

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 3rd February, 1915.

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

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL LANDS, ESPERANCE.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that a very large number of inquiries are being made at the Kalgoorlie Lands Office for agricultural lands in the Esperance District? 2, What steps do the Government intend to take to encourage settlement on these fertile areas? 3, Will the surveyed blocks, which have been temporarily reserved in the mallee belt, be now thrown open for application?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes; but inquiry does not necessarily mean business. 2 and 3, The matter is now under consideration.

QUESTION—EDUCATION INSPECTORS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many senior inspectors of schools are residing within the metropolitan and sub-metropolitan area? 2, How many senior inspectors are located within the Kalgoorlie centre? 3, How many senior inspectors are located (that is, residing) in any other centre than Perth and Kalgoorlie, with names of localities and senior inspectors? 4, Have the senior inspectors charge of districts and junior inspectors? If not, why not? 5, Are any of the senior inspectors employed part of their time in the offices of the department? If so, what is the nature of the work that cannot be performed by the

director, the chief inspector, and the other officers in the department, but necessitates the retention of so many senior inspectors? 6, Are the teachers of the metropolitan schools as highly classified as those in charge of the small outback schools in the country and goldfields districts? If so, is it necessary for so many senior inspectors to look after the welfare of the children residing in the metropolitan area? 7, Will he have a searching inquiry made as to the necessity or otherwise for so many senior inspectors living and residing in the centre of the metropolitan, and then consider a system of decentralisation of these high educational facilities? 8, Is it a fact that the late Chief Inspector (Mr. J. P. Walton) for some years did the major part of the inspection of the schools in and around Perth and Fremantle with the assistance of his staff for a few weeks at the end of the year, as well as attending to departmental files (at the office), etc.?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Three. 2, None. 3, None. 4, Each senior inspector is in charge of a district. He is not in charge of other inspectors. The other inspectors work under the direction of the chief inspector. 5 (a), Yes. (b) Work in connection with continuation schools, manual and domestic training centres, cadets, school stock, the editing of the *Circular*, and examinations. The great development of the work of the department in many directions in recent years renders necessary some decentralisation of the administrative work. 6 (a), Yes. (b) The senior inspectors are naturally engaged in the districts where the work of the greatest number of highly qualified teachers has to be judged. It is on the inspectors' reports that the teachers' classification and promotion depends. 7, The Minister has carefully inquired into the matter, and has agreed to a policy of decentralisation in so far as requiring district inspectors to live in their districts. He is convinced that such further decentralisation as is suggested would not be advantageous. 8, No, not within recent years. In early days, when the department's work was very limited, it is possible that he may have done so.

SELECT COMMITTEE—WHALING INDUSTRY.

On motion by Mr. HOLMAN, the time for bringing up the report was extended by one week.

BILL—NAVAL AND MILITARY ABSENTEES RELIEF.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments, made by the Council, now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It will be remembered that this Bill, as passed here, provided that citizens of Western Australia on active service in the naval and military forces of His Majesty or of the Commonwealth whilst absent on duty should not be subject to any disability of any law of Western Australia by reason of their absence. Another place has amended the measure by providing that a citizen of Western Australia who happens to be made a prisoner of war shall also receive the benefits of this measure. Personally, I am not altogether convinced that there was any need for the amendment, because I take it that a soldier or sailor on active service happening to be made a prisoner of war would within the meaning of this clause still be on active service, although in fact a prisoner of war. However, the object of the amendments is to make the intention perfectly clear. Amendments 2, 3 and 4 are consequential on the first amendment. I move—

That the Council's amendments be agreed to.

Mr. SMITH: I presume that the clause also covers civilians who may be made prisoners of war?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause does not include civilians.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [4.44]: I have no objection whatever to raise to this small amending Bill. A certain principle is involved in the measure, inasmuch as under it women are created justices of the peace so far as children's courts are concerned. The children's court is, of course, a tribunal entirely different from ordinary courts in the general acceptance of the term. That difference was intentionally created when the Act constituting children's courts was passed in 1907, in order that neglected or wilful children might be removed from the precincts of the police court and of the lock-up. For that reason children's courts were constituted, and sit in a much less formal manner than do ordinary courts. The Act specially provides that members of a children's court shall not meet in an ordinary court room, but either in a magistrate's room or in a private room. They simply sit down and have a talk to the child or the parent, and decide what is best for the child. As constituted to-day, the court consists of a resident magistrate, or a specially appointed magistrate. I do not think any special appointment has been made as yet. To my mind such appointment would be of benefit, because there are in the State many men who have had considerable experience of children, and who are admirably qualified for this purpose. It is further provided that if a magistrate is not available two justices may try the case and commit the child to the State Department, or inflict certain fines and punishments set forth in the Act. The Bill provides that women may sit on the court instead of ordinary justices. It goes further, for the real amendment is contained in the last two lines—"or other persons male or female appointed by the Governor as members of the

court." I do not know why it should read "other persons." Why not leave it to the ordinary justices, and not appoint special male persons to be justices of the children's court only? Then we have "or female." It is not clear whether it is intended to appoint two women instead of two male justices. If it is only intended that one woman should sit on the court I have a serious objection to offer, because it is not the amendment as explained to us by the Honorary Minister, who said, in effect, that the Bill provided for the appointment of two women to sit in the court.

The Attorney General: It does not clearly express that.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No; it states "other persons male or female." I think it should be made clear that it is intended to appoint two or more women. I have an objection to the appointment of one woman alone, because it will be giving her greater power in the children's court than the ordinary justice is invested with. The provision should be made clear.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 18:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Does the Minister not consider it necessary to amend the clause?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I am prepared to accept any improvement. My object is to provide that women shall be eligible to sit and adjudicate in the children's court. The Bill requires two or more justices, or two or more other persons.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: That is the intention?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Absolutely. Two women or more can sit. I desire to obtain power to appoint certain women to act on children's courts in various parts of the State.

Five or six may be appointed, for they are not likely to be all available to sit at one time. I believe the provision is quite clear in the clause as printed.

Mr. Taylor: How many children's courts are established in the State?

Mr. ROBINSON: The last few words of the clause should be made a little more explicit. I move an amendment—

That after "the" in line 7 the word "children's" be inserted.

The persons appointed may colloquially call themselves justices of the peace, whereas, under the proposed amendment, they will be specifically known as members of the children's court.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: In answer to the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) I may say a number of children's courts have been proclaimed in the State. It is not really necessary to proclaim these courts, because it is provided in the Act that two justices may sit outside the proclaimed area.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I am prepared to accept the amendment. I think it will improve the clause.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. SMITH: The clause opens with "In the absence of a special magistrate or in places not within the area named in the Order in Council." I cannot see any good reason for limiting the appointment of female justices to courts where there are no special magistrates, or in areas not named in the Order-in-Council. Female justices should be appointed to sit in any children's court.

Mr. Robinson: They have that power.

Mr. SMITH: The clause limits the jurisdiction of these women to the absence of a special magistrate or to places not within the prescribed area.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1914-15.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the Treasurer's Financial Statement,

and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £1,750:

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) [5.0]: Several members have spoken on these Estimates and put before the Chamber their views with regard to the methods by which the present financial difficulties of the State might be overcome, and I must give every member who has spoken credit for having given the question some consideration, and of expressing what he thinks are the best methods for overcoming the difficulties. But I want to say, also, that I have heard nothing so far suggested which is likely to be of any great utility to the Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Give us your ideas.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I will do so before I sit down. I was particularly disappointed with the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. F. Wilson) and the Leader of the Country Party (Mr. James Gardiner). They are gentlemen who have had experience in office and should have been able to put their fingers on the spot and find out if there has been any extravagance, and if there has been, to point it out to the Chamber. If they could not do that, they should have been prepared to use the positions they occupy to say to the Ministry, "We are satisfied that you are carrying on the finances so far as is in your power in a satisfactory manner; but we are satisfied that the income is not sufficient to carry out the financial obligations of the State, and we are willing to assist you to get more taxation." But those hon. members have not put forward any suggestions, so far as I have been able to gather, except for the cutting down of some odd items here and there. I believe the leader of the Country Party did point out something with reference to the stores at Fremantle, that the Government should take care that they do not accumulate enormous stores at Fremantle.

Mr. Bolton: Good advice, too.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Very likely it is good advice, but it is not the class of ad-

vice which will get us out of our financial troubles.

Mr. James Gardiner: Let us hear from you.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) also protested that the cost of administration is not so satisfactory as it was 12 years ago when he was in office; and he finds fault with the Government because he says there has been extravagance. But he did not point out where that extravagance arose. I am satisfied that there has not been extravagance, but that the increased expenditure is due to the advancement of the State.

Mr. James Gardiner: Your own Government is asking for power to stop extravagances.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I think it is an unfair statement to make that the Government admit they have been extravagant. I venture the opinion that the members of the Government have spent many troublesome hours going through these Estimates and cutting down every unnecessary penny of expenditure. They have proved that by the reductions made in certain directions. The leader of the Opposition (Hon. Frank Wilson) criticised the Government, and said that they have starved the schools and hospitals. Was ever such a charge heard from the leader of a responsible party when he is supposed to be criticising the Government?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why do you not quote my figures?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The leader of the Opposition asks why I do not quote his figures. Probably he will excuse me if I quote some figures also. Just to show how unjustified he was in making the statement that the Government had been guilty of starving the schools and hospitals. The expenditure on the Education Department for the year 1910-11, the last year of the hon. gentleman's term of office as Treasurer—was £202,000; in 1911-12 it rose to £238,000; in 1912-13 to £276,000; in 1913-14 to £304,000. Or for the year he was criticising, as compared with the last year of his own term of office, there has been an increase of £102,000. Does that seem like starving? I will tell the

hon. member, if he is not aware of it, that the per capita expenditure on education in this State is enormously greater than in any other State of Australasia. Where, then, is the justification for the charge that this Government has starved the schools and hospitals? In New South Wales the per capita expenditure is 18s. 6d.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are not dealing with my figures.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: In Victoria, 16s. 7d.; in Queensland, 19s. 8d.; in South Australia, 15s. 4d.; Tasmania, 10s. 6d.; and in Western Australia, 21s. 3d. I have pointed out to the House the enormous increase which this Government undertook this year, as compared with the last year of their predecessors' term of office—an increase of £102,000.

Member: Look at the area!

Mr. Bolton: The area is the same.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Absolutely the same area. Has Western Australia expanded in area since the Labour Government entered into office? If so, that must be another justification of the Labour party. Let us now take the hospitals. The leader of the Opposition (Hon. Frank Wilson) made an unfair statement when he charged this Government with starving the hospitals. In 1910-11 the grants to Government hospitals in this State amounted to £14,000 and some odd pounds; in 1911-12 it was £18,000; in 1912-13 £20,000; in 1913-14 £22,000; and this year provision is made on the Estimates for £23,000. That is for all Government hospitals. Take the Perth hospital alone. In 1909-10 the Liberal Government made a grant to the Perth hospital of £13,383. In 1910-11, their last year in office, when they were endeavouring to square the finances, and endeavouring to make the people of the State believe they were heaven-born financiers, the Vote was cut down by £1,383, and totalled only £12,000. If you ask the hon. member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor), who is Chairman of the board, and has been a member of the board for many years, he will tell you that the Perth hospital is to-day trying to overcome the difficulties into which they were forced

on that occasion. What was the position when the present Government came into power? In their first year the Vote for the Perth hospital was increased to £15,170, or £3,170 more than in the last year of their predecessors' term. For the next year the Vote was £19,096; last year it was £19,580; and this year provision for the sum of £20,000 is made on the Estimates. Is there any justification whatever for the hon. member to make the statement that this Government has been guilty of starving the schools and hospitals, when we have such facts as these before us? The hon. member (Hon. Frank Wilson) interjected that I was not quoting his figures. What have his figures to do with the general expenditure? All that he endeavoured to point out was that the Government had not expended certain insignificant amounts provided in various small sums. But in the general cause of education and the general cause of providing accommodation for the sick in our State, the present Government have indeed done far more than was ever done previously in the history of this State, and I believe, in the history of any other State. The leader of the Country party also found fault with the general run of the people of the State. He said that they were all running to the Government for assistance, and that time had arrived when a moral tonic should be administered. I want to know which section of the people it is that he objects to.

Mr. James Gardiner: The whole lot of them.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Is the hon. gentleman opposed to the assistance which the Government is rendering to the agriculturalists?

Mr. James Gardiner: Not at all.

Mr. Thomson: In that they are only protecting their own assets.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I want the hon. member to point out to me any section of the community receiving assistance from the Government for nothing except in those directions in which every section of the community may participate. I want to know if it is the agriculturalist leaning on the Government to which he objects. Is it to the artisans who are being enabled

to get homes of their homes through the Workers' Homes Board? Is it our free education he objects to?

Mr. James Gardiner: No.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Is it the proposed assistance through the worn-out miners' fund?

Mr. James Gardiner: No.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Well, what on earth does he object to? Does he object to the State building railways to open up the primary industries of the State? But I know very well all that he objects to is the wage-earner.

Mr. James Gardiner: You have no right to infer that. I say that I object to everyone running to the Government. We have had evidence enough of that in the discussion on the Estimates.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is useless the hon. member saying he objects to everyone. I have enumerated all those receiving assistance, and the hon. member cannot place his finger on one he honestly objects to.

Mr. Griffiths: Did you object to the assistance to the Goldfields in the early days?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I would like the hon. member (Mr. Griffiths) not to try to pass on to me the statements made by his leader. Why did he not ask the leader of his own party that question? I am pointing out how unfair the Leader of the Country Party has been in making that statement. In my opinion it is the duty of the Government in any democratic country to assist every section of the people. I have asked the hon. gentleman to name those sections to whom assistance is given to which he objects. Is it the State industries that have been established here?

Mr. Male: Yes.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I know there are some hon. members on that side of the House, belonging to both parties, who say that they object to those industries. But I want to tell those hon. gentlemen that those industries have been established for the purpose of relieving the people from monopolies. Hon. members may object as much as they please, but I say that the system of State industries will

grow and continue to grow and will still be flourishing when hon. members and the parties to which they belong are sunk into oblivion.

Mr. Robinson: You will go down on your State enterprises.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I do not claim that we shall go on for ever and for ever, or that this party will not some day go down and that some other party will not come into office. I do not make such an absurd claim. I say, however, that the principles for which this party stand will go on growing and flourishing, even though they may get a set-back some time during their existence, when hon. members and the parties to which they belong will be absolutely forgotten. Hon. members can oppose State industries as much as they like. They may, if they come into office at some future date—and I think it will be in the very far future—wipe out a few of them, but if they do the people will give them their quietus, and the position will be restored to what it was before.

Mr. Green: They will not dare to do that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There is another question which both leaders on the other side of the House and some members have dealt with, namely, the State Savings Bank. Most of the statements which were made in reply to those of the Premier were altogether misleading. I do not say that hon. members intended, or endeavoured, to be misleading, but some of their statements in the face of what the Premier has said, would be misleading to persons outside the House. They have endeavoured to show that the Premier proposed to hand over our State Savings Bank to the Commonwealth. Nothing, however, is further from the truth, and hon. members know it.

Mr. Smith: Tell us the facts.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The facts on the question are these. The Commonwealth Government, by the powers vested in them by the Constitution, decided to establish a Commonwealth Bank, not only a Savings Bank, but a Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. Taylor: They tried the other first, but it failed.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The Savings Bank was included in the very first measure that was passed. Many members of the Federal Parliament sitting in opposition to the Labour party, said that they had intended to bring in a Commonwealth Bank Bill, but had not intended that it should include a Savings Bank. The first measure that was passed included a Savings Bank. It was pointed out that it would be useless for the Government to endeavour to bring into operation a banking institution unless they had the Savings Bank portion attached to it.

Mr. Taylor: They brought the other in first.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I say they did not. The whole thing was in the one Act. They may have established the other portion a few weeks prior to the bank. The position is this. We have the Federal Savings Bank established in this State. Last year the withdrawals from our State Savings Bank exceeded the deposits by £43,000.

Mr. Smith: The people had lost confidence in the Government.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: In the same period the Federal Savings Bank had deposits exceeding withdrawals of £165,000.

Mr. Thomson: For this State?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: For this State alone. What does this prove?

Mr. Robinson: What were they two years ago?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I would further point out that the Commonwealth Savings Bank are not giving as good conditions as the State Savings Bank—not as good by a long chalk. They only pay interest up to amounts of £300, whilst the State Bank pays up to £1,000—in fact I believe they have wiped out the limit altogether since the Commonwealth Bank came into operation. It shows that though we are giving better conditions to the depositors, still the Federal Savings Bank is growing. It shows conclusively that there is a national sentiment behind the Commonwealth Bank. It

shows that the big masses of the working people, the people who put their money into Savings Banks, are patronising the Commonwealth Bank because they realise that this is the first time in the history of the world that the Government of the country in which they live have made a serious and proper attempt to break down private financial institutions, and to get control of the finances for the people.

Mr. James Gardiner: Do you not call the State Savings Bank a thriving institution?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I say it is an honest attempt on the part of the Government to obtain proper control of the finances, and to prevent private financial institutions and capitalists from holding them in the hollow of their hands, as Governments in other parts of the world have complained of their doing. The Government are justified in the position they are taking up, namely, that this State should come in as a partner, not only in the Savings Bank, but in the whole of the Commonwealth banking business. The platform of the Labour party, which was drawn up at the Brisbane conference, where this matter was first discussed, supported the principle that the States should become partners with the Commonwealth in their banking business. Mr. King O'Malley, that much maligned individual, is fighting for the proposal in the Federal Parliament to-day, and it behoves everybody in the community, who has the interests of the State at heart, to stand behind the Government and insist that the Commonwealth Bank shall accept them as partners in their banking business. The State has everything to gain. They have, as I have pointed out, not only an opportunity of becoming partners in the Savings Bank business, but of becoming partners also in the Commonwealth Bank. Further, the conditions were that three-quarters of all the new business was to be at the disposal of the State Governments, so far as the Savings Bank was concerned. These are conditions that we can never hope to get in the future for our Savings

Bank. Much as I would like to see the State Savings Bank progress, I am satisfied that the Commonwealth Bank is going to supersede it in the matter of business. If we stand aloof, instead of becoming partners in the bank, and if we endeavour to fight them and waste money in so doing with a possibility of eventually going down and gaining nothing for the State, we shall stand to lose a great deal indeed. It is impossible to fight. They have got facilities that we can never have again. They have the post office which we can never make use of again. It behoves the State and every party in the State to stand behind the Government and endeavour to get a partnership in the Federal Savings Bank.

Mr. Smith: On what terms?

Mr. Taylor: That is to say, it is the duty of the State to accept conditions which they believe to be unfair, but must accept them because they cannot refuse to do so.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I object to that statement; the conditions are not unfair. If the Federal Government accept us as partners the conditions are absolutely fair and just.

Mr. Taylor: They force us into it.

Mr. Thomson: They took away what we had.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: How could they do that unless the people of the State were willing?

Mr. Male: You were willing.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Although our conditions are better in Western Australia the people of the State are undoubtedly transferring their deposits to the Commonwealth Bank, and are taking them out of our institution. How can this be called showing the mailed fist, when our people are rushing in to accept worse conditions than they can get from the State? Those candidates for the Federal election who went out on the State rights absurdity were wiped out, whereas those who endorsed the policy of a Federal Bank were returned to power by a substantial majority.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was a national policy.

