

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th February, 1915.

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

## QUESTION — EDUCATION, HEAD TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS.

Mr. ALLEN (for Mr. Smith) asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House a return, showing the names of the 59 head teachers and 56 assistants who were notified of their transfers prior to the vacation?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: I regret that the list compiled was not correct. The clerk entrusted with the compilation of such lists included transfers arranged before the beginning of the holidays, although in some cases the notifications did not go out until a few days later. The first day of the holidays was Saturday, December 19th. Notices of transfer were sent on or before December 17th to 42 head teachers and 23 assistants. On December 19th notices were despatched to one head teacher and nine assistants. On Monday, December 21st, notices were despatched to one head teacher and 10 assistants. On December 22nd notices were despatched to 13 head teachers and 14 assistants. On December 23rd notices were despatched to two head teachers. A return of all the names concerned is attached.

The Minister laid the papers on the Table.

## QUESTION — RAILWAY REVENUE, BEVERLEY, BROOKTON, AND PINGELLY.

Mr. HICKMOTT asked the Premier: What was the railway revenue earned for the last two years at Beverley, Brookton, and Pingelly?

The PREMIER replied: The total earnings (i.e., station debits) for the last two years are as follow:—Beverley, £12,065; Brookton, £18,870 (this includes freight on railway construction material); Pingelly, £14,630. This information is published on pages 78/9 of the annual report for year ended 30th June last.

## SELECT COMMITTEE, WHALING LICENSE.

On motion by Mr. HOLMAN the time for bringing up the Committee's report was extended for a week.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Attorney General: 1, Return showing notifications of transfer to school teachers. 2, Papers re prosecution of Joyce Bros. (ordered on motion by Mr. Bolton). 3, Return of head and assistant teachers notified of transfer prior to the vacation.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Licensing Act Amendment Continuance.
- 2, Stamp Act Amendment.
- 3, Postponement of Debts Act Amendment.
- 4, Esperance Northwards Railway.

## BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE.

*Council's Message—Money Bills Procedure.*

Message from the Legislative Council that it repeats its request for amend-

ment of No. 9, and requests concurrence in further modifications of Nos. 1 and 10, now considered.

*In Committee.*

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

The CHAIRMAN: In consequence of a ruling given by His Honour the Speaker in connection with an insisted requests on amendments to a money Bill, it is not my intention to ask the Committee to deal with these amendments until I have reported the matter to the Speaker. I will therefore now leave the Chair to report to His Honour the Speaker.

*The Speaker took the chair.*

The CHAIRMAN: I desire to report, Mr. Speaker, that in consequence of the ruling which you gave the other evening I did not ask the Committee to deal with these amendments until I had reported the matter to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The matter which has been reported to me came under my notice when the Message was brought to this House last evening. I would have made some remarks then but for the fact that a number of amendments were modified and therefore not pressed in the usual acceptance of the term. In regard to one amendment, however, the Legislative Council repeats its request. The word "repeat," is only an evasion of terms, because to repeat an amendment means that its acceptance is insisted upon. Therefore, I rule, in accordance with previous rulings, that the Legislative Council has no right to insist upon an amendment to a Money Bill. I shall leave it to the House to take whatever action it may think desirable. I have on previous occasions left such matters to the discretion of the House, and I intend to do so on this occasion.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not prepared to take the responsibility of asking the Chamber to forego any of its rights and privileges as I hold the opinion very strongly that we have already foregone them too often.

As a matter of fact another place has already expressed the opinion that we have not insisted very often, and consequently they have regarded it as their right to insist. But I do not think this Chamber can safely forego its rights in regard to such a Bill as this in the future. This Chamber, having disagreed to the amendment previously sent to us, the other Chamber might have modified it, but having neglected to do that and having insisted upon its being accepted, the position is one which this Chamber cannot take into consideration. In this particular Bill the Legislative Council have modified previous amendments and these are of such a nature that we can take them into consideration and we can deal with these at a later stage. In one particular case, however, it is not a modification, but an insistence upon the amendment which they previously sent to us. I think I might move in the direction of sending a Message to the Legislative Council to the effect that Assembly acquaints them that there is a difficulty in the way of considering their Message in which a request is pressed and that the Assembly requests the Council to further consider the Message transmitted by them. I do not know whether we should limit it to this one amendment and then deal with the modifications, or return the whole message.

Mr. SPEAKER: The modified requests of the Council's Message are not pressed requests and I think they are open to discussion by this House at any time. The exception I take is only in respect to one paragraph in the message which states that the Council repeats its request for amendment No. 9. That in substance is the same amendment which was sent to this Chamber on the previous occasion.

Mr. Bolton: I think it would be better if the whole Message were sent back to the other place rather than discuss a portion of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

*That the following Message be sent to the Legislative Council:—The Legis-*

*lative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that there is a difficulty in the way of the consideration by the Assembly of the Council's message in which a request is pressed. The Legislative Assembly therefore requests the Legislative Council to further consider paragraph 2, amendment No. 9 of the Message transmitted by them in regard to the Industries Bill.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I have ruled that the modified amendments can be discussed, but if the motion which has been moved by the Minister for Lands is carried the whole Message can be sent back. I think no exception is taken to the modified amendments, the only exception taken is in respect to paragraph 2 dealing with amendment No. 9.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we send back the whole Message there will be a difficulty in connection with the modifications and I would like in the same message to point out a difficulty in connection with one of the amendments which has been modified. We may as well have the two matters considered by another place at the same time. On the Notice Paper hon. members will see that the Legislative Council propose to strike out "December, 1915," and to insert "March, 1916," and then the amendment with the modification will read—"Provided that no commodity shall be supplied or money advanced under this Act after 31st March, 1916." The difficulty is that putting in that proviso after paragraph (d) of Clause 9 the Legislative Council are inserting a proviso in a clause which will limit that clause. That is absolutely wrong.

Mr. Hudson: Do you mean wrong constitutionally?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not see how it can be put in correctly because we are trying by the proviso in the clause to limit the operations of the measure, whereas the proviso should be at the end of the measure dealing with the whole of it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Cannot that be explained by the Minister in charge in another place?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am in the position to know that the Minister did explain it in another place and members there did not seem to take the slightest notice of it. I was wondering whether we should strike out "Act" and put in "Section" and then it would as it should limit the operation of the advances to that clause.

Mr. Hudson: Then you will be dealing with the Message.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We would be passing a measure which would be absolutely misleading to the public and to the administrators of it because we would have to turn to Clause 9 to find out the limitations of the measure.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is within the province of the Committee of the House to discuss the modified amendments now if the House so desires, and it is equally within the province of the House to send the whole message back. Though exception can be taken only to the one amendment which is repeated or pressed. I suggest, if it meets with the approval of the House, that a motion of this character be submitted—"That the Committee have leave to consider paragraph 3 of the Legislative Council's Message No. 29, but not paragraph 2." The Committee on coming to paragraph 2 can report to the House, and a motion of this character can be sent to another place in respect of paragraph 2.

The Minister for Lands: What would happen in regard to the modifications? If we deal with the modifications can we transmit them by the same message?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Committee will report, and the Minister can frame the Message accordingly.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

*That the Committee have permission to consider paragraph 3 of the Legislative Council's Message 29, but not paragraph 2.*

Mr. TAYLOR: The motion indicates that we are to deal with only a portion of the Message. That is a procedure which has never been adopted since I have been in the Chamber. The reason, I am satisfied, is to secure the passage of

this Bill if possible, and the House is prepared to forego its privileges again to save the Bill, but if paragraph 2 be of such importance that the Minister will not accept the conditions submitted by another place—

Mr. Bolton: It is a question of pressing amendments.

Mr. TAYLOR: If another place presses paragraph 2 and we will not accept it, the Bill will be lost. It would be unwise for this Chamber to take up its time discussing the portion of the Message indicated, when we know the vital point is in paragraph 2. It would be wiser on the part of the House to return the full Message, and then another place would have an opportunity to maintain its position or recede from it.

Mr. Bolton: What about their modified amendments then?

Mr. Hudson: They could return them in a proper Message.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am inclined to agree with the hon. member for Mount Margaret that we should either waive our rights and consider the whole Message, in view of the extreme urgency of the legislation and in view of the fact that we have already appointed a joint select committee to overcome these difficulties in the future—

The Premier: The member for Mount Margaret did not suggest that we should waive our rights.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Or we could send the Message back in its entirety. I do not think we shall be doing right if we consider a portion of the Message. The fact of taking any portion of a Message into consideration will be tantamount to considering the Message, and we should take a stand one way or the other. I do not see that there can be any difficulty in the way of the Minister getting his views put before another place by his colleague there.

The Premier: We did that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We do not know that officially. The position could be so clearly placed before the Council that they might fall in with the sug-

gestion, and then on the Message being returned we could consider the whole of it.

Mr. HUDSON: The whole of the Message should be returned to the Council as being bad. It is a violation of the rights and privileges of this Chamber, and we should maintain those rights and privileges. I ask your ruling, Sir, on the question if we reject the proposal of the Minister, what will be our position?

Mr. SPEAKER: Any further motion desired can be moved.

The Minister for Lands: I desire to make an explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister can reply, but his reply will close the debate.

The Minister for Lands: It may be too late if I do not make the explanation now.

