

# Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 13th February, 1917.

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The House met at 4.30 p.m.

## RESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER.

The Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant): It is my duty to announce to hon. members that I have received the following letter from His Honour the Speaker:—

Perth, 13th February, 1917.

Dear Mr. Grant,—Will you kindly announce to the House my resignation of the office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I desire in submitting my resignation to tender to yourself and the staff of the House my warmest thanks for the admirable manner in which you and they have at all times helped me to carry out the duties of my office; from each of you I have at all times had the most cordial and loyal support. I am, sincerely yours,  
M. F. Troy.

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.35], addressing the Clerk said: In view of the resignation of His Honour the Speaker which you have just read to the House and which I regret very much he has seen fit to hand in, there is no other course to follow than to proceed immediately to elect a successor to the office. I therefore have much pleasure in moving—

*That Mr. E. B. Johnston do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.*

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [4.36]: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

Hon. J. Seaddan: Will you make him a C.M.G. afterwards?

Mr. Hudson: What next will you do?

Hon. J. Seaddan: We want some time to recover now.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.37]: I have much pleasure in submitting myself to the will of the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder): [4.38]: I move—

*That Mr. S. Stubbs do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [4.39]: I have much pleasure in seconding the nomination of Mr. Stubbs.

The Clerk: The hon. member for Wagin is not present to submit himself to the will of the House and as there is only one nomination, I have to declare, in accordance with Standing Order 12, that Mr. E. B. Johnston is duly elected.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [4.40]: I have much pleasure in moving—

*That Mr. Gardiner do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.*

Opposition members: You cannot now; the member for Williams-Narrogin has been elected.

The SPEAKER-ELECT [4.41] having been conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder said: Mr. Premier and hon. members of the Legislative Assembly, I thank you for the high honour you have done me in electing me to the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia. I shall endeavour to preserve the rights, liberties and privileges of hon. members and of this House. I desire to carry out the duties of this high office with absolute impartiality, and I hope that this will be the easier since I am not leaving a party on the floor of the House. It will be my aim in the high and honourable office to which I have been elected, not only to retain to this Chamber its present reputation as one of the best conducted Houses of Parliament in Australia, but also to follow the high traditions of the Mother of all Parliaments. I hope to have the assistance of hon. members in this direction.

*Congratulations.*

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.43]: Mr. Speaker, whilst I am sure that you will again pardon my expressing regret that the late Speaker, Mr. Troy, should have seen fit to resign, I do in all sincerity congratulate you upon your election to the high position you now occupy. I am satisfied that notwithstanding party differences which from time to time have taken place in this Chamber, and in which you have taken a necessary part, you will uphold worthily the traditions of this House and you will see that the rights and privileges of members are duly protected, that order is maintained in debate, and that the business of the House is conducted with due decorum. You are a young man, you have any amount of possibilities ahead of you, and I am sure that as you go on occupying the position you are now filling you will make good and win the confidence of members. I congratulate you.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [4.44]: I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to accept my congratulations and I trust that while you hold the high office you now occupy you will discharge the duties of that office with dignity. I deeply regret that the late Speaker should have considered it necessary to resign. I am sure he had the good feelings of this party and I trust that you also will earn the goodwill of the party I have the honour to lead.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [4.45]: May I also offer you, Mr. Speaker, my congratulations on your election to the high office of Speaker of this House. I feel sure you will endeavour to carry out the duties of the office with credit to yourself and to the advantage of the House. The step which I took was purely a voluntary one; I consulted my own feelings and it is by my own desire that I am now on the floor of the House. Mr. Speaker, I again congratulate you.

The PREMIER: I have now to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor is prepared to receive His Honour the Speaker and hon. members.

*Sitting suspended from 4.45 until 5.35 p.m.*

## PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER-ELECT.

On resuming,

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. E. B. Johnston) [5.30]: Hon. members, I beg to inform you that, accompanied by the Premier, the leader of the Country party, and other hon. members, I waited on His Excellency the Governor and submitted myself to him as Speaker of the House, and His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:—

Mr. Speaker,—It is with much pleasure that I learn you have been elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly to the high and honourable office of Speaker of the House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner. Harry Barron, Governor, 13th February, 1917.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister: Amendment of health by-laws of Broome Municipal Council.

By the Minister for Works: Additional by-laws for the regulation of motor and other traffic.

## QUESTION—SUNDAY TIMES CRITICISM.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to a leading article in the *Sunday Times* of 4th February? 2, Is it true? 3, Does he propose to carry out the instructions contained therein?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

## QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY LINE TO KALGOORLIE.

*Condition of Permanent Way.*

Mr. FOLEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware of the numerous complaints of travellers on the Kalgoorlie line between Merredin and Kalgoorlie as to the state of the permanent way? 2, Will he have a special inspection made at the earliest possible moment?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, Yes.

*Vibration of Carriages.*

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the vibration of the railway carriages on the Goldfields express on portions of the Yilgarn line is of such a violent character that many of the passengers are rudely awakened from sleep? 2, If the matter has not been already reported, will he cause inquiries to be made as early as possible, with the view of avoiding a possibly disastrous railway accident in the near future?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, Inquiries will be made.

### QUESTIONS (2) — GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

*Retrenchment of maintenance men.*

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Minister for Water Supply: 1, Is it a fact that a large number of men (approximately 170) engaged upon maintenance work on the goldfields water main have been recently discharged? 2, Has the engineer in charge of the scheme approved of the retrenchment as being economically justifiable at the present time? 3, Will not this extensive curtailment of maintenance and repair work seriously affect the life and safety of the pipe track and result in greatly increased expenditure on repairs in the near future?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: 1, About 120 men have been discharged. 2, Yes. Action was taken on the initiative of the Chief Engineer. 3, No. Ordinary repair work is proceeding as usual. The special repair work necessary to be done this financial year has been completed.

*Compensation.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Water Supply: 1, What necessitated the recent retrenchment on the Coolgardie pipe track repairs? 2, In view of the fact that those men had only just returned from their holidays—which were taken and spent on the understanding that work would continue as usual after Christmas—will he make a special allowance as compensation for (a) the injustice of not notifying them before leaving on their holidays; (b) the

unnecessary expense incurred through being encouraged to return long distances for such a short term of employment?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: 1, Completion of special repair work necessary to be done in this financial year, provided for on this year's estimates on the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. Ordinary repair work is being proceeded with as usual. 2, It is not apparent that injustice has been done by giving casual labourers work which was generally known to be temporary, and by discontinuing this employment on completion of the necessary work provided for on the estimates. Instructions to reduce hands were not issued by the Chief Engineer until after the third week in January. Some of these men will again be employed on Goldfields Water Supply construction work.

### QUESTION—KIMBERLEY CATTLE, GOVERNMENT PURCHASE.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to appoint a board to adjust the weight of cattle recently purchased by contract from Forrest, Emanuel, or any other cattle purchased? 2, If not, what action do the Government intend to take to ascertain the correct weight of the cattle before making payment for same?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, No. 2, The system generally practised in the trade, and as carried out by the late Government with regard to last season's cattle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You had an expert there last year. He is not there now.

### QUESTION—ESPERANCE RAILWAY AND ROYAL COMMISSION.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has he read the evidence taken up to date by the Esperance Lands Commission? 2, In view of that evidence, is he prepared to order the resumption of work without delay? 3, What has been the cost of the Commission up to date?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, When the report of the Commis-

sion becomes available it will receive due consideration, and action will be taken in accordance with the decision of the Government. 3, Amount spent from inception to 31st January, 1917, including fees, £762 17s. 6d.

#### QUESTION—ESPERANCE WHEAT TRANSPORT.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Have any steps been taken by the Government to purchase, stack, or transport the wheat of the settlers on the mallee lands in the Esperance district? 2, Is it proposed to give these settlers any aid or facilities to get their wheat to market?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, The matter is under consideration. 2, Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION — TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: In view of the German submarine menace, involving the probable heavy loss of our shipping and consequent isolation of Western Australia, will he urge the Federal authorities to push on with the Transcontinental railway with all possible speed?

The PREMIER replied: I understand that every effort is being made to complete the Transcontinental Railway, and I am now in communication with the Prime Minister in regard to this matter.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY EXTENSION, LAKE BROWN AREA.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, How do matters stand in regard to the serving by railway communication of that large area of land in the Mt. Marshall and Lake Brown areas? 2, Are the Government considering the advisability of reviewing the proposal to continue the Wyalcatech-Mt. Marshall line through Lake Brown area to Merredin, and junctioning the said extension with the Dowerin-Merredin line at Newcarrie?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Owing to the financial posi-

tion there is no immediate prospect of constructing the line. 2, It is not proposed to junction at Merredin as the Railway Surveys Act of 1913 provides for the junction with the Dowerin-Merredin Railway, but when the survey is in progress the point of junction will have full consideration.

#### QUESTION—THE GOVERNOR'S ADVISERS.

Hon. J. SCADDAN asked the Premier: Is it not contrary to constitutional practice for a private member of the House to tender advice to His Excellency the Governor in connection with a political crisis involving the question of a dissolution of the Legislative Assembly?

The PREMIER replied: It would not be unconstitutional if His Excellency desired information. On the occasion to which this question relates an assurance was sought, not advice.