Mr. Smith: Upon what terms do you propose to transfer the State bank?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Another statement has been made by the leader of the Opposition. During the course of his speech he said, "As you go on raising wages so does the cost of commodities go up." In speaking the other evening on the Industries Assistance Bill, the leader of the Opposition made this extraordinary statement, "There is always the same amount of gold in the world, but it ebbs and flows like the tide." I want to quote an authority which I think will be accepted as a greater authority than the leader of the Opposition—great as he is. In the *Scientific American* of 21st March, 1914, an article appears by the pen of Mr. John B. C. Kershaw, Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society of London, the title of the article being "The rise in prices and the increase in the cost of living." This article deals, first of all, with the increases which were existing in 1912, comparing them with those which were existing in 1900. I want to quote the various countries of the world to show the leader of the Opposition how much the increase in wages is likely to have influenced that rise in prices. Canada leads the way with 51 per cent. Canada, I think, is a country which hon. members admit contains very little in the way of labour organisations or labour troubles.

Mr. Green: And where there is very little State enterprise.

Mr. Smith: Is there a Labour Government there?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There is a Conservative Government there to-day.

Mr. Munsie: That is why it is so dear.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The figures for the other countries are—United States 39; Japan, 38; Austria, 35; Belgium, 32; Germany, 30; Holland, 23; Russia, 21; Italy, 20; Norway, 19; Australia, 16; New Zealand, 16; the United Kingdom, 15; and France, 15. These figures show the difference between those countries in the world where Labour Governments have been in power and where the workers are organised, and are active in their demands for a fair wage, and where they have re-

ceived a fair increase in their wages; and those countries where these circumstances do not exist. The countries that have had the smallest increases are those where the labour organisations have been most prominent.

Mr. Robinson: Do you know any country in the world where living is dearer than it is in Western Australia?

Mr. Munsie: Yes.

[Mr. Male took the Chair.]

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The writer in the *Scientific American* says—

These figures show that the rise in prices during the last 15 years, has not only been great but general. It applies to almost all commodities and all countries for which we have figures. If practically all the children in a certain school were stricken simultaneously with typhoid fever we should reasonably suspect that there was some common source from which the germ had come. If the prices of most commodities rise somewhat simultaneously we very reasonably, it seems to me, should attribute this rise to a common factor, rather than to various isolated causes relating to the commodities separately considered. In other words, on the basis of probabilities it is reasonable to assume that the general rise in prices is related to some common factor. Since every price is tied to gold and the supply of gold has increased during the last 15 years, we need not then be unreasonable in suspecting, if not convicting, that fact of being responsible for the present high prices. No other common cause has been suggested.

Later he states—

The increased demand arising from the growing population of the world and increase of luxury have no doubt enormously stimulated the call for food and commodities of all kinds. At the same time, the increased output of gold and the greater use of credit have tended to cheapen these in their relation to commodities, and, therefore, one

has to pay more in gold or silver to obtain the same amount of food than five or ten years ago.

This gentleman does not say the rise is due to increased wages. He clearly points out it is the increased amount of gold and the greater facilities of credit that are responsible for this state of affairs. Is it not an absolute absurdity that we should be living under such conditions that, no matter how plentiful the supply of the necessities of life may be, if there is an increase in the output of gold these necessities of life immediately become dearer? Hon. members will agree with me that a condition of things such as that should not be allowed to exist any longer than can possibly be helped. I want to quote the conclusion of this gentleman's article to show what he considers is necessary for rectifying this absurd state of affairs. I want to show also that he does not suggest a reduction of wages as a method by which it should be brought about. He is dealing now with an inter-state conference which has been suggested to go into the matter. He says—

If the result of its investigations should indicate that the rise of prices is chiefly a monetary phenomenon, this would indicate the importance of a monetary remedy, such as some plan for "standardising" monetary units, namely, "stabilising" the general level of prices. But whether or not any such far-reaching remedy can be applied or even recommended, there are other and less ambitious remedies in the way of saving waste which ought to be carefully considered. Such, for instance, are the conservation of natural resources; the elimination of unnecessary middlemen; the introduction of co-operation where economies can thereby be effected; improvement of banking systems, etcetera.

I will ask hon. members whether there is one of the items which he suggests which is not the policy of the party on this side of the House. Every one of these items is what we are endeavouring to accomplish to-day. We are endeavouring to abolish the middleman by establishing State enterprises, and we are en-

deavouring to bring about a better banking system through the Commonwealth Bank, and it is only by such means that the people will be relieved of the oppression of those monopolies which are dominating the world to-day. I want to say a few words in regard to the increases to the civil servants as obtained through the appeal board. At the outset I admit that the Government are in a sense in an anomalous position. They were responsible for the creation of this appeal board, which to all intents and purposes is an arbitration court. We as a party have fought for awards of the arbitration court to stand without an appeal to any higher court, and I cannot for the life of me see how the Government in the present instance can do other than give the increases which have been awarded by the board. I realise the fact that glaring anomalies have been created, but even though that be so, we have to give the board credit for giving their verdicts on the information which was before them, and I cannot for the life of me see how the Government can repudiate those findings. With regard to the instruction which has been issued that no civil servants who are in receipt of over £156 per annum shall get any increments this year, I have heard it whispered that this is not to apply to all those in receipt of that sum. In some of these cases the officers were appointed at a different period from others, and they are going to enjoy the benefits of the increments, while others drawing the same salaries will not receive any increments this year. I hope that the Government will not take that stand but that if they are going to draw a line of demarkation at a certain salary they should adhere to it, irrespective of the date on which the recipient of that salary was appointed to his position. If they are not going to grant any increases then the Government should adhere to that policy. They should not give increases to some and refuse them to others. All should stand on exactly the same footing. I am grieved at the fact that the Government have not been able to see their way to pay the full amount of municipal and roads board sub-

sidies. I admit that the position is a very difficult one, but I am going to lay the responsibility on hon. members opposite and the members of the Country party. If members go through the Estimates carefully they must realise, as I said at the beginning, that there is no chance of altering the situation unless we are willing to agree to increased taxation, and it was the duty of members sitting in Opposition to say to the Premier, "We realise the position and we are willing to assist you in the introduction of increased taxation." The Premier endeavoured to do this, but I am not going to say now that the measure which was submitted was what should have been brought in.

Mr. Allen: What about starting with ourselves?

Mr. Munsie: We are perfectly willing and will embrace the opportunity.

Mr. Allen: We will give it to you.

[*Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If we bring in a system of taxation it will apply to members here just as it will apply to outside persons, but it is absolutely unfair for members to come forward and suggest that we should bring about retrenchment in the public service. Hon. members opposite have suggested retrenchment. Their desire is to throw someone out of work.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Certainly not.

Mr. Allen: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Members opposite want to do what the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) did a few years ago, drive them out into the country to starve. The way to overcome the difficulty is for hon. members to face it honestly and say, "We believe that the wealthy section of the community, many of whom are enjoying just as great incomes to-day as they were doing before the war and the drought, should pay something additional towards enabling the State to tide over the existing state of affairs." Property owners in the City are not receiving anything less in the way of rents than they were receiving in normal times, though we know that in many cases business has fallen considerably.

Mr. S. Stubbs: And the rates have gone up.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I do not know then on what system the City Council levies rates. If they increase their rates as a business falls, then I am sorry indeed for the ratepayers. The fact remains that business in many instances has fallen in Perth, but the owners of property are receiving the same rents to-day as they were drawing before the trouble began, and it is only fair that those people who are deriving incomes not through any efforts of their own but simply because they hold something which the community gives a value to, and the community increases the value of—those people should be compelled to pay something additional to tide the State over its trying period.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Do you not realise that you have two millions more than we had?

Mr. Munsie: You know that is not so.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is so and the figures have been printed by yourselves.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is useless paying attention to the interjections of the member for Northam. I want to make a few remarks with reference to some statements made by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) who endeavoured to point out to this Chamber what a heaven-born financier Sir George Turner was when he took charge of affairs in Victoria during the financial trouble in that State. The member for Bunbury went on to say that we wanted a strong man here, a man who would go in for retrenchment. Such a man, to my mind, would bring about privation on the community.

Mr. Thomas: I never said that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is what the hon. member meant.

Mr. Thomas: No.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If a Treasurer attempted to do in this State what Sir George Turner did in Victoria, Western Australia would find itself in a position from which it would not recover for many years.

Mr. S. Stubbs: It did not kill Victoria.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I have as great a knowledge of Victoria as my friend and I know also that what Sir George Turner did in Victoria did not pull that State out of the trouble it was in. What assisted Victoria to get out of its difficulties was the goldfields of Western Australia. Thousands would have starved in Victoria if it had not been for the goldfields of this State. They came here at that time and if we look up the money order returns which were published monthly in the newspapers, we will find that an enormous amount of money was sent from this State through that channel to Victoria. The amount which Victoria received was more than double that which was sent to every other part of the world, running into nearly £50,000 a month. It was that money which tided Victoria over its difficulties and helped it out of the slough into which it had drifted. The opportunity of Western Australia benefitting in a similar manner is not an immediate prospect. It would be a disgrace to this State were we to go in for unnecessary retrenchment. I have no objection to anomalies being removed as far as possible. But we will always have anomalies in a big service. Now the question I want to deal with particularly and which I promised the leader of the Opposition I would refer to is the way in which we should try to relieve the State at the present time. There are two methods which I think we might adopt.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Increased taxation.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I will tell the hon. member if he will possess his soul in patience. The hon. gentleman being a member of the wealthy class is in terrible dread of taxation. Let me draw attention to the position of the State in regard to its sinking fund. I know I will be met with the argument that we borrowed our money on the understanding that a sinking fund was to be established.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Labour Government reduced it from one to half per cent.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The party to which the hon. member belongs introduced the Bill.

Mr. Thomas: He is not responsible. Do not take any notice of him.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The hon. member is absolutely irresponsible when he makes statements like that. In 1911-12 the deficit was reduced with the aid of the surplus from the previous year of £13,299 to £121,110. In that year we paid into sinking fund £141,580. In 1912-13 our deficit for the year was £190,000, and at the end of the year it aggregated £311,000, and we paid into sinking fund in that year £244,000. In 1913-14 the deficit for the year was £135,000, and the accumulated deficit at the end of the year was £446,000, and we paid into sinking fund that year £250,000. In the three years we paid into sinking fund a total of £636,000, and our deficit for the same period was £446,000. Is it not absurd that we should be borrowing money and paying it into a sinking fund and then debiting our revenue account with it?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Your Labour platform requires that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It does not.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It does.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If the hon. member attends to his own platform he will do better.

Mr. Munsie: He does not know his own platform leave alone ours.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Some steps should be taken to remedy this absurdity. The contributions to sinking fund should be an investment of surpluses, and when we have a deficit we should not use borrowed money upon which interest has to be paid, pay it into a sinking fund, and then debit the revenue account with it. If we had not had a sinking fund our revenue account would have shown a surplus.

Mr. Male: No, you would have spent it all.

Mr. Nairn: Other Treasurers in Western Australia have had to pay into a sinking fund.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I do not deny that.

Mr. Nairn: Then why do you want to get out of it?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The position is absurd. This is a matter which should be taken into consideration by the Government immediately.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why do not the Government live within their means?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Why does not the hon. member get some sense?

Mr. Allen: That is not an answer to a straightforward question.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I wish to deal with the question of increased taxation. I know my friends opposite do not like any suggestion in that direction.

Mr. Allen: Are you game to submit to a reduction of £100 per annum on your salary? It is a straightforward question, and you will not answer it.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I wish to point out that in this State, land and income taxes are lower than in any State in Australia. If members look up the last page of the report of the Commissioner of Taxation they will find that the people in this State pay far below those of any other State in land and income tax.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are not we the least developed of the States?

Mr. Nairn: Victoria pays a lower rate.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Last year the town lands, including the metropolitan area, the goldfields and country towns, of a total area of 43,604 acres assessed, paid £20,640, or equivalent to 9s. 5½d. per acre. The country lands of this State, totalling 13,895,000 acres, paid £16,184, or a fraction over a farthing per acre. If we take the lands in the metropolitan area alone, we find that 24,149 acres paid £17,537, or 14s. 6¼d. per acre. Country lands are never subjected to an excessive valuation.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are not they?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: No; the enormous values are placed upon town lands, and especially lands in the cities.

Mr. Griffiths: Look at the thousands of acres of country lands lying idle.

Mr. Smith: In Western Australia they tax a farmer before he goes into occupation.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Thirteen million acres of country lands paid only £16,000, or a fraction over a farthing per acre.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That includes pastoral leases.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: These figures prove that if we increase the land tax it will not prove oppressive to the agriculturist. The men who will pay the greater portion of any increased taxation will be the owners of valuable city properties, and this will prove of enormous assistance to the settlers on country lands. If a man puts his land to proper use, he will never feel the infinitesimal amount of the tax. The individual who is the curse of the country and a hardship to the legitimate settler is the man who holds his land out of use. He, and not the man who puts his land to legitimate use, is the one who feels the burden of increased taxation. The Country party ought to study this question, and if they do they will find that every writer and student on the question points out that it is for the benefit of settlers on agricultural lands.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What, to be taxed?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If members of the Country party can combat the arguments of political economists, let them bring their arguments forward. I am satisfied that the men who oppose taxation in the interests of the farmers are those like the member for Northam, men who own enormous tracts of land and do not put them to proper and legitimate use, but hold them in order to derive the increment which will eventually accrue. In regard to an increase in the income tax, those people who to-day are not suffering any depreciation in their income should undoubtedly pay a greater amount.

Mr. Allen: Who are they? Only members of Parliament.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I have pointed out a number of them to the hon. member, but if he cannot follow my arguments I cannot give him the brains to enable him to do so. The owners of city property have not suffered any depreciation of income.

Mr. Allen: Of course they have. You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There are hundreds of people in this State whose incomes have not been reduced.

Mr. Allen: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Can any member mention a mining manager in this State—some of whom draw enormous incomes—who has suffered a reduction in consequence of the troubles through which the State is passing?

Mr. S. Stubbs: How do you know they have not suffered a reduction?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I know it for a fact.

Mr. Male: Dozens of them have.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If they had done so, the world would know of it. There are men who are willing to wave the patriotic flag and talk patriotism and suggest what people should do to assist the Empire, but those people should do something to assist their own State. Western Australia is passing through a troublous time, and even if we are not suffering greatly on account of the war, we are suffering from the effects of the war and drought combined.

Mr. Allen: What are you prepared to do?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The cause of the trouble is beside the question. We are passing through trying times, and it behoves every section of the community to bear its share of the burden and do something to relieve the country at this juncture. Those who have wealth should agree to being taxed in order to tide the State over this trying period.

Mr. Allen: But you want to start with yourself.

The Minister for Works: What have you paid to the relief fund?

Mr. Allen: That is my business.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.55]: We have been told several times since the opening of Parliament that not carping criticism but rather constructive criticism is required, and when the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) began his speech I was in hopes that he would give us something of constructive character. On this side of the House we

desire to afford assistance to every section of the community.

The Minister for Works: We want to see you do it.

Mr. THOMSON: We are prepared to do it, but we are not at present administering the affairs of the country.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Are you sorry for that?

Mr. THOMSON: I do not know. We are able at present only to offer suggestions, and I have one or two to offer. While I intend to speak more particularly on matters affecting the agricultural areas, I would like to assure representatives of the mining constituencies that if any desirable measure to assist the goldfields areas comes before the House, I will give it my strongest support. We have heard a good deal about economy, and no doubt owing to the present state of our finances, economy will have to be exercised. I know of no better place where the Government can start than in the House of Parliament itself. If so be it that the civil servants and employees of the State have to submit to reductions of salary, I maintain that we, as members of Parliament, should set them an example.

Mr. Munsie: We all quite agree with that.

Mr. THOMSON: Those public servants would be able to bear their portion of the burden more cheerfully if they knew that members of Parliament would submit to reductions of their salaries in equal proportion.

Mr. Hudson: Do you suggest they are not already bearing a burden?

Mr. THOMSON: I am suggesting that if economies have to be exercised, we should start on our own salaries. We should not say to employees of the State, "Do as we say," but "Do as we do," and if we adopt this course I am confident we shall be acting on right lines.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Will that solve the difficulty?

Mr. THOMSON: It will be a step in the right direction. I do not intend to deal at length with our State business affairs, but I consider the State butchery—

Mr. McDowall: What would you propose in the way of a reduction of members' salaries?

Mr. THOMSON: Anything up to £50.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Would you favour the War Emergency measure?

Mr. THOMSON: No. Dealing with our State trading concerns, I consider the State butcher shops might reasonably be dropped by the Government.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: They are paying.

Mr. THOMSON: They made a profit of something like £16 10s. on a turnover of £21,000. This is a point I want to stress. If the Government are going to establish butcher shops right through the State so that the people of the State can receive the alleged cheaper price I might support them.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Where are they going to get the money from?

Mr. THOMSON: As far as my district is concerned, the price of meat has not been reduced one farthing. I certainly fail to see why the metropolitan area should have all the benefits conferred on them. The Government should, I think, drop the butcher shops or give the whole of the State the benefits? As far as State steamers are concerned, I think, at any rate, some of them should be dropped. I am not saying I am totally opposed to the State steamers, because where people have no opportunities of railway facilities and the State can give the people the facilities of travelling to and from the metropolis I am in favour of State steamers. In regard to State brickworks, the member for Hannans made a statement that through the institution of brick works the price of bricks has been reduced by 5s. per thousand. That is absolutely inaccurate. The price of bricks in the metropolis is exactly what it was prior to the State brickworks being established.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: What is the price?

Mr. Munsie: I am prepared to produce documentary evidence as to the price of bricks prior to the announcement of the establishment of State brickworks and a fortnight later they were 5s. per thousand dearer.

Mr. THOMSON: I can give the hon. member documentary evidence as to my

statement. The Government think that they can get £6,500 revenue from brick-works during the remainder of the financial year. It is absolutely impossible to do that. The Government are not making bricks at the present time. In connection with the implement works, under present conditions these works cannot be successfully run. I know this for a fact, that implements have been sent from the implement works at North Fremantle and it has been four or five weeks after the machinery has left the works before the people in the country have received the advice notes. I visited the implement works recently, and I wanted to know the reason why that was so, and, judge of my surprise, when I found the clerical portion of the implement works is carried out from Perth. I am going to make a suggestion as to how the Government might curtail this expenditure. Statements have been made from this side of the House frequently that the Government trading concerns were not paying, and members from the other side have stated that they are paying. If the Government are so sure that their trading concerns are what they claim them to be, then they should appoint a Royal Commission to go into the whole matter and agree to abide by the decision of that Commission.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That may be an unnecessary expenditure.

Mr. THOMSON: Hon. members will agree with me that that would for ever silence criticism. Members on the Government side are asking for favourable and helpful criticism.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We are not asking for anything.

Mr. THOMSON: I am showing a way out of the difficulty. I am showing how the Government can prove to the people of the State, if their trading concerns are what they claim them to be, that the probable result of an inquiry by a Royal Commission would mean very effective economies.

The Minister for Works: Did you ever know one yet?

Mr. THOMSON: I have not had the experience the hon. member has had. I

am endeavouring to point out what I consider a possible solution of the difficulty. I go further, and recognising in the implement and other works that a large amount of money is involved, if the Government are in favour, I give another suggestion. They might take into consideration the advisability of carrying on the works under a trust, thus making them entirely independent of the Government. This would be similar to the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The Minister for Works: Who have you been talking to down there?