Mr. HOLMAN: I consider that the Message should be returned to another place before being dealt with. Had it come forward with amendment No. 1 placed on top, I would not have been able to take notice of No. 2 until we had dealt with the first, and then I would have considered it my duty to report to His Honour the Speaker, in accordance with the rulings which have been given, but, seeing that the other portion of the Message occurs first, we would be justified in referring the whole of the Message back before dealing with any portion of it. I think this will be the best course to adopt.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the permission of the House I will allow the Minister for Lands to make an explanation. The matter is deserving of full consideration, and requires to be cleared up.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I realise that it would be in the best interests of this Chamber to send back the whole of the Message but I have already asked for the ruling of His Honour the Speaker as to whether we cannot deal with a modification. I want to amend the modification. His Honour the Speaker has given a ruling, and the member for Mt. Margaret has misconstrued what has happened. I asked the Speaker's ruling

as to whether we could consider the modifications so as to put that right, and in the one Message get the modification put right, and include the other point regarding the interference with our rights and privileges.

Mr. Hudson: Would not you be dealing with the Message?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: With a portion of it.

Mr. Hudson: That is what I object to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we deal with a modified amendment we are not prejudicing the rights and privileges of this Chamber. It is only proper to deal with a modification.

Mr. Hudson: We would be dealing with a bad Message.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we adopt the course suggested by the member for Mt. Margaret and the Leader of the Opposition we should have to send this Message back. On receiving another Message we should have to deal with the modifications and then return that Message. I wanted to get the whole thing fixed up in one Message. We are liable to get mixed up, and possibly in the confusion the Bill will be lost. I can see that members are not anxious to consider the matter in this light. I would rather send up half a dozen Messages than to allow the position to become so complicated as to jeopardise the Bill. In the circumstances I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What motion will you submit in lieu?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will submit the original motion in regard to paragraph 2 and ask that the whole Message be sent back. Then we can deal with paragraph 2, and we shall have to go into Committee and deal with the modifications and send them back.

Mr. Hudson: We should have to do that in any case.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will not argue the point.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

*That the Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that there*

*is a difficulty in the way of the consideration by the Assembly of a message in which a request is pressed. The Assembly therefore requests that the Council do further consider the message transmitted to the Assembly in regard to the Industries Assistance Bill.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to take the opportunity to correct the impression which several members have that the acceptance or consideration of a modified amendment is a breach of the privileges of this House. I have gone into the matter most carefully, because it came under my notice last night, and I had doubts as to dealing with the Message, but I find that a modified amendment can be accepted at any time, because it is not in substance the amendment previously sent down. Therefore the consideration of a modified amendment is not a violation of the privileges of this House, but the discussion of a pressed amendment would be a violation of the privileges of this House. I make this statement that hon. members may appreciate the distinction between the two.

Mr. Taylor: The modified amendment and the request are contained in the one Message; that is the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has no bearing whatever on the matter.

Question put and passed, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

#### BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council notifying that it did not insist on amendment No. 4, but insisted on its modification of the Assembly's amendment No. 6, subject to a further modification in which it desired the concurrence of the Assembly now considered.

##### *In Committee.*

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

No. 6: At the end of new Clause 7 (as modified by the Council) add the words "or a member of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association."

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The only question we have to deal with is the amendment to the original amendment moved in this House by the member for North Perth (Mr Smith) providing that we should add another visitor to the Hospital for the Insane and that that extra visitor should be a female. To this amendment the Legislative Council endeavoured to add the words "Who shall be a medical practitioner" and this House declined to agree to that amendment. The Legislative Council now suggests that we should add the words "or a member of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association." In appointing a visitor for the insane it is not necessary to restrict such visitors to nurses. It is quite possible that some women in Western Australia would make better visitors than some of the nurses would.

Mr. Foley: Only some of them.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Only some of them. I am of opinion that there are as able women outside the Nurses' Association for this purpose as there are inside it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is just as well to have practical experience if you can get it.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Why bar the others? They do not go there to examine patients. Even if nurses did go with that object they are not trained in lunacy. We know that the best doctors we have know very little more than a layman about lunacy, which requires special training on the part of medical men. The object of having a visitor is to see as far as possible that no patients are kept there who should be outside, that the patients are being well treated, and that the management is carried out as it should be. These functions can be carried out by a laymen equally as well as by a trained nurse. The fact of being trained as a nurse gives no extra facility in carrying out the duties of a visitor. In the matter of appointing these inspectors, we should give the Governor-in-Council the widest possible scope and the scope should not be limited to certain sections only. This would not

of course bar the trained nurse or the woman doctor, but what this amendment does is to bar all outsiders. I want it open to all women in Western Australia, and I think the Committee would be right in insisting, if we are to have these inspectors, that the widest possible choice should be given to the Governor in Council in the matter of their appointment. I move—

*That the modification be not agreed to.*

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I entirely agree with the Honorary Minister. Both Houses have decided to affirm the principle of lady official visitors to the Hospital for the Insane, and the Honorary Minister is quite right in saying that we should have the widest possible choice. Whilst a member of the Trained Nurses' Association may possess certain qualifications for nursing, these qualification may not come in in a question of inspection, for such inspection will deal more with the treatment that patients are receiving than the malady from which they are suffering. There are a great many female nurses in the Hospital for the Insane and one of these ex-nurses would probably be much better as an official visitor than a member of the Association.

Mr. Hudson: You require qualifications for a male inspector but not for a female inspector.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Medical knowledge on the part of a visitor is not absolutely necessary, for what the visitor is required to do is to see that the provisions and regulations under the Act are being carried out.

Mr. ROBINSON: The very opening words of the Honorary Minister condemn the proposition he is making. He says that the object of the visitor in going there is not that he or she should judge as to whether the person should be in the Hospital for the Insane or not. Under Section 94 of the Principal Act two official visitors are appointed, one of whom shall be a medical practitioner and the other a resident or police magistrate or legal practitioner. What we want in the visitors that are selected to go to the Hospital for the Insane is the best combination of knowledge

possible to assist the patients there. I felt inclined at first when the question of a lady visitor came up to agree to any lady visitor, on the ground that we would be giving what was wanted by those women who are in the hospital. The fact that patients will be more likely to express their feelings to a lady visitor than to a male visitor would entitle the Committee to say that a woman shall be one of the inspectors. The next point is, if there was a sufficient choice in the country, that that lady visitor should be a qualified practitioner. But it has been shown that there are not sufficient qualified lady medical practitioners in the State, and that there is in fact no choice in that respect. I have no doubt that in a few years the Government will always appoint the lady holding the highest qualifications as medical practitioner. In the meantime, surely the next best thing is to appoint a trained nurse. As regards the circumstance that the amendment comes from another place, I rather resent the feeling apparently existing here that a suggestion must be bad because it comes from another place. Under the amendment, the limit will be extended to include several hundreds of women. Why jeopardise the Bill by wrangling over a triviality? I ask hon. members to throw aside all party considerations in viewing the amendment, which I consider a very proper one.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The argument of the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) was logical up to a certain point, but towards the end became wholly illogical. If the principle extending the scope of choice from two or three women to several hundreds is a good one, why not extend the scope still further, and include all the women of this State? The rejection of the amendment will not prevent the appointment of a lady from the ranks of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association as visitor. However, I see no reason for singling out the members of that association for distinction in this matter. As pointed out by the Honorary Minister, the special ex-

perience of a trained nurse would not render that lady better qualified to inquire into the conditions at a hospital for the insane, than a woman of wide worldly experience. No layman or lay woman could judge of the mental condition of the patients. The duty of visitors is merely to inquire into the care that patients are receiving.

Mr. FOLEY: The Council's amendment absolutely limits the choice to the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, but there are other trained nurses' associations.

Mr. Robinson: Strike out the word "Australian," then.

Mr. FOLEY: When the Midwifery Bill was before Parliament, one union of trained nurses was endeavouring to influence hon. members against the other union. The scope of choice should not be limited, because there are women with ample experience of nursing, but not members of a trained nurses' association, who are fully qualified to fill the position of lady visitor. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) is quite wrong in assuming that because an amendment comes from another place it necessarily encounters opposition here. Indeed, the boot of dictation is rather on the foot of members of another place. The Honorary Minister in my opinion would be wise in declining to accept the amendment.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: In reply to the member for Canning, I wish to say that I consider another place effects many improvements in measures. As regards this clause, my desire is to obtain the widest possible choice. There are women of say 60 who have been wardresses in the hospital for the insane, but who upon marrying have become dissociated from that hospital; and a woman visitor with experience of lunacy nursing would be more valuable than one selected from among trained nurses. Yet lunacy nurses would be barred under the amendment.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The suggestion of another place is not being viewed in a proper light. Any reasonable amendment from the Legislative Council we should endeavour to meet;

and, after all, this amendment is a trivial one. The specification of the professions of visitors is obviously advantageous. Patients desiring legal advice may consult the legal visitor, while other patients may be desirous of the special attention of the medical visitor to their cases. Now it is proposed to appoint a woman visitor. If we had a big selection of women medical practitioners, that would be an argument in favour of appointing one of them, because we should take the extra qualification if it is available. Why should we not appoint a nurse? The choice will be sufficiently large. Surely it would be beneficial to accept an amendment on these lines.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: It does not say "trained nurse."

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, amend it to "trained nurse." A trained nurse is better qualified for the position than a woman who has had no training. Rather than jeopardise the measure, it would be wise to meet another place in a spirit of compromise.