#### QUESTION—BRAN AND POLLARD SHORTAGE.

Hon. J. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Industries: 1, What was the total yield of wheat in the State during each year 1910 to 1916 inclusive, also the total amount of flour exported from the State during the same period? 2, The amount of bran and pollard imported during each year? 3, Is he aware that bran and pollard are essentials to poultry farming and dairying, and that at present there is a serious shortage in the State? 4, Was this position foreseen by the Minister, and, if so, what action has he taken to relieve the position?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, Wheat yield—1910, 5,602,368 bushels; 1911, 5,897,540 bushels; 1912, 4,358,904 bushels; 1913, 9,168,594 bushels; 1914, 13,331,350 bushels; 1915, 2,624,190 bushels; 1916, 18,236,355 bushels. Flour exported — 1910, 61,636 centials; 1911, 145,402 centials; 1912, 311,812 centials; 1913, 597,018 centials; 1914, 365,358 centials, for six months ending 30th June; 1915, 58,992 centials, for 12 months ending 30th June; 1916, 345,947 centials, for 12 months ending 30th June. (Note.—The statistical year was

changed to 30th June as at 1st July, 1914.) 2, Bran and pollard imported—1910, 260,376 centals; 1911, 264,551 centals; 1912, 186,017 centals; 1913, 149,635 centals; 1914, 34,686 centals, for six months ending 30th June; 1915, 346,221 centals, for 12 months ending 30th June; 1916, 20,797 centals, for 12 months ending 30th June. (Note.—The statistical year was changed to 30th June as at 1st July, 1914.) 3, Yes. 4, Yes. Every endeavour is being used to relieve the situation by securing export flour orders.

### SELECT COMMITTEE TRUST FUNDS.

#### *Interim report presented.*

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [5.47]: I have the honour to present the interim report of the select committee appointed by this House to inquire into the administration of the trust funds of the Supreme Court. In doing so, I should like to explain that this report only deals with one department of the Supreme Court. We find that it will take so long to go into all the various trust funds in the time at our disposal that we have selected one department only and have finished that. The committee now present their interim report and intend, if time will permit, to proceed with the inquiry, and reports concerning these other departments will be made available later on. 1 move—

*That the interim report be received and read.*

Question put and passed; the report read.

On further motions by Mr. SMITH report ordered to be printed, and the time for bringing up the select committee's final report extended for one month.

*Sitting suspended from 6.8 to 7.30 p.m.*

### MOTION—WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [7.32]: I move—

*That the Government do not possess the confidence of the country because of their action in introducing during this time of War purely party measures to the exclusion of more urgent and important*

*legislation affecting our national welfare, their incapacity in the handling of the public finances, their general lack of initiative and ability in the administration of the affairs of the State, and their abandonment of the principles of responsible Government.*

First may I be permitted to say that it seems at this juncture things are particularly well ordered, for we did not begin our proceedings with prayer as usual in order to assure us of that Divine care so necessary to proper Government. In view of some recent happenings, it would be something in the nature of sacrilege that prayers should be said at a gathering of this kind. Matters have developed at such a rapid rate that much of the subject matter I had prepared before the House assembled this afternoon has become ancient history as compared with what has happened since the Chamber met. Perhaps, however, the less said on such a subject the better, it might be left to sink in and be properly appreciated by members and the public generally. I approach this question of want of confidence in the Government with absolute confidence. At least we shall be able to establish the true position of our friends on the Treasury bench who have on every possible occasion urged their one desire to be to obtain an expression of opinion from the people by means of a general election. But they have taken every possible opportunity of avoiding such an appeal being made. I know it is claimed by our friends on the Treasury bench they are unable to relinquish their responsibility, but I would point out that there is nothing in the British Constitution or in our own Constitution which compels any Minister or set of Ministers to retain their positions on the Treasury bench against their will. If it were their desire, as we have so often heard it expressed, to obtain an early appeal to the country, then the opportunity of doing so has presented itself on more than one occasion, and has always been cleverly avoided. Rumours circulate pretty freely in this Chamber and throughout the City. And one is that a certain member, for Williams-Narrogin, had made up his mind when this motion was submitted to the House to vote in

favour of it in order that he might keep a pledge made to the people of his electorate, when he said that on the first opportunity that came his way he would send Parliament to its masters. The opportunity came along but the hon. member, with the aid of the Government, scrambled out of the way. Again it has been said that the same hon. member suggested an amendment to the motion and was seeking a seconder and the assistance of other members in order that it might be carried. As I have said, matters have rushed along at such a rate during recent hours that we find ourselves in a curious position. We find ourselves in a position which is intolerable from the point of view of the proper representation of the people and the proper carrying on of responsible Government.

The Minister for Works: You are a good judge of that.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I hope I am a better judge than the hon. member. I want at once to make this statement, whether it be accepted by my friends opposite or by the public, that so far as this motion is concerned I am not approaching it in any spirit of party bitterness, but because I am earnestly convinced that nothing short of an appeal to the country will settle the intolerable position of affairs existing in Western Australia to-day. I am aware that all sorts of suggestions have been made by responsible and irresponsible persons in our midst that the time is one for approaching matters of domestic legislation from the point of view of the formation of a national Cabinet. That may or may not be correct; but I cannot see how it is possible for Parliament to approach this subject of the formation of a national Government when business is submitted to Parliament by a distinctly party Government and the only points on which they have insisted that a decision shall be arrived at are matters of a strictly party nature, of no value to the country. On the question on which I suggest a national Government should be formed, namely, the consideration of the finances and the restoring of the financial credit of the State, the Government, for their own safety and to save their own skins, have run away from the position by throwing overboard their financial proposals. I

wish to apologise to the Chamber, as I find there will be nothing strikingly original in my remarks. This (Labour) party sat on the Treasury bench for a period approaching five years, and all I am likely to say by way of indictment of the Government has been said by my friends on the Treasury bench when they were sitting in opposition. All this talk about dropping party bitterness has been said and repeated times out of number by our friends when sitting in opposition. In November, 1915, the present leader of the Government made this statement to the Press—

There has been no party bitterness exhibited which has not been the outcome of Government action, and it is idle to say that one must condone all the acts of the Government, good, bad or indifferent on account of the war.

If that was the attitude of my friends when in opposition, I suppose I am justified in claiming equal consideration for the present opposition. We could not justify ourselves as members of Parliament, much less as members of the Opposition, were we to accept on account of the war all the Government has done, good, bad and indifferent, emphasising the "bad and indifferent," for there has been little done which has been good. Since the present Government took office, members of the Opposition have endeavoured to avoid unnecessary criticism of the Government, particularly on questions of finance. There have been opportunities of doing this such as never previously presented themselves to an Opposition. The Opposition have had numerous opportunities of criticising severely the manner in which the present Government have handled the question of finance during recent months. Our friends on the front Treasury bench attained that position largely because they told the public and convinced the unthinking members who sit on the Government cross benches that they had within them all the business acumen it was possible to collect in this State, and they urged that the country was in a financial muddle and that they were the only people capable of straightening out affairs. How far they have achieved that object one may judge by the monthly returns published with regard to the finances of this State. Before touching that point,

however, I wish to quote further from statements made by our friends on the Treasury bench. I find that the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), the present Minister for Industries, made the following statement on the 25th February, 1915:—

The country is looking for sound administration and demands it. The country also requires the Premier to go carefully into the expenditure of this money.

If ever the country demanded sound administration it is being demanded now, but that demand evidently is unheeded because of the desire of our friends opposite to retain their positions on the Treasury bench for a few months longer. On another occasion, in 1914, the same hon. gentleman, who is never too careful of his words, made this statement—

The Premier has failed and Ministers have failed in their endeavours to run this country, unless indeed they are endeavouring to run it on the rocks.

More anon about the rocks. The present Premier when, as leader of the Opposition, he spoke on a no-confidence motion, urged that the time had arrived when criticism of members should be helpful rather than otherwise. I interjected, "Before you go on, you say you want to be helpful in your criticism. If you really mean what you say, how do you propose meeting the difficulty?" The retort of the then leader of the Opposition was, "Let the Premier ask me something easy. I do not want to be offensive or to make personal remarks, but when the ship is drifting on the rocks, or when the pilot will take a wrong course and put his ship in danger of running on to a lee shore, it is time to change the pilot. If the pilot is changed, it will perhaps be possible to save the ship. I did not want to give an answer, but the Premier asked for it." I am delighted now that I made that interjection and obtained that answer from the present Premier. First of all we were told by the present Minister for Industries that we were running the country on the rocks, and shortly afterwards we were told by the then leader of the Opposition when a ship is drifting on the rocks a change of pilot is required. I desire to ask now, if we were then drifting on to a lee shore,

whether anyone can tell me where we are drifting to now. If a change of pilot was necessary then, I submit that a change in pilot only is not sufficient to meet the danger. The State is making such rapid progress towards the rocks that we want not only a change of pilot, but an entire change of crew; and the sooner that can be arranged the better it will be for the State generally. References have been numerous to the financial position of the State and to the need for better handling. The present Premier once said—

The deficit has been growing month by month.

It is not growing gradually now. Indeed, the state of the deficit reminds me of the Japanese plant so often seen in pictures, planted to-day, to-morrow it is a huge tree.

It has been growing month by month ever since the hon. member took possession of the Treasury bench, and it now stands at £837,000, and with our small population it cannot be treated in an off hand manner, or in the light fashion that one need not bother about it, and it does not matter whether the deficit goes on increasing or not.