Mr. THOMSON: I am giving my own ideas. I am not having any blame placed on any civil servant.

The Minister for Works: It is very strange that I got the same idea in a letter a few days ago.

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly, great minds may run in the same groove. It is a suggestion I consider well worthy of consideration by the Government. Another matter I wish to deal with is the rabbit-proof fence. It is amazing to me, when I discover that the interest paid on the fence is £13,100.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is £18,000.

Mr. THOMSON: Sinking fund is £3,034, salaries and maintenance, £14,594, the annual cost to the State being £30,728. The revenue approximately is £200. What I want to aim at is, recognising the enormous amount of money the fence is costing the State, and recognising that we have rabbits in the State, why are the Government prohibiting the use of rabbits commercially. For the eleven months ended November last we imported frozen rabbits to the number of 250,320 of the value of £5,536. Under the law at the present time, unless permission from the Minister is obtained, a man is absolutely prohibited from making use of rabbits commercially. I should like to inform the House of two statements which have been made to me during the recent election campaign by residents out east of the rabbit-proof fence. One man made the statement—I will give his name if necessary—that if the Government would allow him to send the rabbits he can catch

to market he would be independent of the Agricultural Bank for assistance. Another man made this remark, that if he was allowed to send away rabbits which he caught on his holding every week he would be able to pay his storekeeper's bill. A sum of £5,536 was paid during the 11 months of last year, and we are not allowing rabbits to be made a commercial success in this State. The Government wish to reduce the cost of living. Here is a chance, and it will also give our settlers east a possibility of making a living. I commend the suggestion to the earnest consideration of the Government. I do not advocate that the Government should do away with the rabbit-proof fence, but they should make use of the rabbits commercially and give those persons along the rabbit-proof fence an opportunity of making a living and give the people in the metropolitan area and other centres an opportunity of getting a cheap article of food. I propose to deal with the railways, and it may possibly be information to members to know that the agricultural industry has paid directly through railway freight 28 per cent. of the railway revenue.

The Minister for Mines: They have paid the same proportion for services rendered as other people of the State.

Mr. THOMSON: I am going to prove that they have paid a greater proportion than they should have done. The figures are: wool, £12,058; hay, straw, chaff, £66,403; wheat, £138,607; grain, excluding wheat, £45,429; potatoes, £11,278; agricultural machinery, £15,457; dairy produce, £7,107; fruit and garden produce, £34,253; fertilisers, £33,830; and I am including live stock, because these belong to agricultural and horticultural industry, £57,813, or a total of £422,234, which was directly paid by the agricultural and horticultural industry of the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What year is that for?

Mr. THOMSON: For 1913.

Mr. O'Loughlen: This year will tell a different tale.

Mr. THOMSON: The member for Forrest has made the remark that this year will tell a different tale, but that

does not go to prove the importance of the agricultural and horticultural industry of the State, more particularly to the railways of the State. I consider that the people want to be educated to the value of the agricultural and horticultural industry of the State.

The Minister for Mines: Everybody recognises that.

Mr. THOMSON: I am going to reiterate it.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. THOMSON: Before tea I was drawing the attention of the Committee to the fact that the agricultural and horticultural industry had practically paid 28 per cent. of the revenue earned by the Railway Department. Now, if this industry has paid directly 28 per cent., how much has it paid indirectly?

Mr. Bolton: About one per cent.

Mr. THOMSON: I am afraid my friend on the other side is joking. I believe we can say that indirectly it contributes—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The lot.

Mr. THOMSON: Fully another 20 per cent.

The Minister for Mines: It is a risky thing to speculate about the indirect contribution.

Mr. THOMSON: Then, I will make a direct assertion, and say that the percentage is more than 20.

Mr. Bolton: There are some vacancies for high positions.

Mr. THOMSON: I come now to the increased freights which the Railway Department imposed upon the farming community last year. In the Commissioner's report it is stated that the increased fares and freights realised a total of £44,304, of which amount the agricultural industry contributed 80 per cent. There is another definite statement. The amount of the increase is made up as follows: breeding and train load concessions, £441; district railway toll, which was imposed only on the 26th January last year and therefore had been in operation for only about six months, £14,590; in-

creased fertiliser freights, £19,589; agricultural machinery increased freights, £849. As to this last item I propose to read to the Committee a couple of letters. From the other side we hear a good deal about the farming community being spoon-fed, and getting such a deal of consideration from the Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: This is the way they are spoon-feeding the farmer.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. I wish to show how the Railway Department are spoon-feeding the farming community. Here is a letter I received from one of my constituents. It is headed "Linger and Die Farm."

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I thought the letter would be signed "Pro Bono Publico."

Mr. THOMSON: No. This is a genuine case—no "Mother of Seven." The letter reads—

I would like to draw your attention to the following matter. I bought a 10 furrow skim plough from the State works, which was landed at Gnowangerup on the 16th December, 1914. The first payment on that plough would be £14 10s. for the year. The railway freight amounted to £16 18s. 4d.—

That is helping the farmer!

which is more than the first year's instalment on the plough. Could you please explain how it comes to that amount?

Mr. Bolton: Did you explain it? What reply did you send?

Mr. THOMSON: I will give the Railway Department's explanation.

Mr. Bolton: That is what we want to get at.

Mr. THOMSON: The Railway Department wrote as follows:—

In reply to yours of the 21st ultimo having reference to freight on a 10 furrow cultivator plough forwarded to you by the State Implement and Engineering Works, Rocky Bay, on the 9th ultimo, I beg to inform you that this machine required the use of a bogie truck and the freight charges were raised on a 4-ton minimum in accordance with the regulations.

The Railway Department have certain rules and regulations which, apparently, it is absolutely impossible to disregard.

The charge you paid, £16 18s. 4d., is correct. I regret I am unable to grant you any rebate.

Do hon. members know the weight of that plough? Its weight is 1 ton 9 hundredweight 3 quarters.

The Minister for Mines: The weight is not the only thing.

Mr. THOMSON: If that is helping the farmer, I say, on behalf of the farmers, "Save us from our friends."

Mr. Bolton: You know that the plough is taken by measurement, and not by weight.

Mr. THOMSON: I am thoroughly well aware of that. But if the hon. member means to tell me that for 1 ton 9 hundredweight 3 quarters £16 18s. 4d. is a reasonable charge in respect of an article of a total value of only £40, I am prepared to sit down and let the Government continue to run the Railway Department as it is being run at the present time.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: How many miles was the plough carried?

Mr. THOMSON: It was carried to Gnowangerup. I am not prepared to say exactly how many miles the distance is. I am merely drawing attention to one of the anomalies in our railway charges. To take a plough of the value of £40 a distance of about 250 miles costs £16 18s. 4d.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The cost has nothing to do with it. A jarrah tree would cost you nothing.

Mr. THOMSON: All I can say is that this is an anomaly which should be rectified. Let hon. members consider the case of an unfortunate farmer buying his machinery on time payment, and having to pay on a machine weighing 30 hundredweight railway freight amounting to more than the first year's instalment on the machine. Certainly, there is something wrong. I am prepared to admit that the railway regulations say that the plough shall be taken at the minimum

for the truck required; but in a special case such as this, in the case of transport of agricultural implements, some discretion and commonsense should be exercised. Even if the plough requires a 4-ton truck, why not carry it at its actual weight?

Mr. Bolton: A bogie truck is a 12-ton truck.

Mr. THOMSON: Then the hon. member knows more about a bogie truck than the Acting Chief Traffic Manager knows.

Mr. Bolton: No; but I know more than you do.

Mr. THOMSON: I claim to know just as much about the railway freighting of agricultural implements as the hon. member knows.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Read the Railway Department's letter slowly and carefully.

Mr. THOMSON: I am showing an absolute anomaly, resulting in injustice to one of our settlers; and then hon. members opposite ask me to read the Railway Department's explanation slowly.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Read it to slow music.

Mr. Bolton: I say a bogie truck was required to carry that plough, and I say it was carried on the 4-ton minimum. See if that is not correct.

Mr. THOMSON: This is the letter of the Acting Chief Traffic Manager—

I beg to inform you that this machine required the use of a bogie truck and the freight charges were raised on a 4-ton minimum in accordance with the regulations.

Mr. Bolton: Exactly what I said, and you disputed it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No. What you were disputing was the raising of the freight charge.

Mr. Bolton: The hon. member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) should withdraw.

Mr. THOMSON: I will withdraw nothing. I maintain that the Railway Department or the Government ought not to impose such a charge on an agricultural implement such as this.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What would you charge on a steamship?

Mr. THOMSON: If Ministers would put their steamships on a truck and send them to Gnowangerup, it would be a good place to keep those steamships. They would certainly not cost the same amount of money there as they cost on the water.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It would pay the Government to pay the freight on those steamers to Gnowangerup.

Mr. THOMSON: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that of the total amount of the increased railway freights imposed by the Railway Department last year, the agricultural and horticultural industries directly paid 80 per cent.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They have had 80 per cent. of the use of the railways.

Mr. THOMSON: I will show directly that the agricultural and horticultural industries are not getting a fair deal. Manure freights were raised, and that increase is responsible for £19,588.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Then the Railway Department had a loss of that much last year.

Mr. THOMSON: I maintain that the Railway Department can carry no article which pays them better than manure. It would pay the Department to carry manure at a loss. Possibly that statement may amuse hon. members opposite, but I can assure them that there is no article carried on the railways from which the railways derive a greater return than that from fertilisers.

The Minister for Mines: Fertilisers give a return to the farmer as well, and therefore he should be in a better position to pay.

Mr. THOMSON: I wish to draw a comparison. What I say, I say with all due respect to the present Government; and I intend my remarks to apply to all Governments. We know that when the Government proposed to increase the freight on fertilisers, the settlers wished to send a deputation to the Premier on the subject. In my district I was respon-

sible for endeavouring to arrange a deputation to protest against the proposed increases. However, the Premier refused to receive a deputation.

The Minister for Mines: That was a belated request—about three months old.

Mr. THOMSON: With all respect to the Minister for Mines I say it was not a belated request. Again with all due respect to members of the present Ministry, I maintain that no matter how sure the Minister may be in his own mind that a certain course should be adopted, if the persons affected are desirous of placing their views before him they have a right to appear before the Minister, whoever he may be, and lay their views before him, and, if they think fit to do so, raise their voices in protest against any action of the Government. In this connection I wish to emphasise that I look upon Ministers as only the servants of the public.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The people concerned could send their protest to the *Sunday Times*.

Mr. THOMSON: The privilege of being received as a deputation was not allowed to the farming community. I maintain that the farmers should at least have been heard.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Certainly.

Mr. THOMSON: I wish to point out to hon. members that it is possible for the Minister inadvertently to get on the wrong track.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He is always on the wrong track.

Mr. THOMSON: It is possible for the Minister's responsible advisers to be advocating the adoption of a certain course which, however, is not advisable in the interests of the State, and which may injuriously affect a certain section of the community. Then that section of the community, I claim, has a right to be heard, and the Minister of the day, whoever he may be—I am not singling out the members of the present Ministry—should allow those aggrieved an opportunity of laying their grievances before him. It is most remarkable that at this particular juncture the whole farming community were desirous of waiting

on the Premier, and were refused that opportunity. The hon. gentleman—I am sorry that he is not here—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I will tell him.

Mr. THOMSON: I will tell him myself to-morrow, or he will probably read this in the newspapers. I am not saying this in any spirit of carping criticism—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is helpful criticism.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, it is helpful criticism; and I hope the Minister will profit by it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He cannot profit by anything.

Mr. THOMSON: I wish to point out that at this juncture the representatives of the coal mining industry having a grievance were received by the Minister. I wish to know why one particular section of the community was allowed to lay its grievances before the Minister whilst another section was denied that opportunity. Any section of the community desirous of expressing their views to the Minister should be received by the Minister. Surely it is only common justice that people should be able to place their views before the Premier. It is generally admitted that the railways are supposed to belong to the people. In my opinion the terminal charge of 1s. per ton on our district railways, which was re-imposed by the Government, is not a fair charge. A farmer living three or four miles along a spur line has to pay 1s. a ton, notwithstanding that if he were 30 miles out from the main line the charge would be the same.

The Minister for Mines: That policy was initiated by your party.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We abolished it and you reinstated it.

The Minister for Mines: The late Minister for Lands (Hon. J. Mitchell) said it was of no value.

Mr. THOMSON: And it is the only occasion on which you have accepted his dictum. However, let us consider the case of a farmer with 500 acres of wheat yielding an average of 12 bushels, which

represents a dead weight of 160 tons. Such a farmer living on a spur line, only five miles out from the main line, is £8 worse off than his more fortunate competitor living on the main line. Again, consider the case of a man who is desirous of sending produce along the Kojonup line, and has to pay on every ton of goods so sent 1s., whether it is hauled 10 miles or 50 miles; and because it crosses the main line and enters the Nyabing line, he is charged another 1s. a ton.

Mr. Bolton: If he is required to pay two terminal charges that is a genuine complaint.

Mr. THOMSON: He should not be required to pay one terminal charge. The railways belong to the people, and a man living on a spur line has as much right to full privileges as the man living on the main line. He pays for the services he gets. Why, then, should he pay 1s. a ton more than the man who is on the main line?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Because the line is not paying.

Mr. Willmott: He is penalised for his pluck in going out there.

Mr. THOMSON: Let me read the Commissioner's report in reference to this. It is as follows:—

It must also be borne in mind that the statement is prepared as if each separate district railway was a separate entity, as no satisfactory method of crediting such lines with the proportion of the revenue which they add to the main line traffic receipts has yet been discovered. So far as results go therefore they must be regarded as approximate.

The Commissioner admits that these railways are showing a loss, but he declares that it is only approximate. The Commissioner will not tell us what they are losing. Why then should these people pay 1s. more than those on the main line? The report continues—

And the benefits derived from opening enormous areas of country to settlement for agriculture or for ex-

ploitation of mineral or timber cannot be properly overlooked.

Now, here is a letter from one of my constituents at Gnowangerup, showing what the Railway Department charge the people living on these spur lines and what conveniences are furnished—

Although this district has some thousands of sheep, we have only a few portable hurdles for trucking sheep, which have to be hauled on a separate truck up and down our spur line to any siding where stock have to be railed. A yard consists of six hurdles, not even lamb-proof, a heavy clumsy race. The farmer has to unload these hurdles (construct a yard far too small to hold a number of sheep) and afterwards take down and load again on to the truck. Stock railed here to catch North Fremantle yard on Wednesday would have to be trucked on Friday before, or actually five days on the road; the alternative is a long drive by road to the Great Southern.

There is one of the great conveniences our people have on these spur lines, and for which they pay 1s. a ton more. Not even a sheep yard! Let me point out another anomaly and show how it is affecting those on the spur lines. A small truck of sheep sent from Nyabing to Perth would cost in freight 6s. 4d. more than the same truck would cost on the main line. If members on that side can convince me that these are fair and reasonable charges, I am prepared to sit down, but I am confident that they will recognise that these are unjust charges.

The Minister for Mines: When we have no more anomalies we will have the millenium.

Mr. THOMSON: The people at Muradup on the Kojonup line have endeavoured to get from the Commissioner a pair of scales on which to weigh their produce. The request has been turned down with the explanation, "We cannot afford it." This, notwithstanding that it is estimated that this season's produce to be sent away from the siding will aggregate 750 tons. It is for this lack of conveniences that the settlers

living on the spur lines have to pay 1s. per ton more than those on the main line; they have no check on the weights which they send forward, but have to take what the Railway Department and the people at this end like to send along. They are at the mercy of the Railway Department and those who buy here.

The Minister for Mines: They would have to accept the Railway Department's weights in any case.

Mr. THOMSON: But the Railway Department makes mistakes.

The Minister for Mines: But never admits it.

Mr. THOMSON: No, or very seldom. Still, there are times when they are compelled to admit it. Why cannot these people have a weighing machine, seeing that it is only a matter of some £10 at the outside? All along the main line weighing machines are to be found on practically every station. Why then should not these people on the spur lines have the same benefits? These are some of the grievances we in the country have to complain of. We consider that it is unjust for the Railway Department to charge the agricultural industry 80 per cent. of the increased freights, and we also say emphatically that the 1s. per ton terminal charge which the Railway Department is imposing along these spur lines is not only unjust, but an iniquity. The railways belong to the people, and there should not be preferential treatment. I propose to offer a suggestion by which the Railway Department can get a considerable increase in revenue from a branch at present showing a direct loss. In his report for 1913, the Commissioner makes the following statement:—

The net results of the passenger service show, therefore, a loss of 1s. per train mile in the cost of working alone. On every train mile of passenger service, according to the report, we are losing 1s. in working expenses alone, and if we calculate the interest charge of 1s. 9½d. we find that, practically speaking, on every train mile of passenger service run we are losing 2s. 9½d. Again, just note how much better catered for are the

people in the densely populated centres than are these in the country. Supposing I wish to travel on the Great Southern line a distance of 12 miles, say from Katanning to Broomehill, a second class return ticket would cost me 1s. 11d. If I want to travel from Fremantle to Perth, or from Perth to Bellevue, which is also 12 miles, I can do so for 1s. 2d., and on three days a week I can travel for 10d. I want to know why certain sections of the community have this preferential treatment. It is always stated that by bringing everything under Government control every man will have an equal opportunity and equal treatment. I want to ask whether this is equal treatment on our State-owned railways, that a man in the country travelling 12 miles has to pay 1s. 11d., while another man in the metropolitan area has to pay only 1s. 2d. Then you have to consider the difference in the services they have respectively. In our district, a man desiring to travel from Katanning to Broomehill has to catch a train at 2.30 in the morning. It is not everyone who has a vehicle, a horse, a sulky, or even a motor car, consequently they have to take the train.

Member: They might walk.

Mr. THOMSON: Some of them might walk, probably it would be quicker if they did so. It certainly would be quicker than in the instance I will now give. A man catches his train at 2.30 in the morning and travels the distance to the next town, and has to remain in that town until 11.30 at night, and for that he has to pay 9d. more than the people living in the metropolitan area. Again, quoting from the Commissioner's report. He says—

In the case of the suburban traffic the difficulty is that full loads for complete train journeys are out of the question, with the consequence that the receipts derived from the very low fares paid by those who fill the train for a small portion of its run are not sufficient to cover the cost of the complete run to its terminus.

That means that a suburban train leaves its terminus crowded, and loses the greater portion of its load before it has

completed one-third of its journey. The Premier was good enough to let me have the return I asked for, and it may be news to members to know that in the metropolitan area the number of passengers travelling within the inner suburban area last year was 13,280,380, and in the outer suburban area, 103,677. I have not touched the goldfields suburban traffic. Going back again to the Commissioner's report. He says that the train loses the greater portion of its load before completing the journey. If we divide the number of passengers—13 millions—by three, it will give us this result: that we have 4,426,793 passengers practically who travel the full 12 miles. I am working it on this basis to show what the department is losing, and how much more the country people have to pay than those living in a more favoured area. If those living in the metropolitan area who travel on our railways paid exactly the same railway fare as those living in the country have to pay for travelling a similar distance, the railways would have been better off by £166,042. At a time when revenue is required, why does the Railway Department pick out the agricultural industry and make it pay 80 per cent. of the increased charges when it is admitted in the Commissioner's own report that for every passenger train mile the department is losing 1s., plus 1s. 9d. sinking fund. I want also to point out that of the £44,304 which the Railway Department raised last year, the agricultural industry paid £35,468. I maintain that in the metropolitan area, that is the outer suburban area, and also the goldfields suburban area, a sum equal to from £80,000 to £100,000 can easily be got from increased fares. We in the country are quite prepared to bear our share of the burden, to pay just charges, but we object to being singled out to pay 80 per cent. of increased freights. I hope Ministers will "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." They are looking for revenue, and I am giving them suggestions where they can get revenue.