Question passed; the Council's amendment not made.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: That is the last of the Lunacy Bill.

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

## BILL—VERMIN BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.—Add the following new clause to stand as Clause No. 7: "Section 47 is hereby amended by striking out the words 'two shillings' and inserting in lieu thereof the words 'one shilling'."

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The object of the amendment is to effect a reduction of 50 per cent. in the rates. The position is that the board, not having

collected the rate, is now owing the Government £9,000 interest on the money advanced for the erection of the fence. To agree to this reduction would be to ask the State to carry a most unfair burden. At the request of the pastoralists concerned the money was advanced on the distinct understanding that a two-shilling rate would be struck. Whatever the pastoralists have done they have done with their eyes open, and it is not fair to ask for this reduction. I move—

*That the amendment be not made.*

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you power to supersede that board?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and if the Bill passes I propose to supersede the board and maintain the fence under State control at considerably reduced cost.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am surprised that the Minister has not accepted the amendment, for the two shilling rate presses very heavily indeed on the Gascoyne squatters.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have not paid it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Because they are not in a position to do so. The Minister says that the fence can be maintained for something like half what it has cost in the past.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, but a shilling rate would not pay the interest and sinking fund on the cost of construction.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Still, if the Minister can maintain the fence at half the present cost he ought to accept the reduced rate.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The rate certainly represents a heavy burden, but it is largely consequent upon the unnecessarily high administrative costs. Those costs can be materially reduced, but in all probability it will be necessary to have the two-shilling rate. The two shillings is the maximum prescribed by the existing Act, and the amendment proposes that the maximum shall be one shilling.

Question passed, the Council's amendment not made.

No. 2.—Add the following new clause to stand as Clause 8:—"Section 49 is



hereby amended by striking out the words 'two shillings' and inserting in lieu thereof the words 'one shilling':

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is consequential on the first amendment. I move—

*That the amendment be not made.*

Question passed; the Council's amendment not made.

Resolutions reported; and the report adopted.

A Committee consisting of the Minister or Lands, Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister), and Mr. Male drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

## BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5.—Omit all the words after the first four lines to the end of the first paragraph, and insert: "distributed or otherwise applied as dividend, or converted into capital in any way, the amount of such profits shall, when so distributed, applied or converted, if duty has not already been paid thereon, be liable to duty under this Act as if such profits had been made during the year in which such distribution, application, or conversion is made":

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact, before the Bill left this Chamber I agreed to make this amendment. It has been made in another place, and as it is in accord with what I promised, I move—

*That the amendment be made.*

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

## BILL—LICENSING ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 9th February.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [6.0]: Since the Attorney General was good enough to grant me an adjournment of the debate on this measure, I have had time to read it through and digest its clauses. There are only four, but some of them are likely to lead to grave results if they are passed. I wish to remind the House that all questions in connection with licensing matters have always been looked upon from a non-party point of view. Individual members, from the time when we passed the big measure in 1911, have always dealt with all suggestions from an individual standpoint, and not from a party standpoint. I wish to deal with this Bill in that spirit. I regret that the Attorney General cannot see his way to deal with the three amendments which were suggested last session. A Bill indeed was introduced, but it lapsed. It dealt with the three matters which were put forcibly before the Attorney General by representative people in the State, namely, the age limit, registration and licensing of barmaids, and the hours of closing. Those were the three matters of vital importance, and I wish he could have seen his way clear to deal with those points when bringing down this amending Bill.

The Attorney General: It would have involved a local option poll, which would cost a lot of money. That was the chief objection.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: At any rate it would not have been a bad move to provide for it even if we had to postpone the taking of the poll.

The Attorney General: We can deal with it next session.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: So far as this measure is concerned I cannot quite understand what the urgency for it is. I can understand that Clause 4 might be classed in that category. Perhaps it is essential that we should legalise the action in regard to State hotels. I do not think anyone would take exception to amending Section 44 so that the

refreshment rooms and railway cars might come under proper supervision and inspection. So far as the principles embodied in the other two clauses are concerned, I can see no reason why we should be asked to deal with them. Indeed, I am strongly opposed to the principles embodied in those two clauses. In 1911 by a large majority we agreed to hand over the control of this trade practically to the people of the State, creating districts and giving people themselves the right by referendum to declare their wishes in connection with the liquor traffic. Hon. members will remember that at that time we decided on certain questions which should be submitted to the people by way of referendum. The people had the control of the trade, but we also decided when it came to the poll that those who were deprived of the rights which they legally held should have some form of compensation, and that was set down as time compensation. That was agreed to on the motion of the present Minister for Works. Licensed houses, therefore, cannot be closed until a certain number of years have passed.

The Attorney General: In 1920.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We have had a local option poll in all districts as to the wishes of the people in regard to increase in the number of licenses, and out of 42 districts, if I remember rightly, 40 decided in favour of no further increase.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The figures were, I think, 49 out of 50.

The Attorney General: There was one for an increase.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Now we are asked by this measure to practically set aside the decision of the people in regard to an increase in licenses in respect to wine and beer shops as they are termed.

The Attorney General: No, no! It is substituting a better form of license.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Attorney General says it is substituting a better form of license for something that has been proved to be bad. That might be. I am not going to dispute that. Perhaps a general publican's license is a better license than a wine and beer license; it is certainly a more valuable

license so far as the proprietor is concerned, and it is a much better license to have so far as the property owner is concerned. I cannot see that we would be justified in adopting the suggestion that the whole of these wine and beer licenses throughout Western Australia, which number, I believe, about 18 at the present time, should be converted into a better form of license. There are two at Fremantle, two in Perth, one at Maylands, and one at South Perth, making six in the metropolitan area, and there are some twelve others in different parts of the State; and if we adopt the suggestion we must convert all these inferior licenses into something which will be very much more valuable. There are two wine and beer licenses in the City, and the moment we convert them we put thousands of pounds into the pockets of the holders. One of these in Perth is at the corner of William and Murray streets, and the other one is in the basement of McNess's arcade.

The Minister for Mines: Has not the King Edward Hotel one?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No. That is a hotel license, which is a different thing. It would, however, be better to give that place a full license, because it has fulfilled all requirements. The hotel is there and accommodation is there, and it is a useful institution and I do not think anyone would take exception to granting to it a full publican's license.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: A promise was given to the Presbyterian Church when the hotel license was granted that it would not be extended.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I was not aware of that, but there is no analogy between the King Edward Hotel, which has an hotel license, and which provides all necessary accommodation, and which is conducted properly, and these wine and beer shops, the Alhambra in the one instance, and the building at the corner of William and Murray-streets in the other. We shall be repudiating the expressed opinion of the public of the metropolitan area if we agree to the passage of this measure, and in addition to that we shall be doing an injustice to

the general public inasmuch as we are going to give to these people—

Mr. O'Loughlen: A huge gift.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, a huge gift. I guarantee that the moment they get a general publican's license for that wine and beer shop at the corner of Murray and William streets, there will be an added value of £10,000 to that license, and I do not know how many thousands of pounds will be added to the value of the property?

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about the other one?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The same thing will apply to the other one.

The Premier: Does not that apply also to some of the other licenses granted by the bench?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course.

The Premier: Then this will not be singular.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But why perpetuate it? The people of the State have pronounced against further licenses. Notwithstanding that we have had a poll, and obtained the views of the people we are presenting legislation which will have the effect of defeating that poll. Having had the poll, and the people having decided that the number of licenses should not be increased, this particular class of license should be the first to go, and we were hoping that these wine and beer shops would be closed in 1920.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: They should be closed up before that.

The Premier: You have no guarantee that that will be done.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am only giving my opinion. I do not see why the Premier should cavil at my expression of opinion.

The Premier: We have no guarantee that they will do so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, but the Premier knows that certain stipulations are contained in the parent Act, which show how licenses have to be reduced, and the classification that has to be made in coming to the conclusion as to which houses have to be closed. It lays down the course which is to be followed. I

am satisfied that any bench that has to deal with the matter of reducing licenses will take into consideration first of all the class of license, and then the class of house, and the inferior house will be closed every time.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I wish to point out that the Attorney General in commending the Bill to the acceptance of the House referred to the Australian wine and beer license as the worst form of license in the State. I have no doubt he is perfectly correct in the opinion he has formed with regard to them. He argued, from that contention, that we should replace the worst form of license with a better form of license. In support of that argument, he stated they were not subject to the same police inspection and supervision as general publicans' licenses were. I cannot for a moment follow the hon. gentleman in that contention. I do not see why holders of this particular class of license should not have equally strict supervision with those of every other form of license. If there is any defect, of which I have no knowledge in our laws in this direction, for instance, in the Police Act, I am of opinion that every member of this House will support the Minister in giving increased powers. I have no wish to convert something, which is of second grade, so far as value is concerned, into something that is of the first grade, simply for the reason that proper and necessary supervision is not being exercised over the holders of these licenses. I believe the police have all the power to see that these houses are properly conducted. I hope the Attorney General will see that that power is properly exercised. With regard to the suggestion that we should give some power to grant an extension of time for the payment of license fees, I cannot understand why we should be asked to do this.