Then, later on, he said—

I am satisfied their assistance will be given readily if the Government outline a plan which will embrace rigid economy in the different departments, and in the administration of the public finances. Of course we cannot maintain credit if the Government set an example of extravagant and reckless expenditure, therefore, it is more than ever necessary that the Government should set the example of frugality and economy I have outlined.

But even at that time—December, 1914—we had a young Liberal who had just blossomed forth in his place in the Chamber sitting in Opposition who desired to add his quota to the criticism of the Government, and he wanted to be more emphatic than even his leader. He said—

It is astonishing to me to find, as it is astonishing to every man in Western Australia who thinks, and has any business knowledge, that there should be any deficit at all, let alone a deficit for the three months of £196,000 over and above the

huge amount of revenue I have mentioned.

Mr. Foley: Who was that?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The present Attorney General. He could not see why there was any reason at all for a deficit, and yet we have the hon. member assisting to increase it at a more rapid rate than ever. The Attorney General is a member of a Cabinet controlling a number of departments, a Cabinet composed of gentlemen possessing business knowledge and business acumen; some of them, too, possess a commercial training. These are the gentlemen who are in charge of departments where, instead of decreasing the expenditure, we find them increasing it. Then again on the 12th January, 1915, the present Premier and Treasurer remarked—

The time has arrived and at the present juncture no one knows what the future will bring forth, when we must practice economy and we must learn to make 10s. go where 20s. went before.

The hon. member may be able to justify that statement by saying that he is learning. Unfortunately, the State is paying dearly while the Treasurer is learning his business in the direction of making 10s. go where 20s. went before. As a matter of fact, he seems to be learning, unfortunately, to make 20s. go where 10s. went previously, and now we have got to such a state that even our friends opposite recognise that the writing is on the wall. In January, 1915, the present Treasurer said—

The pernicious system of building up an ever-increasing deficit, despite an increasing revenue, and depending upon loans to make good the difference, can have only one result, namely, financial disaster. We look to the Government to remedy that state of affairs: they alone have the power and theirs is the responsibility.

I want to emphasise that statement, and to ask the Treasurer now to accept a little of his own medicine. Theirs is the responsibility: they alone are entitled to show how the existing state of affairs can be remedied, and as the *Sunday Times*, in my opinion, pointedly and effectively explained, if the present Government cannot do it, in view of the assurances they gave to the public

on behalf of the Liberal party, they should get out, and the public then would be in the position to say whether they desired that condition of affairs to continue.

Mr. Nairn: They did not suggest sending for you.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am not suggesting that I should be sent for, but if I am sent for, it will be to tender advice, not to give assurances.

Mr. Munsie: And you will not go as a deputation.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Then again, on the 24th February, 1915, the present Treasurer said—

I do wish to say, as I said before, that, so far as I am concerned, I am not in favour of imposing increased taxation until such time as the Government have shown some determination to exercise that due economy which the country is entitled to expect at their hands.

Mr. Bolton: Reduction of wages and reduction of salaries.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Be it what it may.

Mr. Bolton: That is what it is.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Economy must be exercised. Economy has been laid down as the fundamental policy not only of the Liberal party but also of my friends sitting opposite.

Then again, dealing with the question of increased taxation, on the same day he said—

The existing burden is quite enough for them to carry, and it is necessary we should refrain from adding to it. People are always willing to pay interest and sinking fund. When the famous war emergency tax was introduced I pointed out that the Government had no justification to take from the pockets of the people any money for the purpose of assisting our farmer friends. The proper course was to borrow, and that is the proper course to follow now, so that works might be carried on.

I mention this for the purpose of trying, if possible, to hold a little mirror before our friends opposite, in order that they may see themselves in a proper perspective. I do not want to misrepresent the position. They had the opportunity when sitting in



opposition, of indulging in destructive criticism, but no opposition has a right, particularly under existing conditions, to forget the necessity of conserving the credit of the State merely for the purpose of using it for party advantage. I want them also to realise the fact that they told this House that it was due to the want of business acumen, and lack of business knowledge, and methods in the Government departments, that the Labour Government had failed to adjust the finances. To-day we have the spectacle of the people of the State, through their representatives, and even without the third party asking for a seat in the Cabinet for the purpose of keeping that Cabinet on the straight road, finding themselves drifting on to the rocks at an even more rapid rate than their predecessors, and the Government were quite prepared to close down Parliament, and avoid the difficulty of having to answer knotty questions, and meeting possible difficulties in the political sphere. With regard to the condition of the finances, as we find it at the present time, we have a Government represented in the Legislative Council by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Colebatch. I venture to remark that there has been no representative in Parliament, either in the Council or the Assembly, who has been so severe in his criticism of his predecessors as Mr. Colebatch. The most irresponsible utterances ever made, either on the public platform or in Parliament, were made by that gentleman from time to time, when there was a Labour Government sitting in possession of the Treasury bench. But in his ardour he forgot that the time might arrive when he would be called upon to show what he could do as an administrator, and thus keep faith with the many statements made by him with regard to the control of the affairs of State. Unfortunately for the people, and also unfortunately for Mr. Colebatch, that time arrived recently, and I know of no one, having had control of the departments he is now in charge of, who has made such a miserable muddle of the administration of them as that gentleman. It is now abundantly evident that if there is one member of the Cabinet who may be a capable man from the point of view of destructive criticism, there is no one

in that Cabinet, bad as they all are, who has failed as Mr. Colebatch has so far as constructive ability is concerned. The Public Service Commissioner, in defence of the service, owing to the fear that the Government might inflict unwarranted hardships, issued a return showing the position of the service and how the finances had reached their present condition, and it was then that we had from Mr. Colebatch an admission that the deficit had been built up through causes over which the Government had no control. What did Mr. Colebatch say in the Legislative Council on the 2nd March, 1915, sometime before he possessed a seat in the Cabinet—

How has the deficit been built up? It has been built up by absolute waste, and two sources which I may mention are firstly, sticking exclusively to the day labour system in all Government works, whether constructed out of loan or revenue funds, and, secondly, trading concerns. When one urges the necessity to economise it is always thrown at him that he desires to reduce the salary of the civil servant.

Later on, speaking with regard to the necessity for introducing economies, he said—

What we mean by economy is the elimination of waste.

I have with me a few cuttings from his speech made on Thursday evening last. Let us see where we find ourselves now. This is what he said—

That economy is desirable, is possible, and is necessary, I candidly admit, but I think it is also necessary to remember that very many of the public servants have gone without the increments they were entitled to expect, notwithstanding the very large expenditure. A great many of them have given to the State, services that would have been more generously recognised had they been in private employment, and large bodies of the public servants have remained at the same salaries which they drew some years ago, notwithstanding the fact that wages in all other walks of life have gone up considerably, each general increase in wages being inevitably accompanied by a corresponding increase in the cost of living. I am not saying this for the purpose of suggesting

that there is no need for economy. There is great need for economy and there are great possibilities of economy, but I do think that the public sometimes lose sight of these larger facts and attribute to the public servants offences of which they are not guilty. I know it is suggested that it is a pampered service. There may be members of that service who do not do their duty, or carry out their work, but I think that any one who impartially studies the figures of the Public Service Commissioner must come to the conclusion that it is not in that way, entirely or even chiefly, that our deficiency has arisen . . . . .

Whilst in the removal of the deficit it will be the duty of the Government to introduce administrative economy and to impose such taxation as can be imposed without embarrassing our industries, I do not see how the position can be materially improved except by a large increase in population and in wealth production. There is no other remedy . . . . . The expenditure of the Education Department depends not on the number of the people in the State, but on the number of children receiving tuition . . . . . In addition to this, the State in the meantime had embarked upon educational projects outside of primary education, and in 1905 the number of pupils in other than primary schools was only 865, whereas at the end of last year it was 6,988, an increase of over 700 per cent. The following figures will put the position more clearly. In 1905 we had in the primary schools 27,978 children and in 1916 we had 45,725. In the evening classes in 1905 we had 344 pupils, and 2,612 in 1916. In the secondary schools in 1905 we had no students at all, but in 1916 we had 493. In the technical schools we had 460 scholars in 1905, and in 1916 we had 3,759. At the Training College in 1905 we had 61 students, and in 1916 we had 124. These figures represent a total increase over the 28,843 pupils in 1905 of roughly 24,000, the total for 1916 being 52,713.

That is an evidence that the expenditure on education had increased, although perhaps our population had not increased to the same extent, the increased expenditure being largely due to the additional number of

children attending the schools. The Colonial Secretary continued—

If members will turn to the tables compiled by Mr. Jull they will find that as against an increase of 28 per cent. in population there has been an increase of 115 per cent. in the interest and sinking fund charges; and if they add that increase to the decreased revenue paid by the Commonwealth to the State they will have the whole position in a nutshell. Hon. members need not smile.

In view of the utterances they had heard from Mr. Colebatch in previous years when he sat in Opposition, I suggest that it was only because of the known decorum practised in that august Chamber that the smiles did not become something in the nature of derisive laughter. The hon. gentleman continued—

In these two things we have practically the entire explanation for the unhappy state of the finances of Western Australia at the present time.