The Minister for Works: Place it on the other fellow, so long as you do not place it on me.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not want to place it on the other fellow. I want you, if you are not prepared to raise the suburban railway rates, to at least let the people in the country have the same rates as obtain here.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is in the country that we are losing money.

Mr. THOMSON: No, not according to the Commissioner's report, and he ought to know. Here is your officer, to whom you are paying £2,000 a year, and in his report he says that it is in the suburban area that you are losing it. I consider the Government made a mistake when they did away with port to port rates. I feel confident that the Railway Department, between Perth and Albany, since those charges have been done away with, have lost on an average between £2,000 and £3,000 a year. If any good had been obtained from the abolition of those charges, I would agree with it, but what has been the action of the Government? They have simply forced that traffic into the hands of the shipping companies. It would pay the Government to carry goods at port to port rates, because as I have said, otherwise you are simply driving traffic into other hands.

The Minister for Works: What ships take goods for Albany?

Mr. THOMSON: The Melbourne Shipping Co. and other inter-State boats.

The Minister for Works: They will not take cargo.

Mr. THOMSON: Let me tell the Minister for Works that I know they will and do take cargo. I have had material brought from Perth and Fremantle sent round by boat, and thence by rail from Albany to Katanning. While the Railway Department refuses to recognise this insofar as goods are concerned, they are recognising it in regard to passengers. Those who live on the main line and those living in Albany have the privilege of travelling to Perth at a 30s. excursion rate. A passenger joining the train at Katanning also has to pay 30s., but if one is unfortunate enough to live at Kojonup it will cost him 33s. 8d. This is a reply I received when I raised this point—

As regards excursion fares, Kojonup enjoys all the facilities afforded to all other branch line stations.

"Given all the facilities," I want to emphasise that. Why should those living on the branch lines have to pay more than those living on the main line?

Holiday excursion tickets are issued generally at Christmas and other times and during summer months. Excursion tickets are issued to Albany, Perth, and Fremantle on Fridays and Saturdays.

I want to emphasise this portion also—

Special cheap excursion tickets are issued from main line stations to Perth and Fremantle in competition with the boat, and cannot be applied to the branch line stations.

The Railway Department recognises that they have got boat competition so far as passenger traffic is concerned, and they cater for it by issuing these cheap fares. Why not reinstate the port to port rates? They are a source of revenue from which the Railway Department might get an increased income. May I make the suggestion that the Railway Department should consider the question of instituting country excursions. These are in existence in the Eastern States, where at certain periods of the year the farming community have an opportunity of travelling to the metropolis at cheap rates. It is well worth the consideration of the Railway Department to inaugurate what is called in New South Wales a farmers' excursion. With reference to education, I commend the Government for their education policy. I recognise that the advantages of education render our citizens capable of aspiring to the highest positions in the land. But I want to draw attention to the manner in which the metropolitan areas are treated in this connection, as compared with the way in which the country districts are served. In the metropolitan area we have the university, the technical school, the Modern school—

The Minister for Works: They are open to every child in the State.

Mr. THOMSON: I am aware that the Government are endeavouring to impart agricultural knowledge at the Chapman, Narrogin, Brunswick, and elsewhere. I would suggest to the Government that they should adopt the Queensland method, and send the knowledge out to the children in the agricultural areas. You may establish your experimental farm, your technical colleges, so far as agricultural is concerned in the various centres, but not every farmer is in a position to send his son to those schools. My suggestion is that we should adopt the system in Queensland, where they send the knowledge to the children in the schools. They should be instructed in the theory of agriculture, and also by practical demonstrations. We have to admit that 75 per cent. of the people who have gone on the land in this State are not farmers at all. They have gone on there and gained their knowledge. Let us give the rising generation an opportunity of getting some practical and theoretical knowledge. For instance, the children at school could be taught how to analyse the soils. We have in the House a number of hon. members representing agricultural interests. I venture to say that if we asked them what quantity of manure should be put on the soil, and what quantity of seed should be used, we should get different replies from all of them. If the children are taught in these agricultural areas—and if there are those who are desirous of having that knowledge imparted to them—how to analyse the soils, they will probably be able to effect a considerable saving to the State in the future. As a matter of fact, most of our farmers, I am sorry to say a good many of them, are practically putting in their manures by guess work.

The Attorney General: Would you have every teacher an agricultural expert?

Mr. THOMSON: I commend the Minister for what he has done in the cause of education; he has certainly done good work in that respect. I am not in any way saying that he should stop any

of the movements he has initiated. I believe in education and in knowledge being imparted to the young. I do want those children in our sparsely populated centres to have the same advantages as those children who are living in the more settled portions of the State, namely the metropolitan areas, and other large centres. I would like the department to appoint a special man for this work; a man who has practical knowledge combined with theoretical knowledge, and who will visit these various schools. To-day we have visiting the various schools a technical master who goes along and sees the work that is being done at the schools. If only he was able to go to those schools once a fortnight or even once a week, the knowledge that could be imparted to those children by him would be invaluable to the State at a future period. I suggest that in our sparsely settled districts, we should adopt the system which is in vogue in Queensland where they have travelling teachers. There are places in that State where they cannot get the children together, and 17 teachers travelled 55,320 miles in house to house visits imparting knowledge to the children. I consider that—

Mr. Bolton: Additional expenditure.

Mr. THOMSON: Not necessarily additional expenditure. I would sooner see some of the trading concerns wiped out—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Take away expenditure from the North-West and give it to Kataning.

Mr. THOMSON: Than that our children should be denied the opportunity of obtaining the knowledge that they should receive. This country is just as responsible for the children who are out in the back-blocks as they are for those who live in the metropolitan area.

Mr. McDowall: Surely this country is doing enough in the cause of education.

Mr. THOMSON: Is it not recognised that those children who are 15, 16 or 20 miles from a school, and who have been taken out into those distant areas by

their parents, should have some opportunity of receiving education?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Is there any country in the world which has more educational facilities than this country?

Mr. THOMSON: Even those children who are in the back-blocks are entitled to some consideration, just as those who are living in more central localities.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): How would you do it?

Member: An absurd statement.

The Attorney General: You must run trams for those, I suppose.

Mr. THOMSON: I wish that hon. members would not attempt to be facetious, but would look at these matters in a serious light. It is a very serious matter for those who have children and live in the outskirts of civilisation.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No people in the world are treated in a better way in the matter of education than the people of Western Australia.

The Attorney General: It costs £7,000 a year to carry the children to school.

Mr. THOMSON: Admitted that it costs the department £7,000 to cart the children to the schools, still there are children situated in portions of the State where it is absolutely impossible for them to travel. What is it going to cost the department even if they do put on a half dozen teachers or even 17 teachers as they have done in Queensland? Surely the children of the settlers are entitled to have the same privileges of education as those who are living in the metropolitan area.

The Attorney General: Even then they would have to travel.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not speaking without some positive knowledge on the question. I say that in Queensland this practice exists to-day.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is an absurdity.

Mr. THOMSON: If it is good enough for Queensland it is worth the consideration of the Education Department of this State.

The Attorney General: Queensland is not doing as much as we are.

Mr. THOMSON: This is one of the things that we could copy from Queensland.

The Attorney General: I do not know that there would be any particular advantage in that system over the system adopted here.

Mr. THOMSON: I maintain, with all due respect to the Attorney General, that it would be an advantage to the State to adopt that system here. It would save the children from travelling long distances, and it would be a great advantage to have travelling teachers to impart knowledge to them from house to house. That is really the only additional expense that I have suggested should be incurred by the Government. I leave it to their favourable consideration.

The Attorney General: If we could get the necessary number of children in any centre we would build a school for them and fix a schoolmaster there.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Minister was to have travelling teachers, as I have suggested, in the scattered districts, it would be an enormous benefit to the people living there. The Education Department has gone a long way towards meeting them already, but they should go, in my opinion, a little further by adopting the system that I have just brought forward.

The Attorney General: Tell me in what way.

Mr. THOMSON: I have shown the Government how they could obtain more revenue from the Railways by bringing up the freights and charges to the level of those which have to be paid by persons living in country districts. Everything is being done for the metropolitan area. The metropolitan area, I may say, is now feeling the effects of the drought which the country is suffering from today. It has been brought home to me very forcibly that those living in the metropolitan area are very much dependent upon those living in the country. The hon. member for Gascoyne (Mr. A. Gilchrist) remarked, when he was speaking, that I wish to raise the royalty on

opossum skins. That is not my intention at all. I wish to reduce it. I consider that for any Government to charge a royalty of 3s. or 40 per cent. on skins—

The Minister for Works: How long has that been going on?

Mr. THOMSON: I am only dealing with it as it is at the present time. I suggest that the Government should consider an *ad valorem* royalty. I go so far as to say that I think the royalty on skins is almost an imposition.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why not advocate the abolition of it altogether?

Mr. THOMSON: I would even go as far as to do that. If the Government are determined to extract a royalty from those employed in getting skins, I think it is only common justice to them—to men who leave the comforts of the town to go out and trap those animals—that they should not pay to the Government 40 per cent. on the skins they have the good fortune to get. I leave that matter to the consideration of the Government. I consider that if they charged an *ad valorem* royalty they would be in a very secure position. As the skins rise in value, so of course the royalty obtained by the Government increases. I am going to make another suggestion. The Government are looking for revenue. We have heard a good deal about taxing a man who has wealth. Of course I consider that the man who has wealth should pay his just proportion; each one should pay his proportion no matter what station in life he may occupy. I consider that even though the Government are looking for means of raising revenue, they should not impose direct taxation, but that they should rather tax, what I may call, superfluities. I am not going to say that people should not have any amusement but I commend to the notice of the Government, the question of taxing our amusements. Such a tax could be very easily collected. The whole of the tax—

Mr. McDowall: I do not suppose we have heard of this before.

Mr. THOMSON: I certainly have not given it to the House before.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Are you going to tax everybody else?

Mr. THOMSON: I want to tax the whole community fairly and justly.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): With the exception of Kataning.

Mr. THOMSON: Katanning has paid its fair share, and pays up promptly.

Mr. Bolton: You do not like the Emergency Tax.

Mr. THOMSON: I must confess I do not like it personally. I think the Government could get an enormous amount of revenue from a tax on amusements.

The Minister for Mines: A few thousands a year.

Mr. THOMSON: Even supposing the Government only get a few thousand a year, it would help to reduce the deficit. It will go a little of the way towards that end, at all events.

Mr. Mullany: It will not help to pay for what you have already advocated on the other side.

Mr. THOMSON: I commend the proposition to the Government. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) spoke about the totalisators. I consider that the Government should look into this question. I am not a racing man myself, and I know nothing about it. I do think that a tax on amusements could very easily be imposed and it would not be an infliction on the people?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot deal with taxation during this debate. We are now dealing with administration, and not with legislation. I have given the hon. member a lot of latitude.

Mr. THOMSON: I am sorry I cannot enlarge upon this subject.

The Minister for Mines: We are sorry because you are floundering.

Mr. Allen: If we had you on a hook we would get a good flounder.

Mr. THOMSON: I know what I am talking about. The hon. member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs), when dealing with the State Savings Bank, stated that the people were patronising the Commonwealth Bank from a national point of view and because they had a national

spirit. I maintain that that statement was not correct, and that the reason the Commonwealth Bank have been getting more depositors than the State Savings Bank is that it is due to a force of habit on the part of the community. People from time immemorial have been going to the Post Office to lodge their deposits and that, of course, is where the Commonwealth Bank have a certain amount of pull over us. We have an excellent opportunity of doing something with our State schools children's bank, and I think that this is going to form the nucleus of our future depositors. I think we should endeavour to keep our State Savings Bank to ourselves. It may be that I shall be termed a State's Righter, but, nevertheless, I say it behoves the people of Western Australia to stick to every right they have, for once they lose a right it is gone for ever.

The Minister for Works: I believe in sticking to what pays best.

Mr. THOMSON: We should have what really belongs to us. The Commonwealth Government in endeavouring to take away our State Savings Bank have done something which it was never intended they should do. It has been a source of revenue, and has been a great help to the present and past Governments, and will be a help in the future. If we had not the State Savings Bank, at times the Government would have been in a very peculiar position. I hope the Government will consider the few suggestions I have made. I think some of them are worthy of consideration, more particularly these affecting the railways. I do hope they will rectify many of the glaring anomalies which exist to-day. One anomaly in particular is that a man has had to pay £16 18s. 4d. freight on a plough which only weighs 30 cwt. It is time that something should be done in a matter of this sort. I hope they will remedy that. Does the Minister for Mines approve of such a charge as this being made?

The Minister for Works: That charge has not been put on by this Government, but has been in existence for years.

Mr. Allen: And you continued it.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister for Mines has just made a definite statement, and I am going to disprove it by a letter which I have in my hands. It was written to me by a man last March (1914). He got the same sized plough from the Agricultural Implement Works and it cost him £8 2s. 2d., proving conclusively that this very rate was imposed under the present Minister for Mines' own administration of the Railway Department.

The Minister for Mines: The rate under that class of machinery has not been increased.

Mr. THOMSON: It has been increased. Will the Minister accept the statement made by the Commissioner for Railways when he tells us in his own report that agricultural machinery produced £849. The Minister for Mines cannot get behind that statement. The rates on agricultural machinery have been increased, and I defy the Minister for Mines to prove to the contrary. I hope these anomalies will be rectified and that every portion of the community will be taxed on a fair and just basis, and that those who are living in the country and a long way from the comforts of life will not be made to suffer so many disadvantages. Rather should the Government level up if necessary and place all on the same footing.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin) [8.33]: Seven months of the financial year have passed, and we have before us a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure. To me as a business man, having had 20 years' training in this State, there seems to be a screw loose somewhere in the administration of affairs. The deficiency has been growing at an enormous rate until it has reached the sum of over a million pounds sterling, and it is still increasing at the rate of £3,000 a day. There must be an end to this. Even the Bank of England could not go on losing £3,000 a day for a considerable period. I have no desire, nor have I any intention of adversely criticising the Government in connection with this big deficiency because circumstances over which they have no control are responsible for a certain proportion of the difficulty. But the Pre-

mier when bringing in his statement of receipts and expenditure did not make it clear to the Committee that he was endeavouring to find out where the screws were loose in the administration of the affairs of the State, and he did not give me, at any rate, to understand that he was going to make any investigation.

The Minister for Works: Some of you would howl at any rate if works were stopped.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the Minister for Works will pay attention to me I shall be prepared to listen to him afterwards. He should, as Minister controlling a big department, put an end to many of the anomalies that exist under his control.

The Minister for Works: Consisting of saying "No" to a lot of requests that are made.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Minister controls a department in which I can prove to the satisfaction of myself and to his satisfaction, if he will only listen to reason, there are scores of inspectors employed in connection with the sewerage scheme where one-half could do the work just as efficiently.

The Minister for Works: I have nothing to do with the sewerage.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Then I throw the blame on the late Minister for Works. I am not going to stand here and say that everybody should be taxed except myself. I am going to make a suggestion, and I hope it will be accepted, that members should start with their own salaries, or indeed that a start should be made by the Premier and his Ministers. If the Government were prepared to do that no fair-minded man in the State would object to make some sacrifice.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Pass the emergency tax; that will catch us all.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Honorary Minister will not disturb me with his interjections. The loss by the State of £3,000 a day is not in any way conducive to good government, and it behoves Ministers to do their utmost to prevent this drift. There has been no attempt made, so far, to stop it.

Mr. Bolton: The Government are building unnecessary railways.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The hon. member makes a lot of insane interjections, but he has never given anything to this House that will be of any benefit to the country in any shape or form.

Mr. Bolton: It hurts you.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The railways in the district I represent have paid their way and will continue to do so.

Mr. Bolton: Some of them are absolutely unjustified.

Mr. McDowall: What about the Wagin-Bowelling which shows a loss of £4,000.

Mr. S. STUBBS: These interjections from hon. members are on a par with everything else that they say. They invite us to state how we are to reduce the deficit, and then when we attempt to give them advice across the floor of the House they reply with absurd interjections which show that they have no knowledge of the subject on which they are making their remarks. The State is being run in a manner which will not help to pull us round the corner, and I maintain that from the Ministers downward we in this House should make a commencement by taking 10 per cent. at least off our salaries. There is not the slightest doubt that we cannot continue to pay £4 15s. per head for the upkeep of the civil service. I say unhesitatingly that the cost of administration is growing to such an extent that the public will be up in arms against members of Parliament who sit quietly and watch this growing expenditure on the civil service. I do not say that we have not a really first class civil service. We have many officers who do their best in the administration of the affairs of their departments. There are several departments that I have come into close touch with in the course of my business. One is the Agricultural Bank which is manned by a staff which can be said to be second to none. There are also capable officials in other departments, but we have far too many civil servants. Why do not Ministers make inquiries to ascertain whether it is not possible to transfer some of them. The Premier interjected the other day that he was hedged round

by all sorts of obstacles when he wanted to do anything in connection with the service, and he wanted the House to give him the necessary power. I replied that the House would do its duty and give him all the power he wanted. That is one of the reasons why I am now defending my action, because several people connected with the service have twitted me with having a set on the service of the State. I have nothing of the kind. I have a duty to perform in my capacity as a member of Parliament and that is to endeavour to help in the conduct of the affairs of the State on lines that any private individual would adopt. If a private individual were to follow the lines adopted by the present Government he would soon find himself in the insolvency court. Two good harvests will not bring us round the corner unless drastic action is taken to prevent the drift which is going on daily.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Would two good harvests bring you back the money you have advanced?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, but I could stop the drift in my business if it were there.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Give us a few specific instances of the drift.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am not on the Treasury benches. The hon. members opposite are there. I am not in the position to offer suggestions; I am not in possession of the information which Ministers have. The Ministers are paid to do their duty and I consider they should endeavour to balance the ledger. They are not making any effort in that direction so far as I can see.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And you are a Liberal Labour member.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The member for Forrest as usual has an insulting remark to make. I throw that back in his teeth. I have been a Liberal member all my life, but I have always tried to be fair to the present Government, and I cannot help saying that since they have been in charge of the affairs of the State they have run the country to the bad to the tune of over a million pounds. Under the Liberal Administration nothing of the kind happened. There are too many State enter-

prises and that is the real reason of our position to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What is the total amount expended on them now?

Mr. S. STUBBS: We have never been able to get the information as to how many of these State affairs are losing propositions. They are all botched up in such a way that they cannot be criticised.

Mr. McDowall: Do not make such extraordinary statements.

Mr. Allen: You do not like it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The deficiency is over a million and there is no attempt being made to stop the drift.