The Attorney General: As a matter of fact it very often happens that they are not quite up to time. This measure enables us to fix a fine for being late. It

simply gives power to fine a man who is not up to date.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If we regard the Minister's suggestion, we should be laying down the principle that there should be an extension of time for payment of these license fees. I am absolutely opposed to any such action. I believe that license fees should be forthcoming at the due date. If an auctioneer has not taken out his license and paid the fee, he cannot continue his avocation, and cannot hold a sale without being liable to prosecution. Why should the publican who has omitted to pay the necessary fee, which is small enough in all conscience, be permitted to carry on his avocation without a license, or be granted an extension of time in which to pay the license fee? If the holder of a license is not in a position to pay a fee, the owner of the property can step in and do so for the sake of protecting his license, which, of course belongs to the House. I for one am not prepared to grant any extension of time. I think it is a mistake. If they cannot pay the license fee, they should not be allowed to carry on their business. I would not hesitate to close up any house for which the license fee had not been paid on the due date. I am opposed to the legislation outlined by the Attorney General in that respect.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Do you suggest closing up straight away if the fees are not paid?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes; they should be closed up if they are not licensed. This should apply in the same way as to other license holders.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I quite agree with you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That seems to me to cover the main features of the measure. The only remaining feature is that, of course, in Clause 4, which I mentioned previously this evening, that is the clause to legalise the position so far as State hotels are concerned. I have not the slightest objection to that, or to the provisions that the Attorney General said were for the purpose of having proper

supervision over our railway refreshment rooms and railway cars. I think that is essential. My opposition is confined, therefore, to clauses 2 and 3. If I have some assurance that, in Committee, these two clauses will be deleted I shall be very glad indeed to let the Bill go into Committee.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): If you cannot beat these clauses in Committee you cannot beat the second reading.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then we shall have to try and beat the measure on the second reading, if that is the attitude of the Honorary Minister. I do not want to deprive him of a section of the measure, which he says is essential for the proper control of State hotels, and the inspection of refreshment rooms. If he is quite prepared to let the other portions of the Bill go, I shall be with him, otherwise I will vote against the second reading and endeavour to persuade other hon. members of this House to think alike and to support me in this action. In conclusion I wish to express my surprise, if I may do so without in any way being personal, that the Government have thought fit to introduce a measure in this direction.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why do they do anything?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I cannot understand why the Honorary Minister ever attempts to do anything.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I got the Lunacy Bill through, anyway.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I cannot understand what is behind the Government to induce them to introduce legislation of this description. Why should they try to increase so enormously the value of the property and the value of the leases for which licenses are held—they are few in number, about 18 in the whole State I believe? That is practically all that the Bill designs to bring about, namely to give an enormous unearned increment to holders of wine and beer licenses at the present time. That is what will happen if we pass this measure. I shall, I know, be met with the retort

that it is subject to the licensing bench. The fact remains that in some instances the licensing bench may be of opinion that it is advisable that all these licenses should be converted into a higher class of license. I am decidedly against this. I am of opinion that it overrides the decision of the people upon whom we have, by legislation, placed the responsibility of the control of the liquor traffic as given at the local option poll already taken. I am absolutely opposed to the provisions of the measure except those contained in the last clause.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [7.40]: I am of the same opinion as the Leader of the Opposition in regard to certain clauses of this measure. In regard to Clause 4, this provides that State hotels carried on at the commencement of this Act shall be deemed to be duly licensed for the year ending 31st December, 1915. This means that these hotels must from the time that the Bill first passes—if it is passed—comply with the Act. That these hotels have not always done so in the past is evidenced by a letter I will read to the House. Under the Licensing Act, 1911, Clause 94, no holder of a publican's general license, who, without reasonable cause refuses to supply any person with food, refreshments, etc., commits an offence, penalty £20. Without reasonable cause! What does this mean? It means that if a traveller is under the influence of liquor he will be refused either food or anything else.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Is that the only reasonable cause?

Mr. WILLMOTT: That is the reasonable cause under the Act.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: There are dozens of hotels in the city of Perth that you could catch every day in the week.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The State hotels should set any example in this way and should serve as an example to the rest of the hotels in the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am of opinion that State hotels are good, let there be no misunderstanding on that point. If I am allowed to do so, I would like to read what happened at Yallingup, and

members will then be able to see if there is room for improvement in the State hotels, or at all events in this particular State hotel. The letter reads—

On Monday, 25th January, in company with my wife and a friend I motored out to the caves from Busselton, arriving there at 2.29. We met the guide and proceeded immediately to go down the caves, the exploration of which occupied nearly two hours. We returned to the Cave House very tired, hot and weary, after the unusual exertion, at 4.23 (prompt time). My lady folk went on the verandah while I proceeded to the bar and ordered afternoon tea for them. The barman said "certainly," and went away to fix up, and then returned stating that the maids were all off duty, and that there would be no hot water, consequently they could not supply it. This at 4.23, at a time when every man likes a cup of tea as a rule, and likes to get it at that particular time.

My wife discovered that there was plenty of hot water; she went into the kitchen to see, and the cook said "There is plenty of hot water, if you can only get a maid." I asked to see the manager and again asked to be supplied with tea. He point blank refused, giving as his reason that afternoon tea came on at 4 o'clock and it was now 4.30.

It seems to me that the Government do not want their hotels down there run on these lines.

The Minister for Mines: We ought to have a Royal Commission.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not think they do want the hotels run on these lines. What do the placards say? They say that it is Paradise. If Paradise is run on lines of that sort, I do not want to go to Paradise. Hon. members may think this is trivial.

Mr. Thomas: It is; in the extreme.

The Minister for Mines: It is a national question.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not think it is trivial. As the man points out, he and his family are teetotallers. He remarks, "If I had gone to the bar for a whisky,

"I could have got it; but I wanted a cup of tea, and I could not get it."

Mr. Thomas: Shocking.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think the man is perfectly entitled to get a cup of tea if he demands it, and I am of opinion that if the State cannot run the Yalingup Caves House better than here described, the present manager ought to be got rid of.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member tell me what portion of his remarks applies to the Bill?

Mr. WILLMOTT: They apply to Clause 4, Sir. The point I want to make is that at present these hotels are not duly licensed, and that therefore their managers are not liable to a penalty of £20 for refusing to supply refreshment. They are not liable because they are not licensed, and so do not come under the Act. If Clause 4 is carried, then the managers will come under the Licensing Act, and can be prosecuted for not supplying refreshment when called upon to do so. The complaint I have brought forward is not so frivolous as some hon. members appear to think, and I commend the afternoon tea proposal. Certainly, if a man goes to the Caves House with his family on the tourist ticket, having been told that he is going to Paradise under the guidance of the State, and then is notified that if he does not break the pledge and have a whisky and soda he can go dry, it shows that something is wrong. I hope the Attorney General, having heard these few remarks, will see that such things do not occur in the future.

The Minister for Mines: We will certainly hold an inquiry.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [7.48]: This Bill represents another attempt to evade the licensing law of the State. The four clauses of this Bill make four distinct provisions. Clause 2 represents a violation of the local option vote. The House will remember that a vote taken in the Perth district resulted by a decision of the people against increase in licenses. It cannot be contended that the conversion of a wine and beer license into a publican's general

license does not represent such an increase. To put forward any such contention would be futile. With regard to the 1911 Act, in my opinion the measure is all right but its administration by the Attorney General is very faulty. The Attorney General says he wants power to convert wine and beer licenses into publican's general licenses in order that the police may have better control over the holders. But he cannot invest the police with greater powers of control than they have to-day, and therefore that argument ought not to have been used by the Attorney General. Now, what is the real reason for the proposal? One effect of it will be to give the people more opportunity to obtain drink. The Attorney General time and again has expressed his desire to reduce the drink trade, but how is this proposal going to reduce that trade? The Attorney General says he will respect the local option vote, and yet time and again he has endeavoured to amend the law in the direction of taking control away from the people and giving the Government a larger degree of control. In spite of a great deal of criticism, the 1911 Act is as good as could have been expected at that time. It is said that since the Liberal Government left office the administration of the liquor law has become very lax. I do not know whether or not that is true, but it is worth the Attorney General's while to inquire into the matter. It may be said, and I suppose the Attorney General will say, that greater revenue will be obtained from a fully licensed house than from one conducted under a wine and beer license, which latter license, as we know, carries a far lower fee than does the publican's general license. If that be the idea of the Attorney General, why not say so? Why not let us know that he is desirous of obtaining a little more revenue?

The Attorney General: I am simply seeking better control.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Government will get no better control under this measure. All that can happen will be to put a good deal of money in the hands of a few persons at the expense of the

great bulk of the people. If all the measures brought forward by the Government were for the benefit of the people, there would be a great deal to be said in favour of the argument used by the other side in support of this measure. As a rule, however, when the Government bring down a measure it is not with the idea of increasing the people's assets, but of reducing the people's assets. I do not, of course, wish to discuss that matter at length. In any case, I hope the House will not allow the Attorney General to carry the proposal. Next, we have the second proposal, which is to permit the Government to extend the payment of the license fee.

The Premier: That is not correct. The law provides for that to-day.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It has been pointed out that either a house is licensed or it is not licensed.