Yet Mr. Colebatch had repeatedly told the people that the condition of our finances was due to extravagant and wasteful expenditure on the part of the Government who preceded his party in office.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: His other colleagues had said the same.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Yes, they had. Again, we have this—

In the first of the years to which the report of the Public Service Commissioner makes reference, namely, 1905-6, the revenue returned by the Commonwealth to this State was £872,992, whereas the estimated revenue from this source for the current year is only £595,963. Thus, while the contributions of the public to the Commonwealth revenue have materially increased, and the population of the State has grown, as Mr. Jull's figures show, by 28 per cent., there has been reduction of no less than £277,029 in the revenue returned by the Commonwealth to the State, and that reduction is one of the very material causes of the present unfortunate position of the State. . . . There is only one other point in Mr. Jull's interesting and valuable return to which I intend to refer: and that is

the increase of 108 per cent. in the Medical, Lunacy, Charities, and Health Departments. Here again we have to consider the scattered nature of our population; and, whilst I believe that many economies can be effected in those departments without impairing their efficiency, I do not think it is the wish of the public that charitable relief should be withheld in deserving cases, or that the health of the public generally, or facilities for medical attention in outlying portions of the State, should be regarded from the point of view of saving a few hundred pounds here and there. I consider that our metropolitan hospitals should be more nearly self-supporting than they are.

I want the Treasurer to digest that statement made by the Colonial Secretary. If Mr. Colebatch was able to discover these things, surely the Treasurer should have discovered them, in which case it was his duty to declare it to the people and to this Chamber, which is responsible for the control of the finances. That discovery by the Colonial Secretary was opportune from the point of view of the Government. They had previously told the country that all that was required to restore confidence and adjust the financial difficulties was the advent of a Liberal Government. I think it was the present Attorney General who said on the public platform—

The advent of a Liberal Government gave confidence to the State, for it spelt the utilisation of business methods in the conduct of State affairs.

How often have we heard from our friends opposite of those glorious ten days succeeding their advent as a Government. Down at Busselton the Treasurer said—

We have been only ten days in office, and confidence is again restored.

This does not square with the views of their supporters in St. George's-terrace, business men who, for the purpose of protecting their industries, have found it necessary to issue a circular letter condemning the Government and declaring that the Government had effectually destroyed any confidence that might have been in the State when they took office. If anyone can show me proof that confidence exists in the minds of the people

to-day, I am prepared to withdraw from the position I have taken up. Without fear of contradiction I assert that the people have lost confidence in the Liberal Administration, in their ability to do even as well as their predecessors. It is only fair to my own party to say that the financial difficulties we had to face were not of our own making. We endeavoured to obtain further financial assistance from the taxpayer in the only equitable manner, namely, by calling upon those who could better afford to carry the added burden. But our friends opposite used their influence in another place to prevent our obtaining assistance in that direction. So despite their protestations of not being responsible for the present position of affairs, they, in conjunction with their friends in another place, are directly responsible for the defeat of our taxation proposals in the Council. And the only argument used by Mr. Colebatch in opposition to those proposals was that there had been wasteful expenditure by the Government, and that he for one was not prepared to grant them an additional penny to squander. I think the present Premier said the same thing. And, after their assurances to the House and the country that, with the business acumen possessed by Ministers, together with close application to work and the introduction of due economy in the departments they could adjust the finances, what do we find? They have been in office for seven months. The Premier has said that they are not responsible for the finances during those seven months. Of course they are just as responsible as were the Labour Government during their first year of office. The present Government assured the country that they knew the position and the remedy. If they did not know it they misled the public. If they did know it and have not exercised that knowledge, they are obtaining their Ministerial salaries under false pretences. During the corresponding seven months of last financial year the expenditure amounted to £3,165,000. For the seven months of the present financial year, under a Government who insist on due economy in the departments, the expenditure has been £3,347,000, or an increase of £182,000. For the seven months of last financial year the

revenue amounted to £2,667,000, and for the seven months ended January last, under the present Government, the revenue was £2,731,000, or an increase of £64,483. Therefore the Government cannot claim that the increased deficit has been due to a falling revenue, for they had £64,000 increased revenue to spend, and £117,000 besides. And they spent it all. During seven months of this year they have added to the deficit £615,298, and yet the Attorney General, when in Opposition, said that there was no reason in the world why there should be a deficit at all. The Premier himself in his policy speech declared that the first duty of the Government was to strengthen out the financial tangle. How have they gone about it? The first thing they did was to repeal the district railway charges, after which they reduced the fertiliser freights and the rates on lines under construction. In 1915-16 the railways showed a surplus over working expenses of £576,000, as against £560,000 in the previous year, or an increase of £16,000. After paying interest the loss was, in 1915-16, £48,000, as against £25,000 in 1914-15. The additional interest in the year referred to was no less than £40,000. One had but to turn to the report of the Commissioner of Railways to find that the loss was almost entirely due to the operations of the spur railways, known as district railways. Notwithstanding this, the Government immediately repealed the charges on those district railways. Of course we know why. They had made a working arrangement with our friends on the Government cross benches. And, notwithstanding those members continually prating about the necessity for a party to take responsibility, they declined to carry any responsibility, and merely used their balance of power to filch from the Treasurer as trustee for the State £60,000 by the repeal of the charges on the district railways, and in other directions.

Mr. Thomson: What do you think about those charges?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is not what I think about them; it was a question whether the condition of the State's finances should not be improved before that farther loss was made. The Treasurer should have come to Parliament and said "I propose to obtain ad-

ditional revenue in this and that direction. I require it in order to make good a loss to be entailed by the proposed repeal of the charges on district railways." But he did not do that. He was not concerned with the adjusting of the finances, although he had declared it to be the first duty of the Government. What he was concerned about was the possession of the Treasury bench and the keeping of the compact which had enabled him to get there.

Mr. Carpenter: At the expense of the State.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Yes. If ever there was a deliberate piece of robbery for the purpose of obtaining political power it was this action of these two parties in repealing the district railway charges, and reducing the fertiliser freights until such time as ways and means had been discovered to make good the loss. I use the word "robbery" Mr. Speaker, because I want the House and the country to understand that the money we are handling is the money which belongs to the people of the State. They were never consulted about this bargain, nor were they asked to express an opinion as to whether it was desirable in the existing condition of affairs, for it to be made possible for this additional loss to accrue.

Mr. Wansbrough: You should have thought about that five years ago.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: In 1911 we went to the people and declared that the district railway charges, this incubus and imposition referred to by the Attorney General, which had been inaugurated by the Liberal Government, were iniquitous and ought to be repealed. We told the public also that it was essential that we should obtain additional revenue, and said how we thought it ought to be obtained. We repealed those charges, and came along to Parliament with a Bill providing for obtaining additional taxation. While our friends on the cross benches, to give them their due, supported this to a man, leaving only nine members on the Liberal side of the House to vote against it, another place where the party game is played more effectively than it can be played here, threw out these financial proposals, caring little about the credit of the State: and yet our friends on

the cross benches suggest that we should go on carrying that loss. I told the people and Parliament that the two must stand side by side, and as Treasurer of the State and trustee of the public funds, I was not prepared to add to our losses unless I could see some way of making good the additional loss, and perhaps making good some of the other losses as well. The present Government were not entitled to remove these district railway charges unless they could bring forward some evidence to show that they were in earnest in making financial proposals in order to adjust the difficulties into which the State has now fallen. The Commissioner for Railways drew attention to the fact that, based on last year's traffic, and that members must admit was small in comparison with what the traffic probably will be next year when the reduced rates will be applied, the additional loss which would accrue to the railways as a result of the repeal of these charges, was no less than £26,000, and that by the repeal of the fertiliser freights the loss would be £35,000, or approximately, together a loss of between £56,000 and £60,000. This is the price of the bargain made between the two parties for the purpose of obtaining possession of the Treasury bench. We have to add to this list the further loss which will accrue to the Public Works Department by reducing the charges upon railways under construction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Which never paid.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That will amount to approximately, when we get back to railway construction at the rate at which it used to go on, £10,000 to £15,000 per annum. The Commissioner for Railways has already explained that the net loss on district railways, not including the Marble Bar and Hopetoun lines, which are for developmental purposes entirely, amounted to £68,351, which compared with the previous year increased the loss on these lines by £15,730. The only railway which the Commissioner for Railways declares are returning a profit are the three in the South-Western timber areas, and he says that in view of the abolition of the district railway rate the loss will be increased. He says that from the railway management point of

view the circumstances rather warrant an increase in the freight charges than otherwise. I am not here for the purpose of trying to justify these charges. I am here to make this statement, that, in view of what it means to the settler to have early railway communication, in view of the fact that all members of Parliament had urged upon the previous Governments to even increase the rate at which they were building railways in the agricultural districts, I think it is deplorable, taking into account our present financial position, that we should for the purpose of bargaining between the two parties and for the purpose of being able, as a party, to control the affairs of the State, give away the taxpayer's money to the extent of something between £65,000 and £70,000 and thus add to the loss on our working railways. I am not one of those who believes that the public will tolerate this kind of thing, but I believe they will tolerate it less when they know that all this is done without the Government first having carefully considered how they propose to make good the loss. I know that the Government have increased the freights and fares in different directions. Just as the Government were not justified in repealing these district railway charges under the conditions prevailing, or in reducing the fertiliser freights, so were they not justified in increasing the railway freights and fares in the direction they did. I would like to give an example or two of this. If a loss accrues in our railway system, surely it is desirable that we should see how that loss does accrue. So long as we can be just and fair we ought to ask that portion of our railway system which is responsible for the loss, if it is not able to make good the whole of the amount, to make good at least some portion of it, rather than go to the people who are already paying high rates and high fares on our railways and ask them to make good the additional loss which would accrue upon these other sections of our railway system. But this is exactly what the Government have done. They have increased the rates on essential commodities. They talk about the formation of a National Government in order to protect the best interests of the