Mr. Hudson: It is more than that in Victoria.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I repeat that for a population of 300,000 we are over-administered and we have far too many civil servants, and the sooner the Government wake up to that fact the better. I am not in favour of wholesale retrenchment, but the service, as well as members of Parliament, should be prepared to put their hands in their pockets and say, "We will help the State."

Mr. McDowall: If the war emergency tax had passed we all should have paid.

Mr. Allen: How much would you have paid?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) said earlier in the evening that large property owners in Perth had not reduced their rents and they were now in the same position financially as they were before the war. The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. Nineteen out of every 20 business men in this State could prove to the satisfaction of any fair-minded man that their revenues have decreased enormously since the beginning of the war. I am more in touch with the business people of this State than the member for Subiaco, or the member for Coolgardie. The war emergency tax would not have brought in anything like—

The CHAIRMAN: I have already drawn attention to the fact that hon. members must not discuss in Committee of Supply matters involving legislation.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No member on the Government side can truthfully say that the affairs of this State are in a sound financial condition.

Mr. Thomas: What do you suggest to get them out of their present condition?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The member for Bunbury made a long speech in which he practically charged his chief with not looking after the finances as he ought to have done, and I wondered why he had not made himself conversant with the operations of the Ministry who represent the party to which he belongs.

Mr. Thomas: Where was I wrong?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do not know where the leakages are occurring in the various departments. If we were supplied with proper figures, I as a business man would be able to put my finger on the weak spot and show where things were wrong.

Mr. Thomas interjected.

Mr. S. STUBBS: In spite of the hon. member's interjections I will not be one to sit quietly in this House and allow the State to drift on to the rocks as is happening at present without raising my voice in protest. If we continue for another 12 months as we are going along now we shall have a deficit not of one million but of two millions. The affairs of this State, as conducted by the present Government, are not in the best interests of the country. I was returned by the electors—

Mr. Thomas: By the Labour party. You never would have been here but for the Labour party and now you are turning round on them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Labour party were defeated by three to one. My constituency is a Liberal constituency. Not only the present Government but previous Administrations have gone in too much for centralisation. This is a policy which should be discouraged as much as possible and a vigorous developmental policy in the country should be undertaken. I desire to see the gold-fields boom again as they boomed 10 or 12 years ago. The great South-West requires the expenditure of a large

amount of money to develop the wonderful tracts of land which are suitable for the growing of cereals and for dairying purposes. Notwithstanding the drought, and the unfortunate position of the Government regarding land rents and Agricultural Bank arrears through circumstances over which the farmers have no control, there are still plenty of developmental works in the wheat belt which might well be undertaken by the Government and which would pay handsomely. The member for North-East Fremantle by interjection referred to rotten railways such as the Wagin-Bowelling and the Wagin-Kukerin lines. When the possibilities of the fine tracts of agricultural land which these lines traverse become known, this land which the hon. member and others have to-night, to their discredit, been decrying will be recognised as being second to none in West Australia. Is it fair to the country or to the lenders of the money that members of Parliament should make such rash assertions?

Mr. Carpenter: He said there were too many of these railways.

Mr. S. STUBBS: He distinctly said one of the lines in my district was not warranted and that its construction should be stopped. Is that a fair interjection from a member supporting the Government who introduced the Bill and voted for it? I feel sure that next year we shall experience a return of good seasons. Land which has been idle for the last two years in a great portion of the wheat belt is in good trim owing to the recent rains. The farmers are working on it night and day to get it into condition and I feel hopeful that it will carry a record crop next season. The outlook in the agricultural areas is indeed bright. I wish to convince members of the Government of the necessity for retrenchment in the outgoings of the Treasury; I do not mean retrenchment by the sacking of men. Each and every unit of the civil service must in time of war bear his share of the taxation necessary to straighten out the finances. The member for Katanning

(Mr. Thomson) referred to the management of our railways. The management of our railways at present is far from satisfactory. The running of trains on the Great Southern line during the last few months does not reflect any credit on those responsible for the timetables. The hon. member also pointed out that the farming community had been greatly penalised as a result of the increased rates of freight, and the Minister for Mines who until recently controlled the railways interjected that the freights had not been advanced in his time. I would like to quote a letter which reached me yesterday dealing with the experience of a farmer at Dumbleyung. He ordered a 10-disc plough from the State Implement Works and after receiving it wrote the following letter to the manager:—

Your invoice to hand to-day for 10-disc cultivator, and I understood from your agent that freight would be no more than £5, so as I see you have it £13 14s. 8d. I must say that it is more than I can pay, and although I have taken delivery and started to work it, I will draw it back to Nippering and consign it back before I pay anything like such freight. Myself and my brothers have had big ploughs sent from Perth and the freight has never been more than a little over £3, and I ask you to kindly let me know what you have to say. This invoice has been a long time coming and I am sorry I did not get it sooner. I was going to enclose a cheque for freight and first payment but at this price I will not, as the freight is out of the question and if it costs anything like that, we farmers will have to stop or go to Perth and get ours there.

The manager forwarded the following letter to the Railway Department:—

I shall be glad if you will cause inquiry to be made into the question of freight on agricultural implements from these works, as almost daily we are receiving complaints from clients as to the extortionate amount they have to pay for transport. As an instance, Mr. ———, Nippering, was sent a 10-

disc cultivator for which he was called upon to pay £13 14s. 8d. He had taken delivery of it and started it to work before he knew what it was going to cost, and informs us that he cannot pay the amount and will have to re-con-sign it back to us for us to pay the freight. He advises that he and his brother have had big and little ploughs sent to them from Perth and he has never had to pay more than £3. It is necessary for these implements (in order that we should send them intact) to be consigned in "Q" trucks. Your early attention to this matter is requested as we may be called upon to meet the circumstances arising out of the charge threatened by Mr.———

Surely there is something wrong when farmers are penalised to this extent. It is all very well for members to sneeringly say that farmers consider themselves to be the only pebbles on the beach. The farmers do not claim to be such.

The Minister for Mines: It is perfectly sickening to listen to the wretched whine on their behalf by members on your side month after month.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am not one who has been whining. The farmers can hold up their end of the stick as well as any other section of the community.

The Minister for Mines: Then why this eternal whine?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why do you penalise them so?

The Minister for Mines: There are no farmers on the face of the earth who are getting such assistance from the Government as those in Western Australia, and this is the kind of whine we get in return.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Nonsense!

The Minister for Mines: The spirit of the farmers who built up Australia is not among them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. S. STUBBS: The State Implement Works are situated at Fremantle and all the clerical work, even that of the preparation of the railway freight notes, is done in Perth. The man in question had been working the plough for some days before he received an invoice for the

freight. Would any private firm of machinery merchants carry on business like that? There is surely something wrong when the clerks are located in Perth and the works are situated at Fremantle.

Mr. Foley: The invoice would have been of no use to the farmer to cultivate his land. Surely it was better to send the plough out first.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is no answer to my point, which is that the man responsible for sending away the implement should have been in a position to post to the consignee the invoice at any rate. Does the member for Leonora know anything about the system of working the railways when a truck containing a plough reaches its destination?

Mr. Foley: They generally empty it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Railway Department generally empty a claim for a lot of demurrage over the man who has the plough consigned to him. He may not know it is there. It may be a week before he receives notification that the plough has left Perth.

Mr. Foley: That does not apply in this case.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No; because, fortunately, the consignee came into the town and was told by a friend that the plough had arrived. My point is that we have not a good system in connection with the works at Fremantle. If the implement works was conducted on sound business lines, there is no reason whatever why it should not pay; but I am confident the works under existing conditions is not paying. There is no member on the Government side of the House who can prove to my satisfaction that the farming industry, so far as the Government are concerned, is being treated on lines which would be adopted by private firms or private individuals.

Mr. Foley: But you do not wish to say that railway rates have been raised since the Labour party came into office?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do say it; I have said it; I can prove it.

Mr. Foley: Prove it, then.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Let the hon. member read the Commissioner's report. I notice

the rates of freight have been raised on more than one line. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) will probably agree with me that—

The Minister for Mines: The rates will be raised more yet, and you will get less yet, if the present Government remain in power.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is a pretty threat.

Mr. S. STUBBS: All I can say is that I think the Government will be working on wrong lines if they penalise the agricultural industry unduly. If the farmer gets a 4-ton truck of manure, that manure produces an enormous return in the shape of extra wheat, which would not be grown but for that manure. Who, I ask, gets the benefit of that extra wheat? The Railway Department get the benefit in the shape of freight. The Railway Department obtain enormous traffic thanks to the carrying of manure.

Mr. Foley: Did not private fertiliser factories raise their prices as soon as the railway rates were raised by the Government? Did the farmers object to that increase of price by the private factories? No. They paid the increased prices.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. S. STUBBS: Will the member for Leonora dispute the Report of the Commissioner of Railways on the running of the railways? The Commissioner distinctly states that he has received £8,498 additional revenue during the last nine months from increases in the agricultural machinery rates. Will that satisfy the hon. member? Here it is in the report, in black and white. I say, also, that the present Government—and, indeed, any Government—recognise the value of the farming community to the State, and carry fertiliser as well as other lines required by the farmer at cheap rates in order that the State may get the benefit of the increased growth of produce resulting from the use of artificial manures and of modern machinery. Therefore, I think it would be a mistake to continue the high rates for fertiliser and machinery. In my opinion, those high rates have a tendency to restrict the quantity of grain which

will be grown in years to come. Those are the points which I desire to emphasise, and I am sure members of the Committee will realise that it is an error on the part of the Government to continue to charge higher rates for the carriage of machinery and fertiliser. As I said before, seven months of the year have gone, but it is not too late for the Government to look around and see whether they cannot reduce the expenditure of the State.

The Minister for Mines: Ask some of your farmer people to pay up; that would be one way.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Let the Government pay up.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the Minister would only take the trouble to inquire into the conduct of some of the State enterprises, he would find that large sums of money have been expended in wages and that the State has not been getting 20s. in the pound value for those wages. I am quite certain we have too many departments, too many inspectors, and so on.

Mr. Foley: Is that the reason why the farmer does not pay up?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Hon. members opposite are casting arrows and darts at the farmer. For some reason or other, they have the farmer set.

Mr. Green: We have supported the farmers for years.

Mr. Hudson: It is the tripe you are giving us we object to.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am not in the habit of using tripe, like the hon. member who interjected. That hon. member is not a gentleman, anyhow.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Hudson: I rise to a point of order. You heard, Sir, what the hon. member said, that the hon. member interjecting was not a gentleman.

The CHAIRMAN: What was the interjection?

Mr. S. STUBBS: In withdrawing the remark objected to, which I will do at once, may I ask is the hon. member in order in referring to a statement which I can prove up to the hilt, as tripe? He would not do it outside, anyhow.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Dundas (Mr. Hudson) will withdraw the word. I do not think it is in keeping with parliamentary decorum.

Mr. Hudson: It is not perhaps a very polite expression.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should withdraw absolutely.

Mr. Hudson: I can withdraw, and then make an explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. Hudson: I withdraw.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Is it any wonder that the man in the street refers to members of Parliament in the manner which is common? It is stated outside that politics have been dragged into the gutter during the last few years, in a manner which, I agree, is not creditable to any Australian Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in reflecting upon any member of this Committee. The hon. member must withdraw his statement.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I withdraw, but the interjections from the other—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect on an interjector. If the hon. member objects to interjections, let him appeal to me, and I will stop the interjections altogether.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Very well, sir. I have tried to prove that the State is not being managed financially in the manner in which it should be, especially under existing conditions. I have been asked to try to give some indication as to where economies may be effected. Members on this side of the House, however, are not in the same position as members on the other side are in this respect, and especially Ministers of the Crown, who are in touch with the various departments. The Treasurer himself knows every month how much each department is spending, and it is for the Government of the day to effect economies. Are Ministers going to allow the State to drift on in the present fashion? I should be wanting in my duty as the member for Wagin if I did not call attention to the matter. I have done that; I have done my duty; I have tried to convince the members of this Committee that

economies should be effected, from Parliament downwards; and I am prepared, if the Committee will accept a motion to that effect from me, to propose that members of Parliament start to-night by reducing their own salaries, from Ministers downwards. I have nothing more to say, except that I hope this year will be a brighter one for all of us, and that the next budget also will be a much brighter one.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet) [9.9]: It is not often that I have the opportunity of taking part in the debates in this Chamber; but so much comment has been excited by the remarks of some hon. members, that I am tempted in view of the importance of the discussion to join in the debate. What to-night chiefly concerns the minds of hon. members, and also the minds of the greater portion of the people of this country—I do not say, the minds of all the people of this country, because I think a fair proportion of the people of the country have little concern for affairs of State—is the condition of the finances; since we have at present in this State—we must admit it—the largest deficit ever known in the history of Western Australia.

Mr. Taylor: It is still growing.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes; it is still growing. There must be some reason for it. Now various reasons, with which I personally do not agree, have been assigned by hon. members. The opponents of the Government, naturally, attribute the deficit to the trading concerns. I have heard hon. members say, "Abolish the trading concerns, get rid of the trading concerns, and then the deficit will disappear." Several hon. members, apparently, hold that view; but I do not think these hon. members can have looked carefully into the matter, because all the trading concerns of which they complain—they do not complain of the railways—such as the State steamships, the saw mills, the ferries, the tramways, and one or two other public utilities, have not absorbed nearly sufficient capital to cover the deficit with which

the State is now burdened. Bearing in mind the amount of capital which has gone into these trading concerns, and the fact that the Government can realise on much of the plant and stock, we must recognise that the trading concerns cannot by any manner of means be responsible for the whole of the deficit as it exists to-day, but that there must be some other cause. I feel competent to say that hon. members generally are just as anxious to bring about the disappearance of the deficit as I am myself. It may be argued that the losses on some of the trading concerns have augmented the deficit; but the strongest reason for the existence of a deficit in Western Australia is to be found in the fact that during the last three or four years we have been labouring under abnormally bad seasons. Nobody can deny that; it is an absolute fact; and to blind ourselves to that fact would not be fair. Now, I have taken the opportunity to secure figures, with other data, showing just how far the trading concerns have made losses. With respect to the Perth trams—which undoubtedly represent a trading concern, and one purchased by the present Government—that business is showing a very handsome profit. I do not think there is one member of this Chamber prepared to ask the Government to sell the Perth trams. So far as the meat stalls are concerned—and the meat stalls represent one of the contentious propositions—they have shown a profit of £366 during the last two years. Again, the milk supply has shown a profit. The ferries have shown a substantial profit; and the State hotels have shown a profit, which, I think, nobody doubts. The State saw mills have shown a profit; and the agricultural implement works, of which I have heard people speak as showing a loss, cannot be judged at this stage of its existence, because the machinery produced is not sold for cash, but is sold on three-years' terms.

Mr. Allen: But you can assess your profits; you need not wait three years to know how you stand.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I have been surprised to find hon. members, not of this

Chamber but of another Chamber, when speaking in the country on the loss shown by the agricultural machinery proposition, including in that loss the capital expended in the erection of buildings and in the purchase of appliances and plant generally. We all know that the Government sell the agricultural machinery they manufacture on three years' terms, and that therefore the agricultural implement works cannot be expected, after one year's operations, when it has received payment for only one-third of the value of the machinery produced by it, to show a profit on the sale of that machinery. It would be utterly impossible for the works to do that, and therefore it is not fair criticism when a member of Parliament or any other person tells the people that the State machinery undertaking is not a payable proposition because it fails to show a profit on its first year's working. I have also gone into the figures of some of the concerns which show a loss; and some of the losses on trading concerns which I may mention are the Kalgoolie abattoirs, on which there is for the last financial year a loss of £1,015, and the Albany cold stores—a proposition not created by the present Government but by a Liberal Administration, or at any rate initiated by a Liberal Administration, and operating solely for the benefit of the farmer—which show a loss of £1,985. Again, the Government refrigerating works, which exists for the convenience of the farming community, shows, for the same period, a loss of £1,257. Apart from these losses, the only State enterprise of any magnitude showing a loss is the State Steamship Service, which for the last financial year showed a deficiency of £22,000, and this year is expected to show a deficiency of £17,000. I want to speak particularly to members representing the agricultural industry. If they will set the loss on the spur railway lines last year against the loss on the trading concerns they will find that the loss on agricultural railways alone far exceeded the loss on all the State industries put together. I am not speaking from hearsay; I have the facts from the Under

Treasurer, and they are correct. One hon. member stated that as soon as any of those trading concerns—there are only a few of them, trading under very bad conditions—showed a loss it should be closed down. If we are to judge of the value of an industry to the State by its success or failure during the past three or four years, the industry that has failed most, and which therefore mostly deserves to be closed down, is the agricultural industry and all pertaining to it. Let me state in passing that every penny I earn and can secure is being put into the agricultural industry, so I speak with some knowledge of it. I may say my own agricultural proposition, like the majority of similar propositions in this State, is not paying to-day; not because the best has not been put into it, but because the seasons have been against us. Therefore I say if we are to judge of the value of an industry to the State by its success or failure during the past three or four years, the industry which has been the greatest burden on the State, a veritable old man of the sea round the State's neck, is the agricultural industry.

Mr. Thomson: The other industries have not been affected by the drought?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, I am coming to another. Let us see what the agricultural industry owes to the State. The agriculturists owe the Agricultural Bank alone, in deferred payments alone, £70,000.

Mr. Willmott: What have they brought into the State?

Hon. M. F. TROY: What has the State brought into them? The State has been maintaining them for the last three or four years. The great bulk of our legislation this year has been for the purpose of utilising the State's money to further assist the farmers. I have often heard of the value of the industry to the State; but during the past three or four years it has not been a question of the value of the industry to the State, but of the value of the State to the industry. I am not blaming hon. members or those they represent. It is not due to any conditions over which they

have control, but to sheer bad luck. If the farmers had had good seasons they would not be owing anything.

Mr. Allen: The seasons here have been no worse than those in the other States.

Mr. Taylor: Providence is against us.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am not in the confidence of Providence.