The Premier: We can extend the time for payment of the license. That is the law now. The proposal in this Bill is that when we do extend the time at the request of the licensee, we make him pay a fine.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: At any rate the licensee fee, as my leader has argued, should be paid when the license is taken out. I do not know how the court can grant a license unless the fee is paid. The Act provides that the fee must be paid when the license is granted. I do not know that it is necessary for me to deal with the matter further, since the Government apparently have power, even now, in extreme cases to extend the time for the payment of the license fee. However, I do not approve of the provision. As the leader of the Opposition has said, it invites holders of licenses to make application for extension of time for payment. As regards the State hotels, I am indeed pleased that the Attorney General has at last realised the necessity for obeying the law of the land. He is flouting the law, and has been flouting the law, inasmuch as hotel managers are not licensed. This has been pointed out to him, and he now very properly asks Parliament to condone that offence of his, to

do a little white-washing, and to make the State hotels again licensed premises. To-day, I suppose, every manager of a State hotel who is selling liquor is liable to be hauled up before the licensing bench and perhaps committed to prison, or, at all events, fined, for selling liquor without a license. It is undesirable that that position should obtain, and I shall have much pleasure in supporting this particular proposal of the Attorney General. I do, however, hope that it will not be necessary to go through this same process again, of passing an Act of Parliament in order to effect something that ought to be done by the licensing bench. If hon. members will look at the Licensing Act, they will see that the applicant for a license has to satisfy the bench regarding many matters, and that he can be disqualified for the doing of many things. It has to be remembered that when the license is being applied for, the public have a right to go to the court and raise any objection they please. Members of Parliament also have the right to raise objection. Some objection, for instance, has been very properly raised by the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott). If the person aggrieved in the instance mentioned by that hon. member had had an opportunity of going to the licensing bench, that complaint would not have been made in this House. As regards the Caves House at Dwellingup, I believe it is run perfectly. I do not know an hotel in the State that provides better for the comfort of its guests. The hotel is thoroughly well managed. The complaint of the member for Nelson is not the first we have had regarding the conduct of State hotels, but I am perfectly certain that in this instance the fault does not lie at the door of either manager or his wife. So far as I could observe during the time I stayed at the Caves House, the comfort of visitors is well attended to by the staff. However, the complaint I refer to having been made here, I think the Attorney General has a right to let the manager tell us, from his standpoint, exactly what happened. For my own part, I am glad to mention that, accord-

ing to my experience, the house is thoroughly well run. I am glad to mention it especially because we have had such frequent occasion to criticise the management of the State hotels. I do not know why the Dwellingup hotel appeared before the court under the Licensing Act. It is true that hotel was established by a special Act of Parliament, but I think it might be well if the Attorney General would, in the Bill now under consideration, bring the Dwellingup State hotel into line with all other licensed premises, making it necessary for the manager to go year by year before the licensing bench and obtain his renewal, just as every other hotel lessee has to do. It is not proper, I think, that these matters should be brought before Parliament as they have been time and again. With regard to railway refreshment rooms, it is, of course, quite proper that some control should be exercised by the liquor inspectors over the quality of the liquor sold at these establishments. Most refreshment rooms are well run; but, all the same, they should be under some supervision. For my part, I should be glad to see the control of them taken away altogether from the Commissioner of Railways and vested in the general manager of the State hotels. That would be more satisfactory, and I think probably the railway refreshment rooms would be more cheaply managed. If there is any complaint to be made, it is that the Railway Department endeavour to make too much out of these places.

The Minister for Mines: They are leased by tender.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the quality of the liquor is not always everything that it should be, then it is a pity that such high rents should be charged. At Pinjarrah, for example, the rental amounts to £600 a year, and the licensee there can have very small opportunity indeed, it seems to me, of getting round. I am aware that the train service has been altered latterly, and possibly the position of the licensee at Pinjarrah may now be more favourable. However, the railway refreshment rooms should exist solely for the convenience of the travelling public,

and not be run as revenue-producing establishments. Up to the present, in connection with railway refreshment rooms more attention has been given to the obtaining of revenue than to conveniencing the public. Our object should be to provide the fullest possible opportunity for the people holding railway refreshment room licenses to supply the needs of the public; and I hope the Attorney General will take into consideration the advisableness of bringing all these railway refreshment rooms under the control of one head. I am not in favour of opening these places on railway stations, unless their primary object be the convenience of the travelling public. It must be remembered that every refreshment room means delay to the trains. However, I have no wish to oppose the measure, except in respect to certain proposals therein contained. I am not sure that we ought not to oppose the second reading, but perhaps it will be better to let it go, and amend the Bill in Committee.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [8.1]: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	16
				—
Majority for			..	2
				—

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullaury
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).
Mr. Johnson	

#### NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).
Mr. Nairn	



Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1914-15.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 9th February, on the Treasurer's financial statement and the Annual Estimates; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

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

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [8.12]: The debate has occupied the Committee for a considerable time, and therefore I will be as brief as possible. The Budget Speech delivered by the Premier some weeks ago was a most disappointing effort; probably the most depressing and down-hearted speech ever delivered in this Chamber. The Premier failed to rise to the occasion. There was nothing of the Lloyd George about him. He is the leading financial man in the State, and not only inside, but outside the House, we all look to him to lead the way, especially in a crisis like the present. But what do we find? The Premier in a long, doleful tale simply made excuses for the deplorable mess into which he has got the country. Most of his speech consisted of references to the terrible drought we are experiencing, while the rest was made up of references to the war. I admit he has a very unenviable task before him, but I remind him that the deficit he has inflicted upon the country was of considerable proportions long before either the war or the drought was thought of. Therefore, all his excuses go by the board. While admitting that the position is an extremely serious one, his speech failed entirely in the respect that he did not propose any means whatever to stop the drift. As far as I can see, there is no serious attempt on his part to live within his income, and in times like this that is the one thing the Treasurer of the country ought to aim at. Instead of that there is not the slightest attempt made to bring the expenditure within the estimated revenue. Apparently we have to go on financing in the same reckless style as we have done in the past few years. The

Premier tells us calmly that he expected to have had the deficit brought down to £800,000 or thereabouts, by June next. The deficit now is considerably over a million, and we have only five more months of the year to go. During the last month we have gone through the worst of the whole year. I think the Premier must be a bit of a wizard if he thinks he is going to cut the deficit down to £800,000 in five months. It does not take very much prophesying for one to be able to say that the deficit will be more like a million and a half by June next. Of course figures are nothing to the Premier. It might just as well be five millions as £500,000. There is no doubt that the finances of the country are in a shocking and deplorable condition. The hon. member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) while speaking on the debate, and several other hon. members also, aptly compared this House to a board of directors sitting down to consider ways and means of getting their concern out of its parlous position. The Treasury side of the House has asked us to give them all the assistance we can, and throw out to them any suggestions which will help to get the country out of this hole. So far as I can see, however, hon. members opposite have no intention whatsoever of accepting any suggestions we may care to make to them.

Mr. Green: Suggest taxation.

Mr. SMITH: That will not reduce the deficit.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What effect will it have then?

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member will soon find out that it will not.

Mr. Green: The Dividend Duties Act will affect you?

Mr. SMITH: There will be no dividend duty so far as I am concerned.

The Premier: We will get you now.

Mr. SMITH: It seems to me, at any rate, as a new member, that the debate has, as the hon. member for Coolgardie (Mr. McDowall) suggested, been a medium for letting off steam. We have now let off a considerable amount of steam and I trust when we get on to the items that we shall put our heads together and

do our best to attend to the affairs of the country in a businesslike way and drop all this cross firing which has been going on. I do not say that one side of the House is more guilty than another. Probably I have myself been one of the biggest offenders. When we come to discuss the departments, I hope we will all try and do so in a businesslike manner and drop all this carping criticism, which the Premier is so frequently talking about, and get on with the business of the State. I wish to make a few remarks on matters concerning the Estimates that strike me particularly as a new member. It has been said that our revenue is buoyant and that the revenue of the country has not decreased anything like in the proportion that one would expect as a result of the drought and the war we are experiencing. I understand that the Premier estimates the revenue for the present year to be over five millions. That is not so very much less than it was previously. It is certainly a considerable amount over the revenue that the previous Liberal treasurers had at their command.

The Minister for Mines: In the ordinary course of business it ought to be increasing every year. There are more railways and that kind of thing.

Mr. SMITH: We are told that these railways are self supporting; therefore we cannot take the railways in.

The Minister for Mines: No fear, they are not.

The Premier: Who said they were?

Mr. Foley: Whoever said that new agricultural railways would pay from the start?

Mr. SMITH: It is always given as an excuse that they will pay.

Mr. Foley: By members who are asking for railways in their districts.

Mr. SMITH: In looking at the revenue, this buoyant revenue that we have spoken of, one naturally asks oneself where all the money is going to. The first thing that strikes one is the enormous amount that we are paying for interest. I see that there is a sum of £1,287,000 allotted for the payment of interest. That appears to me to be an overwhelming load. This should not,

however, be a load at all, because the money was borrowed particularly to construct railways with, and these were railways which it was promised should pay interest, so that if the money had been put to proper use and expended on these works, which were so promising, they should be paying interest.

Mr. McDowall: A number of these railways were agricultural lines.

Mr. SMITH: There should be no load at all on them. These works should be repaying interest on the capital all the time.

The Minister for Mines: They should but they are not doing so.

Mr. SMITH: I am only drawing attention to the fact.

Mr. Wisdom: The railways paid interest in the time of the Liberal Administration.