people of the State. Is it not one way of protecting the people to conserve the food-stuffs of the people and keep down the cost of living for them? The Government, however, have done the very reverse. They have increased the railway freights against the man living in the country districts, in the outback goldfields areas; the people on the one hand, who, according to the Minister for Industries, have made agriculture possible in the State, and the people on the other hand who have been developing the gold-mining areas of the State, they have, I say, increased the charges set against these people and increased their cost of living to the benefit of people living in and around our city. Let me quote some examples of this. The cost of freights upon essential articles of food for the carrying on of our primary industries, mining machinery, agricultural implements, and so on, have been increased to the following extent—on one ton to Northam 2s. 10d., on one ton to Albany 10s. 6d., and on one ton to Kalgoorlie 11s. 2d., on one ton to Leonora 14s. 2d., on one ton to Meekatharra 15s. 3d., but on one ton to Armadale, which is in the suburbs, 1s. The Honorary Minister, who is responsible for answering certain questions in the House, can claim as often as he likes that this is not a tax in the ordinary sense. But it is a tax, and a tax of a most pernicious kind: it is a levying of undue charges against those people who are opening up our country districts to the advantage of those who are living in and around our city and metropolitan area. Imagine increasing the railway freights upon essential commodities to a man at Meekatharra, who is working in the mining industry there, and who, upon the carriage of such necessities as food, machinery, and kerosene, has to pay into the Treasury 15s. 3d. per ton, whilst the man who is living only as far out of the city as Armadale is called upon to contribute to the Treasury only 1s. per ton! That is one of the methods employed by our friends opposite to adjust our finances. If this commends itself to the people of the State, then I misunderstand the feelings of the people. I venture to say that even people in the metropolitan area recognise the injustice of charges such as those which I have outlined. There is a feeling growing

in the State that we must apply ourselves, not to decentralisation as we have talked it so frequently in the House, decentralisation as members mean it by the expenditure of public moneys in the different parts of the State, but that we must apply ourselves to methods, even to the extent of amending some of our existing social conditions, by which we shall induce people to open up our vast interior. Can we own Australia by having a few people populating just the fringe of our coast, or centralised in and around our city? We talk about the depleted population of the State, but I say that the population of the metropolitan area, notwithstanding the number of men who have left the State during the past two years, has increased and not decreased as a result of the war. The whole of our losses in population are in the country districts. Are we encouraging men to go back to the mining areas, to hump their blueys and live in the bush, are we encouraging men to go out into our agricultural areas when the supplies, which are so necessary to enable them to carry on their prospecting and agricultural operations respectively, are to have the charges placed upon them that I have outlined, whilst the Treasurer insists in going on with all his extravagant expenditure in all the departments? Are we to place these charges upon these people and so add to the unfortunate conditions under which they are labouring, whilst the man who is living in the metropolitan area in the lap of luxury is asked to contribute nothing to the Treasury on this score unless he is living at Armadale, when he contributes at the rate of 1s. a ton? It is up to our friends on the cross-benches to wake up and see to the demands of the people in the districts which they represented. It may have been a part of the bargain to reduce these railway charges, but I ask them to show the House and their constituents whether, whilst they were relieving these people of what they termed these pernicious charges, they also agreed to the increased rates? If so, it has not been made public. On the one hand, they have given the farmers a reduction in the charges on our district railway lines, but on the other hand they have increased the freights until, as a matter of fact, they are in a worse position than they

were in previously. Here are some examples of what I mean. So that the matter may be thoroughly understood, I wish to indicate the articles to which I refer, namely, dairy produce, fish, bacon, hams, beef, pressed pork, groceries, canned fruits, and tinned milk. Each one of these items represents a commodity which the farmer must have for his wife and family and for the purpose of keeping himself on his holding, and which must be carried over our railway system. The same thing applies to galvanised iron, building material, oils and kerosene, for each is an essential commodity. This applies to the man on an agricultural area fed by one of our railways, as well as to the man who is opening up one of our gold-mining areas. A settler at Nyabing under the old rate, including the district railway charge of 1s., would have paid £4 8s. 3d. to carry one ton of these commodities to Nyabing. Our friends opposite, for the purpose of keeping their contract, repealed the district railway charges. They followed that up by increasing railway rates. What do we find as a consequence? The settler would pay, exclusive of terminal charges, £4 10s. freight on a ton of these commodities, or an increase of 7s. 9d. per ton. The Government gave him 1s., and left him 6s. 9d. to the bad. That is business acumen. Unfortunately there are in politics in various parts of the British dominions too many men who apply business acumen, as it is known in private concerns, to the detriment of the public. We custodians of the public do not exist for the purpose of fleecing the public, but in order to protect the best interests of the public. On the other hand, trusts and combines exist principally for the purpose of fleecing everyone they come in contact with, in order to pay big dividends to their shareholders. The present Government, I repeat, have given the settler 1s. in order to take from him 7s. 9d. I remember well the howls raised by our friends on the cross benches, and also by the present Minister for Industries (Hon. J. Mitchell), when the previous Government raised railway freights. But the previous Government made their increases on a sliding scale, ranging from 25 per cent. near the metropolitan area down to 5 per cent. for the remoter parts of the State. Unfor-

tunately, the previous Government were driven into raising railway freights by the action of the supporters in another place of the present Government. But the cross-bench supporters of the Government in this Chamber have not made even a whisper against the increases imposed by the present Administration. The present Treasurer, in his policy speech delivered at Busselton on the 9th August, 1916, speaking as head of the Government, said—

Railway rates and fares were increased considerably by his predecessors in office. Had not the Liberals on all occasions denounced Mr. Scaddan's action in increasing the freights?

Was not the hon. gentleman speaking with his tongue in his cheek? He was then arranging to increase railway freights so soon as he and his friends were definitely settled on the Treasury bench. That is why the people of this State—sometimes the *Sunday Times* does echo the opinions of the people—say there is no enthusiasm for the leadership of the Liberal party. Can there be any enthusiasm when the head of the Government speaks as the present Premier spoke at Busselton, and then acts as that hon. gentleman has done? The Premier says that justice should be done though the heavens fall. The heavens must be supported by a pretty decent prop, or they would have fallen long ago upon this Liberal Administration. The Government must have a peculiar idea of justice if they think they render it by giving a man 1s. and taking from him 7s. 9d. The cry of Ministers has been, "We must face the position so far as the finances are concerned; we must stop the drift on to the rocks." And then they reduced railway freights on fertilisers and abolished the terminal charges. On the other hand, however, they imposed higher charges for services rendered by the railway system, thus taking back more than they had given. They went even further, bringing down taxation proposals. The State needed a strong man—another Sir George Turner. I have heard the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) say more than once that a man of courage was wanted, a man who would not be pulled hither and thither by his supporters, but would mark out his course and pursue it even though

the heavens might fall. Western Australia got that strong man. He did not consult either the cross benches or even his own supporters. Without consulting anybody, he came along with a number of Bills, which he threw on the Table of the House, saying, "There is the result of my financial hatching during the last few months; I have here the financial proposals which will save Western Australia from disaster. The hon. gentleman proposed a super tax of 181 per cent. on the man living right on the verge of subsistence, the man whom the slightest increase in the cost of living might compel to demand either an increase in wages or salary or else to apply to the Charities Department in order to be enabled to clothe and feed his children properly. But the man who, even under war conditions, even during the droughts through which this State has passed, lived in the lap of luxury in the metropolitan area, would, under the Premier's proposal, pay a super tax of only 25 per cent. Why was this proposed? Simply because the present Government cannot face the question free from party considerations. The Premier's political friends are those who live in the lap of luxury to-day, and he does not propose to ask them to carry additional burdens. Therefore he proposes a super tax of 181 per cent. on the man living on the verge, the man who has been compelled to pay an unnecessarily high price for bread while wheat was rotting on our wharves and being destroyed by mice in the country districts. That man has had to cut down clothing, foot wear, and food for his children and his wife and himself. That is the man whom the Treasurer proposes to hit with a super tax of 181 per cent., while limiting that tax to 25 per cent. for those living in the lap of luxury. The cry of the present Government was that they wanted office in order to encourage settlement in the country districts. They said, "We are going to draw population to the State of Western Australia; we are going to increase production." Where did they propose to increase production? In the vicinity of Perth? If so, what was the nature of the increased production? Or did they propose to increase production in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales? Another of the financial proposals of the