Mr. Allen: Then you are not related to the Kaiser.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If the agriculturists could pay their debts to the State the State would receive nearly £350,000. Yet this year again we have provided in a Bill for the expenditure of an additional £750,000 for the assistance of the farmers. I have always been a supporter of the State trading concerns, and I believe in them, but I ask hon. members to look into these matters more fairly, when they must realise that our condition to-day is due to circumstances over which we have but little control. It will then be seen that the failure of the agricultural industry is the cause of the burden under which the State is labouring to-day. Apart from that there are still other disabilities. Other industries have been affected by the present conditions. Take the pastoral industry, of which I can speak with some authority, representing as I do one of the oldest pastoral districts in the State. During the past four years the squatters in my electorate, and I am speaking of all south from the Murchison up to Pilbara, have experienced the worst seasons known in the history of the State. It is estimated that during the last four years we have lost through drought one million sheep; and there has been no natural increase. Take these conditions, and the fact that the pastoralists have been suffering, as the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Gilchrist) pointed out the other night; men who, a few years ago, were among the wealthiest in the State are now asking the State to come to their relief in the payment of interest on their rabbit-proof fences. It will be seen that the industry has had a detrimental influence on the State's finances and on the operations of the State steamers. For if the people

of the North-West are in financial difficulties and losing money, and stock is decreasing, there cannot be the traffic on these steamers which there would have been under more favourable conditions. Just as the railways have shown a loss because of the bad seasons the steamers will show a loss in consequence of drought in the North-West. Of all the industries in Western Australia that which has, after all, suffered least from the adverse conditions, and which has maintained its position against all the influences affecting other industries, is that of mining, which to-day is the only self-contained industry in the State. During the past three years there has been less money expended on the mining industry in comparison with other industries than at any other time in its history. We have asked for less. In my own constituency I have asked for less, and I have deprecated the roads boards, in my electorate going to the Government for grants. I have pointed out that the conditions, although not good there, are even worse in other parts of the State, particularly in the agricultural districts, and I have urged that we must help them in time of need. I have had many an argument in my own electorate about the reduction of Government subsidies to roads boards; I have pointed out that those most in need at present are the people in the agricultural industry, and my vote will always go to the assistance of the people who most require help. Several suggestions have been put forward as to how the Government may mend affairs. I am particularly concerned, because no one likes to see the country drifting. Hon. members have pointed out that economies might be effected, and I hearken to that suggestion and support it. But those members have always asked that economies should be effected elsewhere than in their own electorates; whilst condemning the Government for expenditure in other electorates they demand more and more for their own. I suppose we have all done it at times, but we get better sense as the years go by. If the Government have to effect economies we cannot expect the roads board subsidy

that was paid in the past, we cannot expect the railway facilities which we enjoyed in the past, and we will have to put up with other inconveniences or, alternatively, pay for the inconveniences. The Government introduced a measure which met with my commendation, namely, the emergency tax. To-night I heard the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) say that members of Parliament should reduce their own salaries. I am quite prepared to make that sacrifice, but I would ask hon. members what better means of making a sacrifice was ever introduced into the House than that provided in the emergency tax, under which every person in the community would have paid according to their ability? Some may talk of large salaries, but every penny I get I put back into the country. At the same time I am prepared to subject myself to some inconvenience, and I think the best that could be done would be the passing of a general taxation measure.

Mr. Allen: The electors did not think so.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Only in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Allen: A very important proposition.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I admit it. It is clear that the electors in the metropolitan area turned down the proposition, but in my own electorate the miners—who received no consideration from the past Parliament or from this, every measure for their assistance having been promptly turned down—were quite prepared to come forward and pay the tax, although they could not see what they were to get from it. It is a remarkable fact that every mining electorate returned its member practically unopposed, and everyone of those members advocated the emergency tax. The miners, even though their wages will not go as far as wages earned down here, are prepared to pay their share under the emergency tax for the good of the State.

Mr. Wansbrough: The majority of those electorates are pocket boroughs.

Hon. M. F. TROY: And there are others. In my opinion the emergency tax

was the best measure which could have been accepted by the country. It meant that every person would have to pay his share.

Mr. Allen: They called it a war tax.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It does not matter what it was called.

Mr. Allen: Yes it does; that is where the Government made a mistake.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I should be sorry to think that it was turned down because of its name. Take the York electorate. The people there opposed the tax because they thought it was a general deficiency tax. Of all the people of the State they were crying out most for help. They rejected their old Liberal member because the Liberals did not give them sufficient. The first speech the new member for York (Mr. Griffiths) made in the House dealt with the woeful position under which the people in his electorate were labouring, and pointed to their absolute destitution. Yet not one of them would have been taxed under that Bill—because they had nothing to tax—while others would have been taxed to help them. Where, then, was the logic in their attitude? That measure was the alternative of economy. Since it has been turned down the Government will have to exercise rigid economy until better times come along. In regard to any proposed increases of salaries, whether justified or not, I cannot give them my support, because it is not the time to be giving increased salaries to anyone. I think that no Government has any possibility of securing the passage of any measure of taxation while the other House is constituted on its present basis. While we are in the position that we desire to secure extra revenue, the Federal Government can come in every time and exploit every avenue of revenue. And the worst feature of it is that while we are labouring under great difficulties and should have the opportunity of handling our own money for developmental purposes in our own country, our own Parliament will not pass taxation measures, but the Federal Parliament passes them and takes from this country the money which should be used here in the development

of the country. And that will become more and more pronounced as the years go on, because, while the money is here and the Federal Government want it, they can get it, while we, who also want it in order to carry on the affairs of the State in the manner which the people would desire cannot get it. A similar reply might have been made to the remarks of the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) last night when he condemned the Premier for allowing the Federal Government to come into competition with our Savings Bank. The same thing occurred here, because the Federal Government has the power and we cannot say them nay. If we had the power in this country we might have forestalled the Federal Government and initiated our own State bank. If the Federal Government could do it we could do it—of course not on such a large scale probably—but we did not do it. Consequently, another Government came in and established their bank; and every year, as time goes on, the Federal Government will continue to exploit our resources. As I have already said, I attribute to the failure of the agricultural and pastoral industries the present depression in this State. I am not blaming the farmers or the pastoralists—but it is a fact staring us in the face. I am hopeful, however, and it has been the experience throughout Australia, that times of drought have been succeeded by unprecedented years of prosperity, and now that the drought has broken up in the pastoral areas, I anticipate that it is the beginning of the end of the drought in the agricultural districts. I have had 18 years experience of the Murchison and during that time we had 10 successive good seasons, during which I have seen wheat growing and maturing at Mount Magnet. During the whole of that time the conditions in the agricultural industry were prosperous, but people had to go out into new districts, which they were encouraged to do by the good seasons, and they struck a bad cycle of years. I am satisfied that the day will come when the people now farming in the eastern agricultural areas will be

perously. I believe the good years will come back again, that we will tide over our difficulties, but in order to do so we must all make some present sacrifice. The only alternative to economy is increased taxation. Let me remind members that in the year 1902-3 the State of Victoria had an accumulated deficit of £3,250,000. That was during a period of bad seasons, Victoria's drought years. At that time Victoria was not contributing to a sinking fund for the redemption of loans. Therefore, there was not as large a set-off as there is in the case of the Government here. In 12 years Victoria had wiped off that deficit entirely during a return of prosperity. It has been suggested that the deficit has been contributed to by State enterprises. Of all the States of Australia, Victoria is the one least inclined to embark on State enterprises, such as we have in Western Australia, and yet this year, after only one year of drought, Victoria estimates a deficit of one million sterling. One would hardly expect that in Victoria, because that State has had the advantage of 10 good years; the farmers have become established there—here our farmers are not yet established. If Victoria is to have a deficit of one million as the result of one year's drought, Western Australia cannot be in such a bad way with a deficit of one million after four years of drought. I am prepared to go as far as any man in this House to help the agricultural industry because the establishment of that industry means national preservation. We must have an agricultural industry for the good of the State itself. If the State cannot support an agricultural industry it cannot become permanently prosperous and will have no future.

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Hon. M. F. TROY; I am prepared to spend the last penny in helping the agricultural industry but I would ask representatives of that industry that they be reasonable

also and assist the other industries when those industries require it. I have heard it said frequently in this House that the Government should run their business on business lines, that a business system should be introduced into all departments. Yet immediately that principle is suggested to be put into operation there is a protest against it. That has been my experience in this House over the last 11 years. Immediately Government attempts to insist upon business conditions and business methods such as a business house would adopt, there is a howl of protest. Personally I do not anticipate that the time will arrive in this State, or in any other State, when the Government will be able to do anything on business lines, because when we get down to hard and fast business methods the people immediately demand more lenient conditions. Take as an illustration the Perth trams. Before the Government acquired the trams the company carried on its business on business lines, and insisted upon a 3d. fare, and they insisted also on other business conditions which the Government have been forced to forego later on. Immediately the Government took over the trams the people demanded that the Government should give more and more concessions, and if the fares were brought down to-morrow morning further demands would be made. I have seen all sorts of demands made on the Government. The Government are asked to take risks which no business house would take, and while such conditions obtain no Government can run their business on business lines, because the people themselves would prevent them from doing so. In my opinion, too, there is too great a tendency in this State to lean on the Government. People proclaim it from the housetops. In regard to every proposition brought forward, it is suggested, "Let the Government do it." I hope the time will come when every member of Parliament will deprecate that attitude. I read in the newspaper only yesterday that a demand has been made upon the Education Department that the services established there permanently and pros-

of those teachers who were taken on temporarily should be retained at any cost. Those teachers came into the Education Department on a temporary basis. They were engaged at a time when the State was in need of teachers and now that there are sufficient young teachers turned out with the necessary qualifications those temporary teachers have to go. But the demand is made that they must not go, that the State must see them through. It is a fact that these teachers are married women. In my opinion when a man marries a woman he should be man enough to keep her, and not expect to send her back to work. The husbands of some of those married teachers in our schools are engaged in different business houses, and also in the Department of Education. The comedy of this is that when a teacher in the Education Department gets married she is given a married retiring allowance, and after a brief honeymoon returns to the department. In this House we should take a stand. When officers have justice on their side we should stand to them but when they have not justice on their side we should not. I again say that I believe there are good times in store for the State in the near future, and I believe that hon. members will set their minds to the task of assisting Parliament and the State over its difficulties. Now that the drought has broken in the pastoral areas I trust that we shall have a return of good seasons, that the drought in the agricultural areas will have been broken by next year and that Western Australia is about to enter upon an era of unprecedented prosperity.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [9.45]: In listening to the debate it appears to me there is only one subject upon which unanimity exists amongst hon. members on all sides of the House, and that is that the position of the finances of the State has become serious and that something must be done to stop the drift or square the deficit. Many and varied suggestions have been made by members on all sides of the House, but I think that none of the suggestions have got anywhere near the root of the

trouble. The nearest solution yet suggested was made by His Honour the Speaker, whose speech I listened to with a considerable amount of interest, and who said that the only possibility of squaring the finances of the State was in the hope of getting a good wheat season in the coming year. I believe that is undoubtedly the case. We, in this State, are in the position that the whole of our future prospects depend upon our getting a good return to normal seasons throughout Western Australia, or else that we may possibly be fortunate enough to find a new goldfield in the State, which is not by any means outside the bounds of possibility. It is remarkable that during this session we have heard little or nothing with regard to the mining industry in this Chamber. A stranger in the gallery would never grasp the idea that, although we have a great agricultural industry in the State, and though this State turns out a tremendous amount of marketable timber every year, and although the gold yield has been declining for some years past, during the last financial year the cash value of the output of gold of Western Australia was worth more than half the cash value of the combined output from every other industry in the State. The figures, I believe, are that gold was responsible for 52 per cent. of the cash value of the output in Western Australia, whilst the rest of the industries combined were only responsible for 48 per cent. As a member representing a goldfields constituency—and I think I am speaking for every one of my colleagues from the goldfields in this Chamber—I say that we take no exception to a considerable amount of discussion taking place upon the agricultural industry in this Chamber. We recognise what this industry means to the State, and unfortunately we also recognise the precarious position in which that industry has found itself during the current season. His Honour the Speaker, in addressing the Committee just now, pointed out that we must look for a return to normal seasons before we can hope to have our finances on a reasonable

or sound basis. Many suggestions have been made. Members representing this new political force, which has come into being lately, namely, the Country party, and members of the old Liberal party, or what remains of it, have all pointed out that something must be done, but when they are asked to say what should be done few of them have any suggestions to make. If they are asked if the present Government made a mistake when they raised the wages of the lower paid employees in the different State departments, from 8s. to 9s. a day, they say that is quite right, but if they are asked if they will reduce wages to-day to endeavour to decrease the deficit they say they do not want to reduce them. If they are asked if in their opinion the Government are following the right track in reducing or stopping subsidies to municipalities and roads boards, they say "No, the subsidies must be kept up." Every member who has spoken so far will hear nothing of any retrenchment that is going to affect his own constituency. He says rather "There is something wrong about a suggestion of this sort, about anything that will take from my constituency and from the people whom I represent. Let the other fellow's constituency suffer." The absurdity of this position must be apparent. A stand must be made, and some attempt brought about to stop the deficit. It has also been suggested by those two great statesmen, representing respectively West Perth (Mr. Allen) and North Perth (Mr. Smith) particularly and also the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs), that members of Parliament themselves should take the first step, and that they should reduce their own salaries—

Mr. Allen : Do not you agree ?

Mr. MULLANY : And that it will serve as a good example to those outside. I am prepared to agree with those gentlemen to this extent, that I would submit to taxation to quite as high an extent as anybody outside this Chamber. I am certainly, however, not going to support any motion to directly reduce the salaries of members of this Chamber. I am prepared to support taxation pro-

posals which will tax the man earning an amount equal to the salary per year of a member of Parliament in the same way as the man who happens to be a member of Parliament. There are hundreds, in fact thousands, of men in the State to-day—

Mr. Allen : A member of Parliament does not work all the year round.

Mr. MULLANY : That is so. The hon. member happens to be in a position that he can go down to his business in St. George's-terrace and come up here after he has done his usual day's work if it suits him to do so.

Mr. Allen : Why do you not do so ?

Mr. MULLANY : If it suits his convenience to go elsewhere he does so.

Mr. Allen : Why do you not do so ?

Mr. MULLANY : I am not in a position to do this. I represent a constituency which takes me a day and a half to reach from Perth, and my time is so occupied in attending to the affairs of my constituency that I am not in a position to enter into any business such as the hon. member does. The hon. member would find this out if he attempted to represent a far-off goldfields constituency. There is absolute justice in the claim that members of Parliament should support taxation proposals, and make sacrifices on the same basis as every other person in the State.

Mr. Allen : We are taxed all right.

Mr. MULLANY : Take the position of the highly paid mine managers throughout the goldfields. Every one of those gentlemen is receiving exactly the same salary to-day as he was receiving before the war broke out.

Mr. Allen : How do you know ?

Mr. MULLANY : I know many of those gentlemen, and I have not heard one of them complain about any reduction.

Mr. Allen : They never complain.

Mr. MULLANY : I say they have not complained about any reduction. I am quite prepared to say I believe that every other member on this side of the House would support any reasonable taxation proposals that may be brought forward. When members opposite are

asked if they are prepared to agree to this, they say "No" because they do not feel disposed to tax those who are in a position to bear the taxation. I am of opinion that all members on this side of the House would agree that taxation proposals must be resorted to in order to restore the finances of the State to their old position. On a general discussion such as this, a very wide range of subjects is dealt with. We have had the State steamships dealt with, the agricultural implement works, the brick work, and on this last named industry it has been rather amusing to hear members complain that the brick works are showing a loss before actually they are in a position to sell a single brick, and before they have begun work in any shape or form. Do hon. members expect them to show profit before they are in a position to carry on business?

Mr. Thomson: Why claim that they have reduced the price of bricks before they have actually started work.

Mr. MULLANY: The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) gave a very clear and explicit explanation in regard to the point raised by the member for Katanning. He told that hon. gentleman that, if he was desirous of his doing so, he would produce documentary evidence to prove his statement. What more does the hon. member want?

Mr. Thomson: I can produce documentary evidence to show that they have not reduced the price.

Mr. MULLANY: This brings me to a few other remarks which have been made to-night. We had a lengthy speech by the hon. member covering a wide range of subjects.

Mr. Allen: It was a good speech.

Mr. MULLANY: It was a good speech to the extent that there was one little grain of common sense in it.

Mr. Thomson: That is good.

Mr. MULLANY: I think members of the Country party will agree that it is a very poor sample of chaff indeed from which, after carefully sifting a ton of it, you cannot get a grain of wheat amongst it.

Mr. Thomson: You cannot refute the figures I have given.

Mr. Allen: That is goldfields chaff you are referring to.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not going to be put off the track by interjections. The member for Katanning made a suggestion that the Government should remove the absurd restrictions which which will not permit people outside the rabbit-proof fence to market any rabbits they are fortunate enough to kill. I have never been able to understand why these restrictions were placed there, but they have been in existence for many years past. I think that the Minister for Agriculture should well consider that question and do away with the restrictions. Why they were ever framed I do not know. We know that the rabbit is a most prolific animal, and, if given a chance, it will over-run good country and become a serious menace to the settlers. I do not think that even the previous administration was responsible for bringing in a regulation which inferred that dead rabbits were going to be a source of danger. The Government will do well to consider this suggestion of the member for Katanning. A matter referred to by the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) is that of the State Savings Bank. I think this position in regard to the State Savings Bank was ably dealt with by the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs). I would like to say that this present absurd position in regard to the State Savings Bank between the two Governments should be ended in some way or other. It seems an absurdity to go out to either in a goldfields or an agricultural district, and find one State Savings Bank controlled by the Federal Government, and in the same township another controlled by the State Government. Here we have two institutions seeking to carry on the same business, owned by the same people and in direct competition one with the other. I am not saying to-night who brought it about. It has already been fully explained what the Federal Government did. No one knows better than the member for Swan the strong Federal feeling which exists in Western Australia. When the Federal Government decided to go

into the State Savings Bank business they certainly had the support of the people of Western Australia.

Mr. Nairn: Do you support the proposal?

Mr. MULLANY: I do not care who runs the Savings Bank, so long as this present position between the two Governments is done away with. I recognise, and so does every other member in this Chamber, if he will but speak his honest convictions, that it would be nonsensical and almost suicidal on the part of this State to endeavour to compete against the Federal authorities if they say they are going to continue to run a Savings Bank in Western Australia. We have no chance of competing against them under the circumstances. Members opposite have often spoken about conducting State business on business lines. No business man would feel disposed to compete against such a powerful rival as the Federal Government. They would have no chance of being successful.

Mr. Taylor: A powerful rival does not justify this sort of thing.

Mr. MULLANY: Does the hon. member think that he would have a reasonable chance against them? The only thing I want to say is that if the State Savings Bank is handed over to the Federal authorities, a reasonable and business-like agreement should be made between the two Governments.

Mr. Taylor: It is no credit to them.

Mr. MULLANY: The interjection of the hon. member is no credit to him. I am expressing my own opinions, and I am as competent to do so as the hon. member for Mt. Margaret. I am not going to be put off my arguments by these interjections.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member would look at me he could be sure of protection.

Mr. MULLANY: I hope to see a sound business agreement made between the two Governments, and this present absurd position ended.

Mr. Taylor: How could you make a good sound proposition if people hold out the mailed fist at you?

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member will have an opportunity of saying something if he so desires; and I trust he will have some good sound business proposition to bring forward.

Mr. Taylor: If I have not, I shall have sense enough to keep quiet.

Mr. MULLANY: We have no means of opposing the Federal Government. It has been interesting, and in a measure pleasing, to note that the majority of members realise the difficulties under which the Government are struggling to carry on; but from this statement I have explicitly to except one member, namely the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell). That gentleman in his usual style, when speaking on these Estimates, proceeded to criticise and almost to ridicule the business ability of the Government—or their want of business ability—and harped on “the continually growing deficit.” Now, if there is any one man in this Chamber more responsible than another for the growth of the deficit, it is the member for Northam himself.

Mr. Allen: Nonsense!

Mr. MULLANY: I will give my reasons for making that statement.

Mr. Allen: The Speaker said the deficit was caused by the bad seasons.