Mr. SMITH: They are at all events not paying interest on the money which has been spent upon them. It would be interesting to the House if hon. members could be furnished with a return showing those works which were not paying that amount of money which it was promised they would pay. We would then be able to see upon which the State was losing money, and would be in a position to bring our minds to bear upon effecting some improvement in regard to them.

Mr. Foley: Are you asking for a sectional return of the railways?

Mr. SMITH: The sinking fund has been referred to by several hon. members. The figures are £257,000. There is no doubt that is a very heavy load for this community to bear. At the time when the principle of providing a sinking fund for loans was first introduced, the country was in a flourishing condition and the sinking fund was a mere flea bite, so to speak, and we did not feel it at all. Under the present circumstances, however, we are not enjoying the same prosperity as in previous years, and the sinking fund is like a snowball—it is growing bigger and bigger every year. I think it is brought home to us that we are really providing too much sinking fund for the purpose of covering our loans.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It all depends on what the money is used for.

Mr. SMITH: It does not matter what it is used for.

The Minister for Mines: We are doing more in that direction than any other State.

Mr. SMITH: In my opinion, the Government should consider, when they are borrowing money in future, the question of providing a sinking fund that is very much smaller than the present sinking fund, and so spread it over a greater number of years. The other States of the Commonwealth have no sinking funds at all. I say it is to the credit of Western Australia that we have provided a sinking fund for our indebtedness, but I think we are undertaking too much and more than we can comfortably carry out. The sinking fund should in future be spread over a greater number of years, and we should then feel the burden to a much smaller degree. Several hon. members have referred to the cost of running the country, and it has been insinuated that we are paying far too much for administration. I think the Premier interjected something to the effect that if we would give him power he would show us what he could do, and that he would deal with the Civil Service in some way. If the Premier meant that he wanted a free hand to go into the Civil Service with a waddy and clear out half of the employees, I am not inclined to give him that power.

Mr. Foley: He did not ask for it.

Mr. SMITH: He inferred that at any rate.

Mr. Foley: He did not.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: He said "Untie my hands."

Mr. SMITH: I am not inclined to give him that power. We should have the Premier sacking men right and left, and we would have half the Civil Service out in the street.

Mr. Foley: The Civil Service know who are their best friends.

Mr. Mullany: Do you mean that Civil servants cannot make a living outside?

Mr. SMITH: I mean in these times it is difficult for anybody losing a position

to get another. I also wish to protest against the Government's attempt to reduce wages. There is no doubt that by a round-about way of curtailing hours the Government are practically reducing wages. There is no doubt about that. The Minister for Mines may shake his head. It is a round-about way of reducing wages. The men who are earning their wages go home with so much less every week. It does not matter whether they are working 44 or 48 hours per week. The fact remains that they have to go home to their wives every week with less money in their pockets.

Mr. Foley: The working man is getting more now with shorter hours than he was getting under the Liberal Government.

Mr. Robinson: His money would not purchase as much now as it used to.

Mr. SMITH: I for one am strongly opposed to a reduction of wages. If there is going to be any reduction at all, let it start with the Governor, the Supreme Court judges, and others who are getting high salaries. These are the people to get hold of first. These men would not mind a reduction in their salaries if the money was spent in a proper way, but the people object to a reduction in their salaries when the money is required, not on account of the war, but because the Government have spent what they have in a reckless fashion and are wasting their revenue. This is how it appeals to me. I do not believe in paying out so much money simply because the Premier is making a mess of things. If he is carrying out an honest administration I do not mind what taxes are imposed. Indeed I would spend my last shilling.

Mr. Foley: Is it because there is a Labour Government in power that the Supreme Court judges and others will not pay?

Mr. SMITH: There is also the neglect of the Government to pay the increases which were awarded by the Appeal Board. It is most unfair that they should have withheld these increases. Many of these men are depending upon these increases, and, for the sake of the credit of the country, I think we ought to pay these men.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The appeals are two years old.

The Minister for Mines: They did not get any in your time.

Mr. SMITH: Another interjection of the Premier's I do not quite understand. That was in reference to the civil servants riding about on bicycles. That was a most uncalled for remark on his part. There is no occasion to cast a slur like that upon the civil servants. Does he mean to infer that the civil servants are in the habit of riding bicycles about at all hours of the day? I suppose that some unfortunate office boy who had gone out for a bit of a ride caught the eye of the Premier, and he came to the conclusion that the civil servants were riding bicycles at all times of the day, and exclaimed, "Give me authority and I will show you what I will do."

Mr. Foley: He never said anything of the sort.

Mr. SMITH: It would be a great deal better if he had something to say about the motor cars that Ministers go about the country in. Fancy the Premier paying £900 for a new police motor car!

The Minister for Mines: We tried to rival the hon. member for Canning.

Mr. Allen: Never mind about the hon. member for Canning.

Mr. SMITH: That was at a time when the Agricultural Bank had practically ceased payment, and found itself unable to carry out its obligations. If any private business firms were to carry on in this reckless manner they would soon find themselves in the bankruptcy court.

Mr. Foley: How many farmers asking for assistance to-day are able to run their own motor cars?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Not one of them.

Mr. SMITH: It is quite possible that some members of the civil service are not worth their salt. It is nonsense, however, for the Premier to say he has not the authority to sack these men. It is rubbish. What did he do in the case of Messrs. Roe and Cowan, the police magistrates? There is no question there of not being able to sack men.

Member: What was Mr. Roe's age?

Mr. SMITH: It does not matter; he was quite competent to carry out his duties.

Mr. Robinson: He is a younger man than Lord Kitchener.

Mr. SMITH: Had his services been retained, the Government would probably have had a better magistrate.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member, I suppose, knows there is power in the Act to retire magistrates over sixty years of age. I am not arguing about the wisdom of it, but the hon. member is talking about the power.

Mr. SMITH: Compare the treatment meted out to Messrs. Cowan and Roe with that meted out to Mr. Mann, the Government Analyst, who has been the subject of discussion in another place. That gentleman was given six months leave of absence, on full pay, and permitted to collect a fee of over £2,000. Why should he have been allowed to collect that enormous fee, while on full pay? Some reference has been made to the curtailment of members' privileges. I will refer to one, free telephones. It may have been all very well to provide free telephones when the department was under the State, but now that it has become a Federal department why should the State find money for this.

Mr. Hudson: That comes with very bad grace from a city member.

Mr. SMITH: In regard to this question of telephones, if the Treasurer looks after the pence, the pounds will look after themselves. I think it is unfair that when Parliament has been prorogued members should be allowed to use their passes for the purpose of travelling over the railways, going round the country electioneering, to the detriment of other candidates, who have not a similar privilege. The Railway Department has been one of our greatest revenue earning departments in years past. The earnings have produced revenue to a very considerable amount over the expenses. But lean years have now come upon us, and instead of the railways earning a handsome profit they are making a loss, and we have to provide money out of the consolidated revenue to make up for

that loss. No doubt the drought has been largely responsible for the present position; but I think the time has arrived when we should consider seriously the question of reducing expenditure in the Railway Department. One direction in which this might be done, I think, is by the employment of motor coaches on the out-back railways. By this means a considerable sum of money could be saved. The cost of running a train over one of those spur lines must be pretty considerable, and I think the spur railways have been largely responsible for the losses on the railways. If we were to adopt the method in use in parts of Queensland and introduce motor coaches, we would be able to give the public a better service, and at the same time considerably reduce the losses. There are also other ways in which the department might increase its revenue. I will just mention a few. The first is an instance in which the Railway Department was unable to compete against an ordinary spring cart. The Federal Government called for tenders for the carriage of mails. The department tendered, but it was outclassed by a spring cart. One result of such business methods is that the railways lose money.

Mr. Heitmann: Do you know the trams are running against the railways even in Melbourne to-day?

Mr. SMITH: Very likely, but we are not concerned about Victoria; we have enough to do to look after ourselves. Another instance: the Railway Department was recently asked by the people of Katanning for the privilege of excursion fares to Albany. The department agreed to a reduction of the fare provided it was guaranteed a certain number of fares. The local people got together and not only made up the minimum number, but returned a very handsome profit; and the department did not take the hint. In my opinion, excursions on these lines should be organised from every town of importance in the State at holiday times, and no doubt a good amount of revenue to the Railway Department would result. The member for Bunbury called attention to some

anomalies, and I have no doubt he was right, though I would not go so far as he in advocating that we should reduce the fares between Bunbury and Picton Junction to the same level as in the metropolitan area over a similar distance. But in that hon. member's reference to the anomalies in the Railway Department I did not notice any mention of what I consider the greatest anomaly of all—the excessive fares extracted by the Railway Department from the people using the trams. The Premier boasted that the Government had made a profit on the trams last year of approximately £40,000. I do not wonder at their making this large profit, in view of their charging the highest tram fares in the world.

Mr. Foley: Did not private enterprise charge the same fares? Did you growl then?

Mr. Allen. Of course we growled.

Mr. SMITH: When the Government took the trams over, the people were given to understand that they would have cheaper fares. I asked the other night about those cheaper fares, and about the better service we were to get. The service to-day is no better than it was formerly, and the plant is going to ruin.

The Minister for Mines: We are running 2,000 miles a week more than the company ran.

Mr. Foley: It was all right while private enterprise ran the trams.