Government is, or was, a commodities tax of 15 per cent. to be paid by retailers throughout the State. Can anyone imagine such a tax assisting production? The resident of Leonora who, under the scheme of the present Government, paid an increase of 5 or 6 per cent. in railway freights, would be paying, on top of that, 15 per cent. increase on the retail prices of commodities. And the Leonora retail price would mean the price of the commodity on the coast plus railway freight and handling and other charges to Leonora. Thus the Leonora resident would have been called on to pay 15 per cent. extra in railway freights. On the other hand, the resident of the metropolitan area—where we do not need to encourage people to reside—would pay the 15 per cent. tax only on the cost of the commodity. And such a proposal emanated from the Government who came into office for the purpose of straightening out the finances, promoting industries, and encouraging settlement in the country districts and more particularly in the agricultural areas. Another proposal of the present Government was a tax on amusements. To that proposal I raised no objection, except that I protested against its feature of hypocrisy. I object at all times to any form of hypocrisy, and to misrepresentation in any shape. The Treasurer's statement that the amusements tax was needed for the repatriation of our soldiers amounted, in my opinion, to misrepresentation, and misrepresentation which does the hon. gentleman no credit. I asked him across the floor whether he proposed to earmark money raised by means of an amusement tax for repatriation purposes each year. He replied, "No, certainly not." He admitted that he expected to get £25,000 or £30,000 annually from such a tax; and the amount which we are pledged to contribute for repatriation purposes is only £16,000, and that only for this year. No guarantee has been given to continue the contribution next year or the year after. But here we find the subject of the repatriation of our soldiers used by the Treasurer for the purpose of passing a taxation Bill which is to yield him £25,000 or £30,000 not only this year, but in subsequent years as well. Why did not the hon. gentleman distinctly tell the House, "I am using the question of the repatriation of our sol-



diers for the purpose of getting this additional revenue, but I have not the remotest intention of applying that revenue to the purpose I have mentioned?" However, he has dropped the proposal. The Government that came into office for the purpose of straightening out the finances have increased the deficit at a more rapid rate than ever their predecessors achieved. The one sore point with me is that the present Treasurer has utterly beaten my record. Seven months after assuming office he comes along and tells the House that he is sure it would suit the convenience of hon. members if this session were confined to purely matters of an important nature. Is it not of importance that we should stop the drift in our finances? Are we, merely for the convenience of members, to close down the session and neglect our responsibilities in respect of the finances? Must the convenience of members be considered before all things? Nobody knows better than the Premier himself that again he was misrepresenting the position. He deliberately misled the people by stating that he wanted to get into recess in order that he might consider matters. He must have considered financial matters. If he has not done so, he had no right to submit taxation proposals. Now, notwithstanding all his protestations about saving the credit of the State and introducing due economies, he says, "We must close down Parliament and throw our financial proposals overboard in order that the Government may get a few months' further lease of life." That is practically the Premier's position. The statement which the hon. gentleman read to the House last week contains some such words as, "The rehabilitating of the finances requires our earnest consideration." Let me tell the House, and through it the country, that from the attitude of our friends on the Treasury bench it is plainly apparent that what troubles them at this moment is the rehabilitating of Ministers. That is the first concern of the Government. Confidence, from the point of view of Ministers, is not confidence in the State, but confidence in them as administrators. Therefore they feel they must rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the public. From this morning's newspaper we learn that the Attorney General took the Minister for Works to Queen's

Park. Why? All the matters touched on by the Queen's Park deputation were advocated by the Attorney General when standing for Canning after accepting office.

The Attorney General: Nothing of the kind; and you know it, too.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I thought I would draw the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: You have to make a misstatement to draw me.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Let me tell the Attorney General that when the State election for Canning—

The Attorney General: If I did not put you right, somebody might believe you.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It will be those who themselves are in the habit of telling the truth who will believe me. Let me draw the attention of the Attorney General to the fact that one of the questions submitted to the Minister for Works, as reported in this morning's paper, was the matter of a road near Wattle Grove. I remember well, when I addressed a meeting at Wattle Grove during my campaign I was told that the Attorney General had brought down the chairman of the roads board to take the chair at his meeting. Mr. Sampson, I think his name is, made the announcement that the Attorney General had promised, if he got back, he would find the money for this road. Yet now we are told that the Minister for Works will have a report made on the question and see what can be done.

The Attorney General: That statement is on a par with many others.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is not my statement. I am quoting from the Press report. I remember away back in 1905 when a Minister of the then Labour Government, I think it was the late Mr. Hastie, made the statement that he had not money with which to do certain things as requested by a deputation our friends opposite made a howl. "No money, no money; that is what a Labour Government says." Yet we now have the Minister for Works stating that he has not a single cent which he could give them for this work. After having been in office seven months, the member of a Government which was going to adjust the finances tells the people that he has not the money for necessary works.

The Minister for Works: Read the whole of what I said.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I have not the time to read the lot.

The Minister for Works: Why do you leave out the truth?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: What I am quoting appeared in the report published in the *West Australian* this morning—

With regard to the £1,000 asked for, he had not a single cent which he could give them for the purpose desired.

If I am not speaking the truth the Minister should blame his party hack, the *West Australian*, and not me.

The Minister for Works: Read the whole of what I said.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am referring to one specific request made, and the answer of the Minister for Works was that he had not a single penny. If the Government is bankrupt, why does not the Minister, as a Minister, compound with his creditors?

The Minister for Works: Why do you not read the whole of my reply? That refers to a main road, and you know it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Let me ask the Minister for Works if he told the people of Queen's Park that for the road over which I travelled on Sunday, and which in my opinion is one of the worst in the State, he had not a single penny? If so, why is it that he is maintaining the Perth-Fremantle road?

The Minister for Works: That is all right.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Of course it is all right, to adopt the policy of spending money so as to keep things in good order around the City where the eyes of the public are on Ministers. That is necessary to rehabilitate Ministers: but out at Queen's Park it does not matter a tinker's curse whether they have a road or not. The Government have not a penny for works at Queen's Park, but it has thousands of pounds available to do the heavy maintenance work on the Perth-Fremantle road caused by motors travelling over it from other districts which do not contribute a single penny to the cost of the road. While he can find thousands of pounds for that work he cannot find a single cent to help the man who is producing in the back blocks.

Mr. Munsie: All the money has gone on Royal Commissions.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The point I am endeavouring to make is that our friends on the Treasury bench are more concerned on the question of the rehabilitation of Ministers than the rehabilitation of the finances. On the same occasion the Attorney General is reported as having said—

I have just received a telephonic communication from the Minister for Railways and Water Supply with reference to matters brought before him last week. With regard to the drain in the railway yard, Mr. Mitchell said the Railway Department was prepared to either increase the size of the culvert to the required dimensions, or make an open drain. The second point was a request for a railway crossing to be made at John-street. Mr. Mitchell said this would be done and he was inquiring into the cheapest method of making the whole construction. With reference to the request that a three-inch pipe be instituted for the 1½in. service pipe in Crawford-street, Mr. Mitchell sent an officer down the previous day to report on the reticulation, and when he got the report he would be glad to help them in any way possible.

That is the position we find ourselves in? The Government have been told by His Excellency the Governor, as the representative of the King, to get on with the business of the country, that there are important questions requiring consideration by Ministers and Parliament, particularly with regard to returned soldiers. Yet we find the Attorney General taking with him the Minister for Works to Queen's Park and telling the people there that he had received a communication from the Minister for Railways with reference to the putting down of an open drain and the laying of a 3in. pipe. Those are apparently important national questions. Yet it is desired we should get into recess. Why should we not decide here in Parliament whether the pipe shall be 3in. or 3½in., also whether we shall lay an open drain? Those are important matters, and apparently they are the matters which His Excellency the Governor told the Premier he must meet Par-

liament for the purpose of discussing. In the same issue, and in the same column, immediately below it, we find a report of the meeting of the South Perth council. The report is most interesting, but it is the last paragraph only to which I shall make reference—

The Town Clerk mentioned that no reply had been received from the Government with regard to the deputation which waited on the Minister for Works regarding the establishment of hydropathic baths, municipalisation of ferries, South Swan railway, Barrack-street tramline duplication, vehicular ferry at the Narrows, a bridge across Perth Water, and other matters. The town clerk was instructed to communicate with the Government.

Will the Attorney General deny that those matters were referred to during his campaign, and that he promised them all?

Mr. Munsie: He promised three bridges across the Swan.

The Attorney General: I should be delighted to enter on another campaign with you to-morrow.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I had the courage to fight him once in his electorate; let him come along and fight me in mine. Again, as showing how confidence has been restored, we find a letter also in this morning's *West Australian* from the president of the Women's National Movement. I think the opinion of that body is entitled to be heard, and they have spoken. In that letter I find this paragraph—

But if the National Government is to include many of the men at present in power, men who have shown inability to govern successfully, shall we be any better off than at present?

Again, dealing with the Canning electorate, let me draw the attention of the Attorney General to the position in which he now finds himself. He gets the Minister for Works to go into his electorate at a time when it is not usual even to receive deputations, when a motion of no-confidence is hanging over the Government. But when that visit was arranged a certain little scheme had not been formulated. We had then before us the possibility of a general election, and he had to get ready for the

fray. He made all sorts of promises. Let me remind him of one, made in December, 1914, and reported in *Hansard*—

Then the Government of the country should assist our millers by seeking in countries beyond the sea, such as Egypt for instance, markets for our flour rather than markets for our wheat.