Mr. MULLANY: I remember some eight or nine years ago, just about the time when the discovery was made that Western Australia could grow wheat in quantities sufficient to justify a large development of the wheat growing industry, the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Mitchell) toured the goldfields and visited every small township on the goldfields as well as the large centres, bringing along with him maps showing the estimated rainfalls of the various districts and the quality of the land in the various districts—beautifully illustrated and coloured maps. He did all he possibly could to induce men to leave the goldfields in order to take up land in the agricultural areas. I distinctly remember a statement made by the then Minister for Lands that the terms which the Government of Western Australia were prepared to give were better than any other Government in the world

had ever given. He went on to say that very little capital would be required, that, indeed, the Government would supply the capital, although of course it would be better if the person embarking on agricultural pursuits had a little capital of his own. The hon. member also said that previous farming experience was not necessary, because the Government provided experts who would be in a position to advise new settlers as to the best methods of farming for any particular holding. He was successful in inducing hundreds of the best class of goldfields residents to leave for the agricultural areas—men who had some little capital behind them, men who were largely instrumental in keeping the public batteries going. The hon. member persuaded those men to leave the goldfields in order to take up land in the Eastern agricultural areas. In what position do we find those men to-day? We find that through the misleading statements and maps which the then Minister for Lands had put forward—I do not wish to say, intentionally—those men have been deceived. Certainly the rainfall records which the hon. member produced have not been borne out by events. However, hundreds and hundreds of goldfields residents were induced to settle on the Eastern agricultural areas; and to-day we have the representatives of those men in this Chamber asking for more and more State support with a view to maintaining the men on their holdings. They were men who, had they remained on the goldfields, would have been producing wealth all the time; they were men who worked small shows of their own, or else worked in the larger mines and received good wages. While on the goldfields they were contributing to the revenue all the time. When they left the goldfields for the agricultural areas, there was of course a bit of a flash in the pan by reason of the capital they brought with them. Their capital helped to swell the revenue of Government departments, and to boom private enterprises generally. The money of those men was expended, and to-day we find them practically stranded on their hold-

ings. Either the Government must now continue to stick to those men, or the men must walk off penniless. I venture to say as regards 95 per cent. of those settlers from the goldfields, for whose departure from the goldfields the member for Northam was responsible, if they could get back their holdings and a very very little for the labour they have put in, they would be only too pleased to return to the mines and try their fortunes once again on the fields. However, I trust that this will be the last of the bad seasons, and that the State will speedily see a revival of prosperity not only in the agricultural areas but also throughout the goldfields. Amongst other suggestions which have been made for securing increased revenue was a fairly definite one from the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas). That hon. member said it would be well for the Government to consider the possibility of increasing railway fares and reights throughout the State. He suggested that a small increase should be made in each passenger fare, and that an impost of 6d. per ton should be imposed upon all goods carried on the railways. Certainly, the hon. member qualified this suggestion to some extent by stating that it would be well to have an expert to go into the matter with a view to obviating anomalies which might arise in carrying the suggestion into effect. The suggestion involves a question of principle—whether any Government have the right to endeavour to obtain increased revenue, which is really equivalent to increased taxation on the people, when Parliament itself has declared that there shall be no increase of taxation? It has also to be pointed out that even the small impost of 6d. per ton on all goods carried over the railways would make a considerable difference to some large companies operating in this State. I refer more especially to certain mining companies which use large quantities of firewood. Some of them are extremely profitable concerns, and well able to pay the suggested impost; but there are others struggling on with a very small margin of profit, or none at all; and if the suggestion of the member for

Bunbury were adopted it would press equally on the profit-earning company and on the company carrying on without any profit whatever. I may instance a mine in my own district, the Menzies Consolidated Mine, near Menzies—a mine which for the last twenty years has never employed less than a hundred men at a time. That mine uses 500 tons of firewood per month. The company had never in its history been able to declare a dividend until last November. I am pleased to say that at the time I have mentioned the company found it possible to declare a 6d. dividend—the very first dividend in twenty years of continuous hard working. I do not think the member for Bunbury would maintain that it would be fair to tax companies such as this on exactly the same basis as, for instance, the Great Boulder or the Golden Horseshoe, or the other wealthy mining companies on the Golden Mile. I consider some other method must be adopted if we are to make any sort of proper attempt to square the State's finances. The member for Bunbury also made an observation to the effect that he thought it was high time for the people of Western Australia to learn to live within their income; and he proceeded to give the old illustration which is usually advanced by a man in a good position, a man whose personal expenditure frequently runs into more than would keep the average man with a wife and a family. The member for Bunbury said that a man must live within his income, that if his income is £3 a week and he is spending £2 19s. per week, his financial position is sound and healthy; but that if while earning £3 per week he spends £3 1s., there is nothing but disaster ahead of him. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson), as perhaps might have been expected, heartily endorsed this observation; and the member for Canning went on to say that the people of Western Australia must learn to live within their means, and that he agreed with the member for Bunbury as to its being an advantageous thing for people to be brought up with a round turn, so that they might become seised of the necessity

for living within their means. We frequently hear people talk about economy in some such fashion as this, "If a man's income is reduced to a certain extent, he must economise; cut off some small luxury or some large expenditure, as the case requires, which he can do without." People in different stations, in order to practise economy of this sort, must adopt many and varied expedients. For example, take the case of a man in a good position, who has perhaps been in the habit of taking a trip around the world or to the Old Country every two or three years. He says to himself, "My income is not now quite up to what it used to be, and I must economise; therefore I will cut out this trip which I have been in the habit of taking." Another man may say, "My income is not what it used to be, so I will get rid of my motor car, which I have had mostly for my own use." I may remark that I personally am at the present time practising the same sort of economy. I have determined that if ever my income will permit of my running a motor car, I will drive it myself and thus do away with the need for a hired man. Again, another man finding his income reduced will decide that his wife must do her own housework, dispensing with domestic aid. Another man in the same circumstances decides to reduce his consumption of whisky by one or two nips per day. Yet another man might say, "I will reduce the number of cigars I am in the habit of smoking; or, if I continue to smoke the same number of cigars, I will go in for a cheaper brand; and thus I shall be economising." In this way we come right down to say the navvy, or the miner, who may decide to do without the customary pint of beer at the close of the day's work. All these economies can be effected without anything in the nature of heavy sacrifice. But when, finally, we come down to bedrock, to the man who in this State is working for 8s. 9d. per day and has on those earnings to keep a wife and a family of say four or five or six, I want to know from these gentlemen who preach economy and living within one's income, how that

man is to economise and lay by something for the rainy day which we are told is bound to come? Are they going to assert that the man on 8s. 9d. a day with a family to keep has a certain amount to spend out of which he must provide for a rainy day, even if he lays by only the merest trifle per week? Would they suggest that if the child of such a man, in imitation of *Oliver Twist*, dared to ask for more, the father should refuse the child more food, in order that he might be enabled to put by a trifle of money? In such circumstances, I contend, any man fit to assume the responsibility of rearing children would prefer not to lay by, but give his family adequate nourishment and suitable clothing and the best education he can possibly obtain. I give credit to the man who, in the circumstances I have suggested, says, "Before laying by for a rainy day as I would like to do, I must see that my wife and children have fair and proper conditions." It is easy for men in good positions to talk about living always within your income, but there are very many—indeed, I will venture to say this applies to the great majority of people in Australia, and even throughout the world—who live simply from hand to mouth, and whose earnings never exceed an amount that will with moderate comfort carry them on from month to month. I admire the man who saves; and I do my best to encourage saving; but I do not like the tone in which the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) treated the subject of saving. Undoubtedly there are some extravagances going on in this State, more particularly in the metropolitan area. I refer now to the absolute surfeit of horse racing which is carried on in the metropolitan area. During the Christmas holidays in one week from Monday to Saturday there were no fewer than nine race meetings in the metropolitan area. I would like hon. members to say if they do not consider that this is going too far with something which might be a desirable institution. I believe it is becoming absolutely necessary for the Government to take some action in this matter. It is not right that the

people should be allowed to run riot in regard to racing. We have also trotting meetings two or three times a week.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Red hots.

Mr. MULLANY: Yes, red hots, as the Honorary Minister, who perhaps has better knowledge about these meetings than I have, prefers to call them. I am not taking exception to the way in which they are carried on. What I am taking exception to is the surfeit of racing. We have in the first place the Western Australian Turf Club, the leading racing institution of the State, and then there is the Trotting Association in Perth. We have also what are called unregistered clubs and various proprietary clubs. Of the latter there is the Helena Vale, the Canning Park and Belmont Park. I would like to see legislation brought in to make it impossible to hold more than one race meeting in the metropolitan area in the week. I do not want to interfere with private enterprise or vested interests in such a way as might do an injustice to one body and confer perhaps a benefit on another, but I would be prepared to allow these various institutions to conduct race meetings in turn, and not more than one meeting should be held each week. I have read that the effect of such a course would be to squeeze out some of the smaller bodies. If this were effected I think it would be a benefit to the State. When some other member was speaking on this matter the other night some one interjected that the effect would be to do away with the bookmaker. I do not know what the answer to the interjection was, but I am going to declare that if I had the power I would do away with the bookmaker altogether. I believe that the totalisator is by far the better method of investing money on horse racing or on gambling, as it ought to be called. It would, I believe, bring in a considerable amount of revenue which would be of benefit to the Government in times such as the present. But I am not advocating this course entirely from a revenue producing point of view, so

much as for the benefit of the people of the State generally. I believe every country member, at any rate the gold-fields members, know of many men who come down for their Christmas holidays after having spent the year or the greater part of it in the back blocks, and their first thought is to go to the races. If they are successful on the first day they keep on going, and perhaps a limited few may be able to hold their own. The majority, however, may go out on the first day and the odds, as the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) pointed out the other night, are about 1,000 to one against them making anything on the first day, and having experienced a loss they proceed to the trotting meeting in the evening and somewhere else next day. It has been my experience to meet these people Christmas after Christmas. They attend the race meetings and go back to the country without having had a holiday at all. I would like to refer also to the disgraceful spectacle of young boys of from 12 to 15 years of age attending trotting meetings and investing their money on the totalisator or with the bookmakers. It is a disgrace to the people of Western Australia that such things should be allowed to go on, although the average youngster who has the temerity to go to the racecourse knows as much and perhaps more than the older habitues. That sort of thing should be stopped. I know several boys who make a practice of going there on every opportunity. The Government would be wisely advised to go into this matter and in the approaching session to introduce legislation with the object of bringing that kind of thing to an end. There would be no trouble in passing such legislation because support would come from all sides. As usual in connection with the Estimates the civil servants have had a little overhauling. They usually do, but they appear to thrive on it. On this occasion, however, additional interest has been lent to the subject by the remarks of the leader of the Country party. That hon. member said that he had a bitter experience of the civil service during his term of office as

Treasurer eight or ten years ago. I think I have heard all Ministers who have occupied Ministerial positions say they are not satisfied with the way in which the Public Service Act is being administered, that they have not the power that Ministers should have, and from the remarks which have been made by the member for Irwin (Mr. Jas. Gardiner) we gather that that gentleman agrees with what has been said. I do not intend to take up much time on this subject to-night, but as members are probably aware the Public Service Commissioner was appointed some years ago with a view of doing away with political patronage and influence in connection with the appointment of public servants. That was the underlying idea when that official was appointed. As the Minister for Mines remarked the other evening, like other attempts at legislation this has been little more than a pious wish. I believe political influence does exist even to-day, but I am sure another thing exists which is quite as undesirable, and that is departmental influence. By that I mean that friends of heads of departments or friends even of the Commissioner himself can get preference over others which they have no right to secure. It seems to me an anomaly that a Minister should be in charge of a department and that he should have no power to remove a servant whom he considers an unsatisfactory officer. I was very much interested in the remarks of the Premier the other day, when an interjection was made by the member for Irwin. The Premier said, "Give me the power; my hands are tied, I cannot move in the matter." If the Premier is sincere, and I have no reason to doubt his sincerity in this matter, he should bring in a Bill which would give him the power that he asks for, not only for himself, but for succeeding Governments. The Premier was given a definite promise of assistance by the leader of the Country party and by members of the Opposition. The Premier surely does not expect a private member to introduce a Bill such as this. If he is sincere, and I believe he is, it is his duty to go into

the matter and submit a Bill which will have the effect of remedying the existing state of affairs. I do not desire to say any more about this matter just now except to refer to the manual workers and other employees in other Government departments whose hours of service have been reduced to 44 per week. At the same time I would refer to many members of the civil service occupying highly paid positions, and many of whom have outside interests which return them even more than they are being paid by way of salaries. These people should be asked to accept reductions. Will any hon. member say also that some of those gentlemen could not be spared an hour or two from their departments? The member for Leondra the other evening drew attention to the fact that quite a number of them absent themselves from their offices even without leave. The man who is employed as a manual labourer can always be dealt with, but the privileged class, the civil service, apparently cannot. True they have been contributing to the war fund, but the men employed in the mines are also paying in 2½ per cent. to the war fund. I understand that a great number of the members of the civil service are becoming tired of contributing to the war fund, but it should be the desire of all to assist in carrying out a proposal so that every one should be obliged to make some sacrifice to help the State out of its difficulties. There is another matter which usually causes a great deal of discussion, but it has not been touched on to any extent during the debate on the Estimates. That is the question of contract and day labour in connection with Government construction works. As every one knows, members on this side are pledged to the day labour system. From my experience since I have been a member of this Chamber, the attempt to carry on that system has not been as successful as the merits of it deserve. There are various reasons for this and one, and not the least, is that many engineers, overseers, and supervisors are not in accord with the system, and are not giving of their best to endeavour

to carry it out. It is well known by many members who have been about the metropolitan area where work has been going on in connection with the sewerage, that gangs of men have been held up for days awaiting for material to arrive. Undoubtedly the fault may be due to the organisation. I am not blaming the men there.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We should be able to sack the supervisor.

Mr. MULLANY: Certainly, but under the present Public Service Act the Minister has not power to do that. It is necessary that some change should be made, and while I am going a little further I am not going to endeavour to place all the blame on the supervisor. Unfortunately some men, not all by any means, employed on the day labour system on Government construction work do not seem to be prepared to give a fair day's work for the day's wages they receive. I am making this statement after due consideration.

Mr. Taylor: Can you assign reasons?

Mr. MULLANY: Yes. It is well known throughout the departments that amongst the tradesmen on a public works job where a large, long, thick wall was in course of construction the bricklayers were laying only 400 bricks a day. Those men are not giving either the Government or the day labour system a fair deal when they do such things as that. I believe 800 to 1,000 bricks per day on a straight wall is regarded as a fair thing. I know this has occurred, and if necessary I can and will say where, but I do not desire to do so at this juncture. Not only the bricklayers, but other sections of the workers are so restricting their output. It is not through laziness that those men are doing this, but through a mistaken idea that if at a certain period there is only a given amount of work, by restricting their output they will spread the employment over a greater number of men and so be the means of increasing employment. I have heard professed students of political economy make this statement and attempt to defend it as being sound. There is,

however, no more mistaken or misleading idea entertained by any body of men, no idea better calculated to hinder the progress of any country than is this. It will absolutely kill the principle and, moreover, will kill the moral qualities of the men who are doing this sort of thing. I will probably be criticised for having made these statements, but I know that the practice is going on. I believe every member will agree in this, and for the honour of the Labour party I say we were never behind such men, and I trust we never will be. The man who does that sort of thing and is not prepared to give a reasonable day's work for a fair day's wages is just as big a danger to the community as is the sweating employer who desires to get more than a fair thing out of his employees. I am saying that advisedly, and I believe that in speaking in this strain I am doing the honest thing by my party and by the State generally. I believe Ministers will agree that the time has arrived when a firm stand should be taken in these matters, for the sake of the day labour principle itself and for the honour of the men responsible for carrying on the Labour Government of Western Australia to-day. I do not wish to give other instances, but there are others, and many of them, which could be brought forward if it were desired. In conclusion, I wish to say a little about the goldmining industry of which we have not heard so much in the House lately. I appreciate the administration of the present Minister for Mines, and although there may not be much mining spoken of these days, I know that any reasonable proposal to the Minister has always had fair consideration. We have had splendid rains throughout the goldfield areas during the year, and there is every probability of an abundance of horse feed out there during the coming winter. We have numbers of men unemployed in Perth to-day, many of whom have had goldfields experience. I believe it would be worth the consideration of the Minister to devise some plan under which these men might go out on the goldfields areas and be provided with rations while

they do a little prospecting. It would be to the best interests of the men. They would feel more manly and have a better spirit than if merely going along daily for their couple of free meals in Perth. There is the possibility, too, that some of these men would be successful. I know that such a scheme would have to be carefully worked out, because liable to abuse, but we have in every goldfields town Government mining officials of one sort or another who could exercise a certain amount of supervision over men so employed. Further than this, in every goldfields town we have men who have followed prospecting for the past 15 or 20 years. Unfortunately they have not always been successful, but still they are battling along. It would be wrong to allow any of these men to be starved out of the industry to-day. Perhaps it would be well if the Minister considered the practicability of providing at least rations for those men who would still continue their occupation of prospecting. With every other member, I trust we have seen the last of the dry seasons in Western Australia, whether in the pastoral areas, the agricultural districts or the fruit-growing localities, that this year we will have a thumping good season, and that before the close of 1915 the war will be over and a new era of prosperity dawning on the State.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion negatived.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [10.38]: I have listened to the debate with a great deal of interest and have been pleased to find so many different ideas expressed, some of which should discover to the Treasurer pearls of wisdom which will enable him and us to co-operate in an attempt to get out of the mess we are in and justify the words of Addison—

'Tis not in mortals to command success,

But we'll do more, Sempronius;
we'll deserve it.

I do not want to get on to the personal note, but I must protest against the statements and innuendoes thrown out by the member for Northam (Hon. J.

Mitchell) who declared that he envied the Premier his newly-found admirer, the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) and said my leader was an apologist for the Government and had offered excuse after excuse for the various acts of stupidity committed by the Government and was willing to condone every offence of the Government; and further he doubted whether all the members of the Country party were in accord with him. The hon. member is wrong and also unfair. There are matters on which we as a party do not see eye to eye with the Labour party. There are things past and gone of which we strongly disapprove, but my leader publicly stated that these things do not enter into our calculations while under the shadow of the awful catastrophe which has overtaken the civilised world. We have to find a way out of our common trouble, break down party lines and bring out any sparks of patriotism within us. As my leader stated, the position calls for the best that is in us, and if we do not give it the sooner the 50 of us are turned out to make room for others who will, the better it will be for the State.

Mr. Wansbrough called attention to the state of the House; bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Northam conveyed the impression that some sort of unholy alliance existed between the member for Irwin and the Premier. There are others of his way of thinking who point to the awful depravity of the leader of the Country party. He was actually in the Premier's company—

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Chairman, I draw attention to the fact that the hon. member is reading his speech.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not supposed to read his speech absolutely, but as he is a new member I will be as lenient as I can.