Mr. SMITH: When I referred to this question I was told, "Oh, we had cheap fares on our platform before you ever thought of contesting North Perth." What is the use of having it on the platform; it has been there for the past three or four years, and yet the Government is still charging the full fares. I also think that the tram system should be extended, and that penny sections should be introduced. If that were done there would be a largely increased number of passengers.

The Minister for Mines: We could not carry them until we get more current.

Mr. Allen: The company recognised

that, and got out. You were foolish enough to fall in.

Mr. SMITH: Many people to-day walk sooner than use the trams, with the result that the trams frequently run empty. At any time in the morning after 10, and again from 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock the trams are hauled backwards and forwards practically empty. If penny sections were instituted, I am satisfied the Government would be running loaded trams during those hours, besides providing a convenience to the travelling public and making more profit.

Mr. Foley: City members would travel cheaper, and country members would not benefit.

Mr. SMITH: The Government have refused to extend the issue of the workers' ticket privilege between 8 and 9 o'clock. A large number of girls and boys, employed in the city, have to come in daily from Mount Lawley and other distant suburbs. They are earning perhaps only 12s. 6d., 15s., or £1 a week, yet the Government expects them to pay full fare, or to walk, while men, earning perhaps £3 to £4 a week, who go to their work up to 8 o'clock, get the concession of half fare. Is that in accordance with the principles laid down in the Labour platform?

Mr. Foley: I do not see that we are called upon to answer that? You do not subscribe to the platform.

Mr. SMITH: I have previously referred to the profit made last year by the Railways. On looking up the figures I find that up to date the Railways, over and above interest, have earned a profit of a million and a half; that money has been put into the consolidated revenue.

Mr. McDowall: For how long?

Mr. SMITH: Since the railways started. Instead of putting that money into consolidated revenue, I maintain we should have created a reserve fund, and that money should have been invested in our own stock. Had that been done, we would not now require to draw on consolidated revenue to make up for the losses on the railways. I hope the Minister controlling the finances will take the

suggestion into consideration that when we again have a profit from the railways that profit should be put into a reserve fund for a rainy day.

Mr. McDowall: I suppose you know that the greater portion of that profit was provided by the Coolgardie line, before many of the other lines were started.

Mr. SMITH: I believe that is right. With regard to the trading concerns, I consider that most of them are rank failures. Coming to State hotels, we are told that they are paying. In fact, the Premier says, "My oath! they are paying all right." I would like to compare the returns from State hotels with those from private hotels. I am quite certain those from the State hotels are not nearly so good as those received by private owners. Personally, I favour the State ownership of hotels; let hon. members make no mistake about that. I do object, however, to the State getting down to the actual beer-pulling business. My idea is that State hotels should be leased by public tender. If that course were adopted, the revenue received from those hotels would far outweigh the profits received to-day. Further, the State would be enabled to reap considerable pecuniary advantage in the shape of fairly large sums for in-going. I would advocate short term leases, say five years.

Mr. Foley: And the lessees would send the hotels for all they were worth during their leases.

Mr. SMITH: The Government have their inspectors; and if the State hotels were in the hands of private lessees, those inspectors, I am quite certain, would be a little more enthusiastic, to put it mildly, in watching them than is the case at present.

Mr. Taylor: Do you think the inspectors are less vigilant in regard to State hotels than in regard to private hotels?

Mr. SMITH: While speaking of licenses, I wish to point out a means by which the Government can obtain a considerable amount of money, which, I understand, is what the Government want. One often hears the successful applicant for a license, when coming away from the court, congratulating him-

self and smacking himself on the chest and saying, "This license is as good as a couple of thousand in my pocket." Why should the community present any individual with a couple of thousand pounds? I say that if a license is to be granted it should be put up to public tender; and if that license is worth a couple of thousand pounds, then the State should receive that money. I think the Government are losing an opportunity of deriving considerable revenue from that quarter. Passing on now to a trading concern in a different category, I regret that the Government are not doing more to assist the mining industry by means of State batteries. There is no doubt that the mining industry is the one industry that is going to pull the country out of the hole it has got into. It is all very well to boost up the agricultural industry; and I quite agree with our friends of the Country party that opening up the country is a fine thing, and that settling the people on the land is a fine thing. But to get the country out of the hole it is in, give me a mining boom. Therefore I say the Government are not doing what they ought to be doing in the direction of assisting the mining industry. There is plenty of scope for development in the mining industry of Western Australia. Hon. members know as well as I do that there are thousands of cases of leases taken up in the old days, 15 or 20 years ago, which were opened up and then, simply because the holders of those leases did not get five ounces to the ton, were promptly abandoned. The Mines Department have gone to the trouble of publishing a booklet which is an eyeopener on this point. That booklet gives the names of such leases, the number of tons of ore obtained from them, and the returns. There is a deal of valuable information contained in that booklet; but, unfortunately, the Mines Department may almost be said to be keeping that information to themselves. I admit that anybody who goes up to the Mines Department and asks for a copy is furnished with one. But what

we want is to disseminate that information right throughout Australasia, to show everybody interested in mining that there are here leases which have produced so many ounces and are waiting to be taken up again by anybody willing to work them. I am prepared to go even further. To anyone willing to take up those leases, I would give a free railway pass to the locality; and I would charge no lease rent for the first year. Under such conditions, I feel certain, we should have a number of people taking up abandoned leases, with the result that our gold output would be considerably increased, which, again, means the circulation of a great deal of money; and it is circulation of money this country urgently needs.

Mr. Foley: Do you know one show in this State that will go half an ounce to the ton and is not worked? Do you know of one such show that is lying idle in all this big State?

Mr. SMITH: There is any number of shows lying idle.

Mr. Foley: Tell me one.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SMITH: Another Government enterprise which has come in for a certain amount of criticism in the course of this debate is the State Savings Bank. The Premier hinted that it was the intention of his Government to effect a transfer of the Savings Bank to the Federal Government. I am strongly opposed to transferring the management of our local Savings Bank to Melbourne. Surely we have had enough of management from Melbourne to satisfy us.

Mr. Male: Telephones.

Mr. SMITH: I think we have in this State sufficient brains to manage a little concern like the Savings Bank, and I do not see why we should transfer its management to Melbourne. The figures quoted by the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) as indicating that the people desired that transfer, were not convincing. I think the hon. member drew a wrong inference from the fact that there has been a reduction in the amount of deposits with the local Savings Bank, as compared with the Federal Savings Bank,

Possibly, our local management wants a little brushing up. Undoubtedly, the Commonwealth Savings Bank is out for business. I think most members recently had put into their hands certain literature showing the advantages of depositing with the Federal Savings Bank. I do not know whether the management of that bank suspected hon. members of having any money to deposit; but, still, they gave us the opportunity of depositing it with them, and drew our attention to the advantages of the Federal bank. We have not, however, heard of the manager of our local Savings Bank reaching out for deposits in that manner. I think that if a little more energy were infused into the management of our bank we should soon see a considerable increase in the deposits of that institution. The proposal to transfer our Savings Bank to the Commonwealth is really, from a business point of view, utterly absurd. It is admitted that our Savings Bank is making a profit of £24,000 per annum, and yet the Premier calmly suggests that we should transfer that business for nothing.

The Minister for Mines: Who said so?

Mr. SMITH: Twenty-four thousand pounds capitalised at five per cent. represents nearly half a million sterling; and yet the Premier proposes to give away that business for no return. Certainly, he is going to get 75 per cent. of the deposits; but what about the deposits from the local Savings Bank which have been lent to our own people in the past?

Mr. McDowall: They are still going to be lent.

Mr. SMITH: No. Of the deposits, 75 per cent. is to go to the State Government and 25 per cent. to the Commonwealth.

Mr. McDowall: That applies only to new deposits.

The Minister for Mines: You do not understand the subject.

Mr. SMITH: At all events the lending of money from the local Savings Bank to our people here has been a great help towards the development of the State. The transfer of the management to Melbourne would be a huge mistake.

We have heard a great deal about the South-Western district and its potentialities. There is no denying that the South West of this country is capable of immense development. The present Government and previous Governments have spent considerable amounts of money with a view to placing the dairying industry of the South-West on a proper footing. But what do we find to-day? After the expenditure of all that money there is less butter and less cream being produced in the South-West than was the case 10 years ago.

Mr. Green: What does that show?

Mr. SMITH: It shows that something is rotten in the state of Denmark. Another matter for complaint relates to the spending by the Government of £3,000 in the importation of seed potatoes from the Old Country. The Government were going to make the South-West of Western Australia the great centre for supplying Australia and New Zealand with pure seed potatoes. But what do we find after two years' operations? The £3,000 have absolutely disappeared, and there is not a seed potato to be got in the country. Not one of the potatoes imported from the Old Country is available now.

The Minister for Mines: You did not expect those seed potatoes to be kept for 12 months, surely?

Mr. SMITH: Another little matter that the Government have overlooked, and which was brought under my notice recently, is the accommodation provided for His Excellency the Governor at Albany. I notice in the newspapers some Vice-Regal complaints at the want of accommodation at Albany. About two years ago, I think, the Government spent several thousand pounds in buying a Vice-Regal residence at the southern port. What has become of it?

The Minister for Mines: It is still the Vice-Regal residence.

Mr. SMITH: I think it must have been pushed into the harbour. At any rate, there is something wrong, or else the Governor and Lady Barron could have occupied the residence. If the Government have abandoned the idea of establishing a Vice-Regal residence at Al-



bany, my advice to them would be to get rid of the property and put the money to some useful purpose. It is simply an absurdity to buy an expensive residence at a cost of thousands of pounds, to house the Governor for perhaps a fortnight once a year, and then not make use of it.