What was it the Attorney General told the public was necessary in regard to poultry farming? First, co-operation; what has he done towards that object? Second, cold storage; how much has he helped towards that objective beyond freezing off most of his own supporters? Third, encouragement in finding a market. Let me remind the Attorney General also that he said this in 1916—

Bran and pollard are quoted at £4 14s. 6d. per ton. It should not be more than £2 10s. And so far as I can, I am determined to see that it shall be only £2 10s. I shall endeavour to see that our wheat is gristed in this State and bran and pollard exported. Why should we be importing bran and pollard while we are exporting wheat in such huge quantities?

What are the prices to-day for these commodities? Bran from £6 10s. to £6 15s. In truck loads, mark you. Pollard £7 15s. to £8 5s. And every single bushel of it imported. I shall not be satisfied until it is not imported.

The Attorney General: If I had had your chance, lasting five years, it would not.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I thought the Attorney General would come at that. I tell the Attorney General now that he will need to wake up his friend the Minister for Industries (Hon. J. Mitchell) who has not the slightest sympathy with the exporters of flour. I repeat, it is useless our continuing to export wheat and import bran and pollard. How are we to establish the dairying industry if we continue the practice of importing bran and pollard at the prices I have quoted? According to the Attorney General, it was a disaster when our poultry farmers had to pay £4 14s. 6d., but under the Government which was to restore confidence and make everything all right for the poultry farmers, the cost has increased from £4 14s. 6d. to £6 10s. for bran and £7 15s. to £8 5s. for pollard.

and every bushel of it imported. In 1910, the last year of office of the previous Liberal Administration, 61,636 centals of flour were exported from this State. In 1910 there were 61,336 centals of flour exported. In 1913, when we took up the matter seriously, the export of flour had increased to 597,000 centals. The Attorney General wants to wake up and see what he can do in five years. In 1910 they imported 260,000 centals, and in 1914 we imported 126,000 centals. That is evidence that we recognise the fact that this industry requires encouragement. We can only produce offal by gristing wheat here and exporting the flour. The Government came down with a scheme to send away all their wheat until to-day there is an absolute famine in bran and pollard, and the Attorney General takes out the Minister for Works to consider such questions as the building of a road or a culvert. We were told by our friends at one time that the period had arrived when we should give up the policy of secrecy. This is what the present Premier said on the 8th December, 1914—

We look to them to give that full and frank explanation of their position and intentions which, I am sorry to say, we did not receive on previous occasions when our numbers were very much less than they are to-day. Indeed, I call on them to abandon once and for all the policy of secrecy with which I challenged them on many occasions, and to be open, not only with the members of the Chamber, but to the people of the State who have to bear the burden of taxation which naturally follows the carrying out of any policy. The hon. gentleman made reference in his policy speech to secret contracts, and on the 9th August, 1916, speaking at Busselton, he said—

Government tenders will be open to all; there will be open public competition, and the Government will not compete with their own citizens. In that way we shall bring prosperity to the State.

All this from the Premier of the State. And at that very time his colleague, the Minister for Lands, was entering into a secret contract with the beef buccaneers, the men who had shut out the small growers from getting their supplies down by our

ships. At the very time when the Premier said there would be open competition, the Minister was blossoming out as a beef buccanneer himself. He was then purchasing from Emanuel Bros. 14,000 head-of cattle, if that firm could supply them. And there was not sufficient space on the boats available to bring them down. All the small men who had an opportunity with the State Steamship Service in existence, of bringing their stock down to the metropolitan markets, were to be shut out unless they elected to sell to Emanuel Bros. at any price Emanuel Bros. liked to give them. We then went back to the old days when there was a meat ring. That contract was most secret. It was not one of those things which they said they had done in the glorious ten days of their existence when they went round proclaiming that they had built a culvert here and supplied three-inch main there. They entered into an expenditure of £140,000, and they regarded it as such a splendid deal that they did not tell the people about it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The State will lose £40,000 over it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: On the 23rd August the contract was signed, and the first intimation the public had of it was when Mr. Holmes, in another place, made reference to it on the 10th November, something like three months later. It was then made known that the Government who howled about secret contracts, the Government who had announced that there was to be open competition, had themselves completed a big contract without Parliamentary authority. This contract was never submitted to Parliament for approval, and these forsooth are the gentlemen who tried by a no-confidence motion to replace the Government who they said had entered into secret contracts. Such things were not to happen if the Liberal Government got into power, but how soon after do we get conclusive evidence that they do not hesitate to enter into such contracts when it means protecting their friends.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How many more are there I wonder.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I do not know. I come now more particularly to recent events, and if there is one thing which

prompts this side of the House to submit a no-confidence motion at the present stage it is recent happenings. As I previously said, we endeavoured by every means that were fair to avoid party bickering in the House. We gave the Government the opportunity to bring down their proposals, and while we discussed them it cannot be urged that we unduly criticised the actions of the Government, either legislative or administrative. They had the opportunity of saying that the time was not ripe for the introduction of party legislation, and that they should apply themselves to their duties and try to keep things going so that the people of the State would not unduly suffer. But it was not to be. They must of necessity come along and introduce party measures of a nature which they knew would eventually land them in the position of having to go to the Governor and ask for a dissolution of Parliament.

Mr. Munsie: That was only "kidstake."

Hon. J. SCADDAN: What a humiliating position for a Government to find themselves in, a Government who only a little time previously assured His Excellency that they had a majority in the House, a Government who came to this House and submitted a proposal which contained what they considered to be a vital matter as affecting the policy of the party, and who then found that their supporters were not available! Let me refer now to some of the things which have happened. We have a statement made by the Premier in which he informed the House that the Governor was not prepared to grant a dissolution. We find that the difficulty which arose took place on the Thursday evening sitting, and it required quite a number of meetings of Cabinet subsequently to decide what action should be taken. It took them from Thursday until the following Tuesday to decide that it was against Constitutional precedent and responsible government to accept the position which had arisen on the Thursday. As a matter of fact, I venture to remark that they knew on the Thursday evening the proper attitude to adopt was to go to the Governor and resign, but they deliberately waited for the Tuesday in order that they might have a joint party meeting. Then after that meeting the Premier took

the naughty boy to the Governor and gave His Excellency an assurance that he would not be a naughty boy again. What a spectacle! And they call that stable government! It is stable government, but the kind of stable that I keep my horse in. It wants cleaning out badly when it is found necessary to take the leader of the third party to the Governor and give him an assurance that while that party have been naughty boys they will not be naughty boys again, and that henceforth it will be possible to carry on. "I asked for a dissolution," said the Premier, "but I am sorry I inconvenienced you by submitting this request; I did not think you would be in a hurry, but while the third party had the knowledge of the fact that a dissolution was hanging over their heads I brought them to book; I have now brought down the naughty boy to be spanked." What a position to be in! We were told in this Chamber that the Governor had asked for time to consider the position. On the following day we were told that the Governor had said—

The Governor feels that at the present juncture during this time of war it is of vital importance to the interests of the Empire, the State, and our soldiers, to avoid the turmoil and expense of a general election, and with that end in view he would be glad if the Premier and the leader of the Country party would confer, and endeavour to come to some understanding whereby the business of the session may be proceeded with, more especially taking into consideration the fact that a general election is due in October next. That was dated the 6th February. The Premier was instructed to meet the leader of the Country party and see if he could not arrange the matter as the Governor did not propose to grant a dissolution. The Premier did not make that known to the House, but he immediately adjourned the Chamber and he took the Country party into a room at Parliament House, held a meeting, and then took the naughty boy down to Government House to give His Excellency the required assurance. That is termed responsible government! Then again we have the case of the decision which was arrived at at that meeting. First of all we were told that the

business affecting the welfare of the nation and particularly of our soldiers was of such a nature that Parliament should not be detained in discussing proposals which were less important. I agree entirely with that, but surely it did not require the Governor of the State to tell the Premier that such was the position of affairs. What sort of responsible government have we got when it requires His Majesty's representative to tell them what are matters of importance that require attention? Is that the kind of thing that is likely to restore confidence? Then we have the decision arrived at regarding the Trading Concerns Bill, the decision to restore it because the Government consider it essential to their policy, and their subsequent statement amounting to "You then can do anything else you like." All the Government's definite proposals were introduced and explained to the Chamber, and suddenly these are thrown overboard in order that Ministers might get into recess. Only recently a lot of criticism was hurled at the previous Government because of what was termed indecent haste to get into recess. Last year the Liberal party's hack, the *West Australian*, made reference in a leading article to the desire of the then Government to get into recess. The *Sunday Times*, another hack, the official journal of both parties opposite, said—

The Cabinet is so desperately anxious to get into recess that it is prepared to scrap all unfinished legislation, including the licensing referendum and the Health Bill.

As a matter of fact, we did not scrap any Bills. We said to Parliament, "There is the business, and we are going to sit until it is disposed of." And we did. What is the position to-day? Here is the Notice Paper, containing twelve items, all of which were seriously submitted by the Government to the House as being important measures essential to the national welfare, matters affecting the vital interests of the State and of our returning soldiers. Yet all these important measures are to be thrown overboard to enable the Government to get into recess. Why? We are told it is that they might apply themselves to the question of preparing for the return of our soldiers. It is all bosh. They have no de-

sire to do anything of the kind. Their desire is to avoid possible difficulties, to avoid a crisis in this Chamber which might send them to their masters. Yet we had the declaration by the Attorney General that he was not desirous of getting into office and staying there, that he merely wanted an opportunity of having a look behind the scenes, after which he would insist upon an appeal to the country and the clearing up of the whole situation. There never was a hare anywhere in Australia more anxious to get under cover than are the present Government. The Government are dodging all the time. If the questions on this Notice Paper are of vital importance to the welfare of the State, as we are told they are, they should be dealt with by Parliament, and not by Ministers. Again, we were told in this statement that they would require all possible assistance from Parliament and the citizens generally to help the scheme for the settlement of our soldiers. What they require even more is recess for three or four months during which they will get to their offices at 11 o'clock in the morning for departmental business. Is that the way Ministers should show their readiness to carry responsibility? Should not Ministers rather set an example by getting to their offices at a reasonable time in the morning, instead of going in at all hours, and in consequence having to bring their officers back Saturday afternoons and Sundays?