Mr. Taylor: I do not mind him having copious notes.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Irwin was actually in the company of the Premier at Augusta and committed the dastardly crime of riding in a car with him, and I believe he even drank ginger

ale with him at the Yallingup Caves. It has been said we are a joint in the Labour party's tail. Because the Ministry have been fair and have honestly tried to overcome the troubles of the primary producers, the member for Northam would have us kick away the ladder which the Government are trying to place to enable the primary producers to climb out of the mud. In regard to the attitude of the leader of the Country party, we are with him to the last ditch. As units of the party we have some thinking apparatus left yet, and although some people infer that we are being led by the nose, we have sufficient brains to think for ourselves. In regard to our great bugbear, the deficit—

Mr. Taylor: You are the cause of it and ought to know all about it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) quoted figures to show that the State is not receiving an adequate return for services rendered. Well, figures can be made to prove anything even without being faked. I could quote examples of excursion fares in the old country that would blow the hon. member's arguments to ribbons. I join issue with him in the statement that the railway accommodation here is superior to that in the old country. On the other hand, the hon. member certainly made out a good case in support of the proposal that something in the direction of a slight increase in railway charges should be made to improve our financial position. Take the fertiliser rates, which were below what they should have been. The rates were raised to what members considered a fair thing, and the same course should be adopted in connection with passenger fares. If charges of this kind were properly adjusted much revenue could be obtained without seriously hurting any one. I agree with the proposal that the State should control the totalisator and the matter should receive consideration by the Government. The Works Department have done some extraordinary things—not altogether through the fault of Ministers—which have resulted in much money being wasted. In a certain district 26 miles

of road was cleared by the roads board for which a grant was received from the Government. Sometime ago a party of men appeared on the scene and proceeded to clear a second road a few feet away from the original one. What the reason was I do not know, but the roads board member interested proceeded to interview the foreman and pointed out to him that a road already existed, and asked why a second road was being made. He said he did not know, but that if he was not satisfied he should get in touch with the authorities down below. He did get into touch with the authorities and some sort of excuse or explanation was sent back to the effect that the first road was put either on the right hand or the left hand side—at any rate, it was not put in the right place and another road had to be made. Now there is the pleasing spectacle of a road 26 miles north on the one hand, and having travelled that, if one desires a change of scenery, he may come back the 26 miles on the other side.

The Minister for Works: Where is that?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: North of Baandee. I was relating that to a friend living not far away, and he told me of one or two other incidents which had occurred in that district. He told me of a well being sunk a little way from his homestead, and he took me up to show it to me. On one occasion, seeing a tent in the distance, he went to investigate and found there a party of men who had not yet started work, but were awaiting the arrival of their tools. He asked them what they were going to do, and was informed that they were going to sink for water. He was very pleased to find out their intention, as he had expended a good deal of money himself searching for water in the district, and was glad to find that there were some signs of water being found. That party sunk for 40 feet, and then one day the tent and the men disappeared. That 40 feet of bore is there to-day and no water in it, except what has run over the side.

The Minister for Works: How long ago was that?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is about two and a half years ago since I was there. On the road between Doodlakine and Baandee there is a section of the road which is almost impassable for heavy traffic, and it was suggested to build a causeway. The brainy individual placed in charge of the work did not consult any plan to ascertain where the railway fence was to come. He simply went straight ahead with the work, and the result was that when the railway fence had to be erected it became necessary to build another causeway on the outside. Coming along that same road I struck a party of men at work widening and otherwise improving the road, and a couple of hundred yards further on I encountered a team of horses drawing an Oliver plough. I inquired of the owner of the adjoining homestead why it was that a gang of men were doing pick and shovel work when there was a team and plough available. His reply was, "For heaven's sake don't say anything about it or they will get the job done too quickly." I do not blame the Minister in charge for these things so much as the supervision, but I do think that many of those works taken in hand by the Public Works Department could be carried out very much better and more profitably in the country by the local roads boards. In the East Avon district the roads boards have attempted to overcome their difficulties by getting settlers to cut out their rates by accepting work. I have been asked to approach the Minister in regard to road board grants and municipal grants, and I have been told that funds are not available. In times like these, one feels that it is really not fair to worry Ministers by endeavouring to induce them, even with the idea of trying to make oneself a popular road and bridges member, to do works which he knows it is not possible for them to undertake. In my district, where there are several new roads boards, many of the settlers have had this season little or no income, and it presses heavily on them. However, they, in common with other sections of the community, will have to take

up their share of the white man's burden. There is one subject I know members would like to hear brought up. It is the State steamers. I have nothing particularly to say in condemnation of the policy, but more in regard to that beautiful ship "Western Australia." I am not out to condemn this enterprise, but I should like to ask the Premier why he keeps on this hulk which has long since outlived her usefulness.

Mr. Bolton: You buy her; there is your answer.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The vessel cost originally £39,000, and there has since been spent on her recently £12,000. She stands in the books of the department to-day as worth £67,000, and would probably realise less than half that amount if she were sold now. Shipping men do not know what trade she would suit. She is a worse proposition even than a wheat farm, because with a wheat farm you have a chance. The Premier claims that this vessel is to-day worth more than she was when she was bought. She should be worth more, for £20,000 has been spent on her since she was purchased. She has made a loss on nearly every trip, and the Government admit a net loss on her of £13,000 in twelve months ended 30th June last. That figure should be £17,000, because the cost of the annual overhaul has not been charged. The loss on this vessel has been for the year 1912-13 £22,800, and for 1913-14 £17,000, or roughly £40,000. If the Government continues to run her the sum will mount up to £100,000. Experts assess the present outside break-up value of the vessel at £20,000. This boat is decidedly a losing proposition. I have the figures here, of her Port Darwin trip. She required 1,000 tons of New South Wales coal, or 1,002 tons of Collie coal in her bunkers to make that trip, and carried 400 tons of cargo although this was only on her outward trip. She consumes 40 tons of coal daily, and her pace is roughly 11 knots an hour. She will earn about £3,000, and costs £4,000 a trip, and therefore shows a loss of £1,000 a trip.

The Minister for Mines: She is a fast boat.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Something should be done. The position so far as that boat is concerned is absurd.

The Minister for Mines: The Russians may want her back shortly.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There is another little matter concerning her. A little while ago she went on her annual trip to the Eastern States. She is built on rather narrow lines. During a light breeze on this occasion she got a bad list on, and, some of her portholes being open, she took in rather more water than was consistent with safety. Her captain and her engineers however, stuck to her like Britons, and by super-human efforts got her out of danger and saved her that she might continue her merry career in helping to swell our deficit. So far as the civil servants are concerned, the question of retrenchment is made altogether too much of a political one. I do not say that certain hon. members are trying to pose in a particular light in order to curry favour personally with the civil service. For my own part I have hosts of friends in the civil service—in fact one of my own sons is there. It is not likely, therefore, that I should be considered as an antagonist towards them. If retrenchment has to be brought about, let us not for Heaven's sake, be hyper-critical over it—granted that it has become necessary—but let us all take our share in any unpopularity that may accrue as a result of any measure that may have to be passed in connection with it. Let fair play and saneness of judgment be the chief dominating characteristics in such action. Let all members of this Chamber and of another place consent to a reduction of their salaries. My ideas on this subject were cast some six or seven days ago. Let them consent to a reduction of their salaries for a start. This seems to be the popular idea to-night, and it has been my idea from the beginning.

The Minister for Mines: We will transmit it to another place and ask for their concurrence therein.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Let all take their stand, not only Ministers, but heads of departments. Let us start at the top and go right away down to the bottom.

The Minister for Mines: Oh no, that is unkind.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Let us work downwards and let us try to be fair. Members are inclined to treat this matter as a joke.

The Minister for Mines: Oh no, it is far too serious.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Perhaps members think that there is nothing to be serious about, because they are hoping that it will not come to pass.

Mr. Bolton: We tried it, you know.

The Minister for Mines: You do not know the privations that we suffered here for a few years.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am certain that the sensible and thinking part of the public service will be content and patriotically willing to bear their fair share of the burden. If there is to be any condensing or merging of departments let any spare officers be placed in any of the new branches that are being started.

The Minister for Mines: That is an idea.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not like the Minister's sarcasm. I did not come here in order that the Minister should make fun at my expense. I came here to give my ideas. If hon. members think anything of them let them take them at their value without being sarcastic. There is no doubt that a lot of supervision will be required in connection with the putting in of the wheat crops this year. There is, I believe, already a number of officers who have been taken away from the Lands Department, and, I am told, placed in the Farmers' Assistance Board Office where their services are being utilised. So far as the reduction of hours in the railway service is concerned, if everybody is to participate in the present effort those employed in this service will also have to play their part. I know they will act in this matter as the rest of us do. It is hard sometimes to get people to think on somewhat broader lines than is ordinarily the case. One's own troubles have a happy knack of looming up and hiding everything else.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): That is the trouble.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Since we first sat here on the 13th November of last year I have travelled 1,600 miles through my electorate, and only last Saturday and Sunday I was in the heart of my constituency. I found that already a cheerful and optimistic spirit was asserting itself amongst the settlers, and that the probable help that was promised by this House was having its effect upon them.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): By the Government.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I think the House had something to do with it as well as the Government. The help that is likely to be forthcoming is spurring them on to renewed efforts. On every hand they had a feeling that they were putting their troubles behind them, and were looking forward once more to a good season. Take for instance, the people around about Kellerberrin. There are shrewd business men there who are fully seized with the prospects of the coming season. Mr. Patterson, for example, of Kellerberrin, is putting in 2,600 acres. He is one of those shrewd business men who has a little capital and has the courage of his convictions, and he is putting his good solid gold into employing other people to cultivate and sow his land. Another gentleman who is going in extensively for cropping is Mr. M. A. McCabe, who is putting in 1,600 acres. There are also many others who are putting in every foot of ground they can.

The Minister for Mines: Is that an increase on last year?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, in the cases I have mentioned.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Is not this the Mr. Patterson who owns a gold mine?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, and he has one of the best holdings around Kellerberrin. He is putting his money back into the land and has great faith in the country. In the cases I am speaking of the men who are putting in such large areas of crop are men who have capital and can afford to do it. In view of this drought, coming as it has on top of

several rather doubtful seasons, there seems to be a tendency on the part of people to hold the view that the farming industry is done, and that the district I am speaking of, at all events, is an unsafe one and no good. But from the men who have capital down to the men who are struggling, and who have very little capital—some having none at all, and having to go to the Government for assistance—all are looking forward optimistically to the future. The rains we have had lately have been of a monsoonal nature. During a recent visit to my electorate I ran into a storm in which 61 points of rain fell, although it is true that this rain only covered a small portion of the country. But rains have been falling all over the country and the weather seems to have completely broken up. The lead is one which the Government have been endeavouring to follow in giving assistance to men on the land, I have heard it admitted in this Chamber that a bold developmental policy should be pursued by the Government.

The Minister for Works: I suppose you are aware that the policy we are following now—

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am about to scratch the backs of the Government, and so I hope the Minister for Works will keep quiet. The bold developmental policy I have in mind is that outlined by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) when speaking of the South-Western district. The men on the land to whom I refer, having gone into the industry as they have, are showing their faith in Western Australia, and thereby giving a lead to the Government, who have followed that lead. For my part, I maintain that the bold developmental policy which will give us the quickest returns is the policy we have adopted already.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: For the last three or four years.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Such a policy is most likely to give us speedy returns. Next, I propose to read a newspaper extract bearing on our prospects for the coming year—

Nearly six months of the greatest war known in the world's history have passed, and in this great clash of arms it will be interesting to review the effect that this great world conflict will be likely to have on the main product of our Eastern Districts—wheat. It is a matter of more than passing moment to the farmers in view of the fact that, whilst the wheat production of Europe will certainly diminish, the demand must increase. Consider the vast armies engaged in the present war, their capacity for destruction; the fact that immense quantities of foodstuffs will be deliberately destroyed when a retreat has to be made by either army. In their advance into the invaded country, captured grain will be wastefully used. Prussia, the great centre for producing wheat, rye, and oats, will probably be the greatest sufferer as time goes on. As an instance of deliberate destruction (to hark back) one has only to call to mind the destruction of foodstuffs at the evacuation of Antwerp. In Western Europe the calling to arms to fight or help in some form the military operations must seriously dislocate the agricultural operations, and, as a matter of fact, along both battle fronts all such work must be at a standstill. The great wheat-growing areas of Hungary are on the great plains across which Russia's victorious troops may shortly be trekking. Russia's wheat-growing country borders upon Germany's border. The coming and going of troops and the wild war rumours must have the effect of staying operations—the farmer, much in the dark as to what is going on, will be overshadowed by the fear of the ebb and flow of the conflict, and will probably strike his holding. The seed time for Northern Europe is November, and it may reasonably be stated little will be sown in East Prussia, Hungary, Belgium, or on the French frontiers; and the withdrawal of so many millions of the primary producers will result (where crops are put in) in badly prepared ground and

consequently poor crops. More than half the world's wheat is grown in Europe, and 40 per cent. in the countries at war. The vast quantities normally produced by the nations at war can be judged by the following figures:—Russia in Europe 461,000,000 bushels, France 319,000,000 bushels, Austria-Hungary 213,000,000 bushels, German Empire 133,000,000 bushels, Balkan Peninsula 77,000,000 bushels, Belgium 13,000,000 bushels, United Kingdom 55,000,000 bushels—Total, 1,271,000,000 bushels. Twelve times as much as the greatest harvest ever reaped in Australia. In spite of this stupendous production, Europe's net imports average no less than 244,000,000 bushels per annum, all except Russia and the Balkan States being importers. The more one thinks it over the surer becomes the conviction that prices must be high. If the outside countries can so increase their output as to make up the deficiency, (which is very doubtful indeed) this may have a tendency to hold prices back. But those countries who will be exporters to Europe—the United States, Canada, Argentine, Australia, and India—may reasonably look with a cheerful optimism to next year's sale of their wheat. In all past Continental wars, normal prices have not been reached for years after peace has been concluded. A large shortage in European production appears inevitable next season, and that on top of a short crop for 1914 will make the position very critical at the beginning of 1916, when the next Australian harvest becomes available. The farmers, the Government, and the financial institutions should co-operatively endeavour to get every possible acre of crop sown. The monsoonal disturbances have been rife, and these have resulted in fine rains—sectional 'tis true, in places—but on the whole fairly general, and indications point to a good season. In spite of all the well-authenticated (?) reports from New York (manufactured in Germany) of how well Germany is managing for her foodstuffs, it will be quite reason-

able to suppose that a dearth must be beginning to be felt, and the pinch will get more severe as the days go on. When peace is declared it will be a very pinched and hungry Germany that will want her garners replenished. The moral is: "Get every possible acre of ground thoroughly well worked and seeded, and cheerfully await the gifts the gods may give us."

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Please give the name of your authority.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The authority is a Victorian wheat expert.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: What is the name of the paper?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: *The Eastern Recorder*. A great deal has been said about spoon-feeding of the farmers. As an old-time goldfielder, I am bound to say that we on the goldfields in the old days had plenty of spoon-feeding. Let hon. members bear in mind the amount of money lavished on the goldfields in the early days. We now in the wheat belt are simply going through the same stage of adolescence as the goldfields passed through in the days gone by. I venture to predict, also, that the destiny of us who are now on the wheat belt will be much the same as that of the Victorians; and Victoria is, for its size, one of the greatest exporting countries of the world at the present time. Let hon. members realise the amount of traffic derived by our railways from the agricultural areas during last year, and then ask themselves whether my confidence is misplaced. The traffic from the agricultural areas last year comprised 12 million bushels of wheat, 62,000 bushels of flour, 200,000 tons of hay, 17,000 tons of potatoes, 1,655,681 bushels of oats, 167,915 bushels of barley, 208,738 gallons of wine, and 25,403 tons of fertiliser, besides the whole of the fruit that was grown. One of the produce firms in this city states that it paid rail freight to the amount of £22,274 between the 1st November, 1913, and the 30th June, 1914, and delivered many trucks of produce on which railage was paid by the buyer. The French wheat exporter, Dreyfus, paid £10,000 last

year. Hon. members consider that they have been getting a good deal of late about the people on the wheat belt—enough to bore hon. members to death. That gets on my nerves. I will give an instance of what living in the back blocks and being spoon-fed means. Last Christmas I was at Wadderin and Emu Hill, and there I struck an old man who had been to Mount Arrowsmith, a distance of 15 miles, to cart his water. The residents there were carting their water over distances of 11 to 15 miles. Some of them had been on their holdings five or six years, and during the first two years they had been obliged to cart their goods as much as 60 miles. Hon. members may have wondered why I was rather urgent in my advocacy of the Yillimining-Kondinin railway, but they will cease to wonder when they learn that these settlers are still distant something over 20 miles from railway communication. Next, on the subject of spoon-feeding, I will relate an incident which came under my notice at a place called Wolyaling. Arriving at the home- stead of Mr. Hughes, I noticed that he had added to his plant a windmill. I said, "This is an addition." He said, "Yes; a very big addition." They had sent away for the windmill and they had to take it 40 miles to the farm at Wolyaling. When the windmill was erected it was found that a part was missing and that it was necessary to send away for it. It was obtained and then the services of a fitter had to be secured and he too had to be taken over that great distance to the farm. Altogether to erect that windmill it was necessary to make journeys covering a total distance of 400 miles. When we find settlers having to cart water over 15 miles and when they have not a blade of feed or grain of wheat, we must recognise that these people must possess stout hearts if they expect to be able to carry things through to a successful issue. I was sorry to hear the member for Subiaco refer to the farming industry in the language he used. I give way to no member in regard to my feelings—I might almost call them of affection—towards the goldfields. I spent some of the best

years of my life on the goldfields, having lived there for eleven or twelve years, and we as a party are prepared to do all we can to forward the interests of the people there. The representatives of the goldfields are helping us to get measures through and we are grateful to them for that assistance. We have had put before us suggestions in the direction of increased taxation, increased railway rates, Government control of the totalisator, that members should bring about a reduction of their salaries, that heads of departments should suffer a reduction of hours, and that the s.s. "Western Australia" should be cut off the service. In a multitude of councillors there is wisdom and I trust something will be done in the direction of seriously taking in hand some of these important questions.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why do you want to cut out the steamers?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is that particular hulk the "Western Australia" which is losing so much that I want to cut out.

The Minister for Works: She is not a hulk; she is a good ship.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It would be better to scrap her and cut the loss.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why scrap her?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then send her home and sell her in the best market.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why send her home when we can sell her here?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then sell her here. Progress reported.

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BILL—PUBLIC SERVANTS.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Message received from the Council agreeing to amendments Nos. 2, 3, and 5, also to the first portion of amendment No. 4, but disagreeing with Amendment No. 1 and to the second and third portions

of Amendment No. 4, and agreeing to Amendment No. 6 subject to a modification.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE.

Returned from the Legislative Council with requested amendments.

House adjourned at 11-28 p.m.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, No. To be effective a considerably greater expenditure is necessary, which, with the first flood, would be rendered useless. 3, (a) Not aware. (b) No; but even if it were so there are works more deserving than holiday resorts, upon which the money could be better expended. (c) No.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Supply (No. 2) (£488,270).
 - 2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.
- Passed.*

BILL—CONTROL OF TRADE IN WAR TIME AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th February, 1915.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th January.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [3.6]: I regret that I was absent when the Bill was introduced. However, I have since read the Minister's speech in *Hansard*, and I find he placed the Bill very clearly, though very briefly, before the House. Little or no exception can be taken to the measure. It introduces very little new legislation, confirming rather what has been done in the past, and validating many illegal actions of the vermin board. The Act was first introduced when Parliament had very little experience of such measures, and therefore alterations and amendments have been found necessary. These are included in the Bill, as well as clauses to validate actions of the board which may not have been in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The chief of these amendments enables the Government to impose interest at five per cent. when any rate has remained unpaid for a period of three months. That period is rather short, and I intend to move in Committee to make it

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—MANDURAH RIVER BAR.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to take early steps to reopen the river bar at Mandurah? 2, Is it a fact that according to an official estimate the work can be done for £500? 3, Are the Government aware that unless the work is done forthwith it may mean—(a) the temporary destruction of the important fishing industry at Mandurah; (b) the ruining of Mandurah as a holiday resort for the coming autumn; (c) the imperilling of the health of the resident community?