The Minister for Works: It is not true.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is true. There are public servants working Saturday afternoons and Sundays because Ministers are not at office during the week. Prior to my taking office, each succeeding Premier made his secretary work Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Surely there are enough hours and days in the week to enable them to get through their duties without having to be brought back on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Minister for Works: What you say is not true.

Mr. Foley: On a point of order. Has the Minister the right to say that?

Mr. Hudson: Take no notice of him; he is not responsible.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Minister for Works made a statement to which the leader

of the Opposition objects on a question of fact, I hope he will withdraw it.

The Minister for Works: The leader of the Opposition has not objected, and the statement made by the leader of the Opposition was absolutely untrue.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Coming from you. I take that as a compliment.

Mr. Foley: I object to the statement, and I want a withdrawal of it.

The Minister for Works: The leader of the Opposition said that Ministers did not go to office until 11 o'clock. The Minister for Lands and myself are in our offices by half-past nine in the morning.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am prepared to accept the Minister's statement; he ought to be there by half-past eight.

Mr. Foley: I still object to the Minister's remark, and I wish it withdrawn.

The Minister for Works: As the leader of the Opposition has withdrawn, I will withdraw my charge that his statement is untrue, at least as far as it relates to myself.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I have attempted to explain the reasons why we thought it necessary to submit a no-confidence motion. It cannot fairly be urged against us that we are wasting time in so doing, because the Premier has already told the country that he proposes to throw over all legislation and get into recess at once—I believe he had arranged to get into recess this very night—so no time is being wasted. We are merely asking the Government to explain their sins of commission and omission, and it should not take more than a few days. The Government recognise that any confidence which might have been restored has been lost. Ministers find themselves up against a pretty strong feeling in the country. The *Sunday Times* has told them that if they had in their minds the idea of going to their masters it was very foolish. It reminds me of a cartoon which I saw recently in an English paper. The late Emperor of Austria was calling up on the telephone the Kaiser in reference to the sinking of the "Ancona." The Emperor said, "I have just received a nasty note from President Wilson, demanding disavowal, discontinuance, punishment, and reparation; what shall I do?" The expert replied, "Procrastination it, and it forgotten will be soon." That is the position of the

Government. They have had a nasty note from the country asking them to disavow their policy, and discontinue their methods, and stating that, except they agreed to do this, they would be duly punished. Of course they came along and asked their expert on the cross benches what to do, and that expert advised, "Procrastination it, get into recess and it forgotten will be soon." The difficulty they find themselves in is that they want a few more months in office to consider the position, hoping that in time the public will have forgotten all about it. There was never a time in the history of the State when we had Ministers displaying so little regard for responsible government. Here we have a party representing only 17 members, carrying on with the aid of a third party of eight, and an independent member who has saved the position at the last moment. I have heard Sir John Forrest declare that the condition of affairs in the Federal Parliament is intolerable. Yet that condition is Heaven itself in comparison with what obtains here, where we have 17 representatives trying to put into operation a policy, not of construction, but of destruction, and they have not been successful even in that direction. If ever there has been in this State a Cabinet showing incompetence, disregard of responsibility, and a complete loss of the sense of what is required under Responsible Government, it is the one in office to-day. I urge this against them, not in my own name, but in the name of the people of the State, and I remind those sitting on the Government cross benches that it is their duty to insist upon an appeal being made to the people. I am not desirous of playing the game of ins and outs. The Premier has my sympathy in regard to the position in which he finds himself. Yet it is of his own making. He told the people what he could do. He said, "Give me a chance; I am the strong man; these others are muddlers. Let me call to my assistance men of business acumen, and I will soon straighten out affairs"; and the people said, "Very well, come along, old chappie." He is in it to-day; he cannot easily get out of it, and now I suspect he is regretting his statement that he will not go to London. Personally, I would not put too many dollars on the other fellow's going, even now. His own

journal, the *Sunday Times*, has told the Premier to go to London. Instead of there being confidence in the State, the people have lost confidence in the present Government, and statements are being hurled all over the place in regard to their incompetence. The people themselves alone can straighten out the present position. The people will demand at least that the strong man shall say what he will do; and when he says that they will make him stick to it, and not keep Parliament sitting for seven months, and then at the last moment sneak away like a hare getting to cover, even though to do this he has to throw everything behind him. We do not want to perpetuate a position of affairs in which His Excellency tenders advice to his advisers. His Excellency advised the Premier to confer with the leader of the Country party and to attend to the affairs of State, to important questions of Empire. In effect the Governor said, "Get about your business, and do not come hum-bugging me with requests for a dissolution." And the head of the Government, having no fixed idea of Responsible Government, went to the leader of the third party and said, "Come along, sonny, and give His Excellency an assurance." The Premier ought not to be taking advice from the Governor. Yet he did accept that advice, which was "Get the other leader, and fix up things between yourselves. All we want is a leader, whether a strong man or a weak man, and Parliament will put the thing right." Under existing circumstances, we do not know where we are to-day, but are praying that we shall see daylight to-morrow. The condition of affairs which does exist in this State now ought not to exist. We ought to know what the policy of the Government is. All that we know about it is a Notice Paper from which nearly everything of importance is cut out. We cannot accept the position as we find it to-day. The Government have failed miserably, more miserably than their predecessors ever did, and the people of the State have entirely lost confidence in the Government.

Hon. W. D. Johnson (Guildford) [9.30]: I second the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition, in his opening remarks, drew attention to the fact that prayers were not read to-night. I would like to explain that the proper Parliamentary procedure for the day on which a new Speaker is elected was carried out. I have a passage here from *May*. I do not propose to read it beyond one paragraph, which says that on the following day, the day after the election of the Speaker, the daily prayers are read for the first time by Mr. Speaker-elect. I wish it to be made clear that there was no omission to-day from the ordinary proceedings of Parliament in such circumstances.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [9.32]: I move—

*That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 on Thursday.*

Hon. J. Scaddan: Why adjourn until next Thursday?

The PREMIER: I am quite willing to make an explanation to the leader of the Opposition. He has been speaking now for two hours at the rate of two hundred words per minute. I cannot get a pull of his speech until to-morrow at noon, and it would take me fully until 4.30 p.m. to get through it and digest it. I, therefore, claim the right to an adjournment until Thursday, a convenient hour when I shall have much pleasure in replying to the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Carpenter: More procrastination.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.33]: I wish to protest against these continual adjournments. It is not fair that we should be brought hundreds of miles from our constituencies to conduct the affairs of the country only to find that on a speech made by the leader of the Opposition the Premier wants an adjournment for two or three days in order to scan the proofs of that speech. An adjournment for one day would be quite sufficient.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): That is all it is.



Mr. LAMBERT: There should be no need for any adjournment. The Premier has not been called out of town, and it would be fairer to the country members that the business should go on as usual.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 15th February, 1917.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, Audited accounts and balance sheets for year ended 30th June, 1916, of (a) Government Refrigerating Works, (b) Albany Cold Stores, (c) Perth City Markets, (d) Metropolitan Abattoirs and Sale Yards, (e) Kalgoorlie Abattoirs. 2, Abattoirs Act, amended regulations.

### RESOLUTION—WHEAT POOL, TO APPROVE ARRANGEMENTS.

Message received from the Council notifying concurrence in the Assembly's resolution approving of a payment of three shillings per bushel as a minimum price for the purchase of wheat grown during the season 1917-18.

### QUESTION—STATE GOVERNORSHIP.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Premier: 1, Whether he had made representations to the British Government regarding the appointment of a local citizen as Governor of the State prior to Sir Ellison McCartney's appointment to the position? 2, If so, will he inform the House of the result of such representation?

The PREMIER replied: Nos. 1 and 2, No.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY CARRIAGE OF GO-CARTS.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it true that folded go-carts, if accompanied by owners, are carried free on the railways in the metropolitan area? 2, If the facts are as stated, will he issue instructions to allow the same concessions on the railways in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder suburban area, and so afford mothers with children in that district the same privileges as exist in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes.

### MOTION—WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

Debate resumed from the 13th February on the motion by the Hon. J. Scaddan "That the Government do not possess the confidence of the country, because of their action in introducing during the time of war purely party measures to the exclusion of more urgent and important legislation affecting our national welfare, their incapacity in the handling of the public finances, their general lack of initiative and ability in the administration of the affairs of the State, and their abandonment of the principles of responsible government."

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.40]: Since the leader of the Opposition delivered his speech of accusation against the present Government on Tuesday evening last, I have been endeavouring to find, by perusal of the speech, some grounds of substantiation for the charges contained in the motion which he submitted for the acceptance of the House. Notwithstanding that I have applied my-