The Minister for Mines: The residence would be more useful as a home for worn-out politicians.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. gentleman will be one of the first inmates.

The Minister for Mines: No doubt of it. I am thinking of myself.

Mr. SMITH: Now, as an instance of the Government's financial management, let us take their treatment of charitable institutions. Ministers rush round, without rhyme or reason, and apply the pruning knife to every charitable institution in the country. Undoubtedly, those institutions have done a considerable amount of good; and, moreover, they have relieved the Government of a great deal of work and expense. If those institutions were not there to carry on the work of charity, the Government would have to do it. Therefore, I maintain it is false economy to cut down indiscriminately the grants to these institutions, with the inevitable result that the Government will speedily find themselves compelled to do a good deal of the charitable work of the institutions in question.

The Minister for Mines: What institutions do you refer to?

Mr. SMITH: One is the Dulhi Gunyah Orphanage, at Victoria Park, the secretary of which has forwarded me a letter giving some particulars of the work of the institution—

We have 38 children in the home, for 22 of whom we receive a subsidy of 10d. per day. The remainder are supported by public subscriptions. The total receipts from the Government for the support of the children for the year ended 30th June, 1914, amounted to £346 8s. 4d. Public subscriptions for the same period amounted to £230 14s. 2½d. In addition, the Government make a grant for education of £156

per annum. This goes to provide teacher's salary and school requisites; the mission provides schoolroom. There are three missionaries in the home, and they are unpaid, theirs being voluntary service. This mission is undenominational. The premises are the property of the mission, and upon them there is a debt of about £250. This is about to be increased by a further £250 by additions to the property, in the building of a new dormitory to accommodate 12 children and a matron. The contract was let on the 7th January, 1915, before we knew of the Government's intention to cut down the subsidy. Had we known this, we should not have entered upon the responsibilities. In consequence, we shall probably be involved in difficulties. The least the Government could have done was to give notice of their intention to cut down. As a mission, we consider, we are doing a public service in caring for these children and striving to educate and train them into good citizens.

The Government allowed more than half the year to pass before they gave these people to understand that their votes were to be reduced. They allowed them to go along on the assumption that they were going to receive the same amounts as they had received in previous years, and after having incurred liabilities, the Government inform them that their grants are to be reduced. So the liabilities will remain on the hands of these people. This is most unfair, and I trust that the Government will see their way to, at any rate for this year, pay the amounts that they have been in the habit of granting. That would be a fair and just way of dealing with these bodies. Another very deserving institution is the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This institution has been in the habit of receiving a small grant per annum. They see that the sections of the Criminal Code relating to cruelty to animals are administered, and they instigate prosecutions, and the fines which result from those prosecutions go into consolidated revenue. Thus, as the Government derive some benefit from the

proceedings which are taken, I consider that the society should be given the same amount which it has received in the past.

The Minister for Mines: The society are getting more assistance from the Government now than they ever received.

Mr. SMITH: That is no argument. The secretary of the society informs me that in Kalgoorlie the other day a contractor was fined £52 for causing several norses to be worked in an unfit condition, and that through the cases instituted by the society, the Treasury has benefited to the extent of about £200 per annum. The least the Government can do, therefore, is to repay that amount of money to the society. They have done the work, and have been responsible for the imposition of these fines, and they ought to collect the revenue.

The Minister for Mines: They are getting more help than they have ever had. I gave them a free railway pass over all lines, and they never had that previously.

Mr. SMITH: That is very good of the Minister, but it is a pity that he should be undoing the good work he began to do by cutting down the vote now. The sum of £50 is of very little help to the society. The secretary also informs me that there is another fact which must not be lost sight of, and it is that the society has about twelve honorary inspectors who act as special constables, all of whom are liable to be called upon for police duty at any time, and that any magistrate can direct such inspectors to make arrests for criminal offences. In that way the honorary inspectors are doing State duty, and therefore the S.P.C.A. is the only paying charitable proposition which the Government have. Before concluding my remarks, I would like to refer to the scandalous waste of public funds in connection with appointments, and I am referring more particularly to the appointment of the ex-Minister for Lands (Mr. Bath) to a seat on the Control of Trade Commission at the enormous salary of £750 per annum. Mr. Bath has been appointed to do something that could well have been done by any ordinary member of the

civil service. Considering the position of the finances, that was an ill-advised appointment, to say the least of it. The Premier told us the other night that if the war was over in the course of a few months, the price of wheat would come down. In that case there will not be any necessity to administer the Control of Trade Act, and here we have the Government making this appointment for 12 months.

The Minister for Mines: That is not right, it has only been made at the rate of £750 per annum.

Mr. SMITH: The appointment then can be cancelled at any time?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, when the work is done.

Mr. SMITH: But the salary is somewhat over the odds. The work was previously done by Mr. Sutton, the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt, without any extra remuneration, and I do not think there was any necessity to appoint Mr. Bath at this salary. Mr. Bath did not have any special qualification for the position. I said at the outset that I intended to be brief and as I am afraid I have occupied more time than I intended to do, I shall reserve any further remarks I may have to make until we reach the items.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth) [9.8]: Speaking at this late stage, one is apt to repeat something that other members have said. That is a disadvantage one is placed at, and I am afraid I shall be guilty of transgressing in this direction because several of the speakers have already taken the wind out of my sails by referring to some of the matters which I had included in my notes. The leader of the Country party prefaced his remarks the other evening by saying that he had had the privilege of listening to two excellent speeches, one from the Premier and the other from the leader of the Opposition. After having heard the leader of the Country party, I think we can say we have listened to three excellent speeches from the three different leaders. We also had a speech from the member for Bunbury, who gave us some interesting information regarding railway fares and freights in this State and in the old coun-

try. Some of us were somewhat surprised at the figures the hon. member quoted, but he vouched that they were correct, and one could not help thinking that there was something in his arguments, and he concluded his remarks by saying that railway fares and freights were matters for experts to deal with. The hon. member was quite right and I hope that those in charge of the department will take note of what he said and give the subject some consideration. The member for Nelson delivered an interesting address, in which he dealt with the forests of the State. I was surprised to hear him remark that the commissioners who were appointed to advise Parliament in regard to the best means of farming had recommended the use of lime to a large extent, but that unfortunately it was not procurable. The hon. member then made the astounding statement that a company with a capital of £100,000 was here and ready to start the development of lime deposits to provide the farmers with that necessary requisite, but that the Government had refused to grant them a concession. The Government refused the concession even though they were not prepared to develop the deposits themselves. If there is one thing that the State is languishing for to-day it is new industries, and I think the Government should grant concessions and encourage them wherever possible. The member for Nelson told us that the concession was protected in every way favourable to the Government. The Government were to fix the price of lime, and the conditions were such that I wonder that there was anyone prepared to take over the concession. I cannot help referring also to the loud and long speech made by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. McDowall) which the hon. member himself aptly characterised as the letting off of steam. It is to be regretted that members should come here to let off steam. There is a thousand acre park not far from here which is better adapted for such a purpose.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What are you doing now?

Mr. ALLEN: I am trying to give an intelligent exposition of the Estimates.

The member for Coolgardie gave us an address on what might be termed the goldfields versus the agricultural districts. He sought to bolster up the goldfields, and as he represents a goldfields constituency one cannot blame him. We all recognise that the goldfields proved to be the instrument which brought Western Australia to the fore. The time, however, is rapidly approaching when it will be realised that Western Australia possesses agricultural lands second to none in the Commonwealth. The member for Coolgardie supplied us with railway figures, and I too can quote figures for that hon. member's information showing the approximate results of the working of some of the railways to the 30th June, 1914. On page 93 of the report of the Commissioner of Railways we find that the goldfields district railways for that year showed a loss of £32,928, whilst the loss on the agricultural railways was £27,341, a total loss of £60,273.

Mr. McDowall: Where did you get those figures?

Mr. ALLEN: From the Railway Commissioner's report.

Mr. McDowall: You have not read them correctly.

Mr. ALLEN: From the remarks of the hon. member one would have thought the railways of the goldfields were paying practically for everything. I want to remind the member for Coolgardie that when gold is taken out of the ground it cannot be replaced. In the agricultural areas the golden grain can always be produced provided Providence gives us the necessary rain. We must admit that on agriculture the future of the State will depend, but of course I am hopeful, with others, that new goldfields will be discovered, and that they will prove to be equal to those found in the past. I am in great sympathy with the farmers in their present difficulty. The Government have sought to blame the farming community to some extent for the position of the State to-day, but we should all extend to them our sympathy for the difficulties they find themselves in on account of the drought. The drought which we have experienced during the past three

years was anticipated to some extent, and knowing what the position was likely to be, the Government should have husbanded their resources and been more guarded in their expenditure. The State's position to-day, I am prepared to admit, is to some extent due to the drought, but not to the war. As some hon. members have pointed out, we have not felt to any great extent the effect of the war, but we shall do so. We are, however, feeling more the result of the administration of the Government. I do not wish to indulge in carping criticism, but I would remind the Premier and his colleagues that for the past three years we on this side of the House have been warning them of what the result of their actions would be. They, however, refused to take any advice from us. This Parliament up to recently was a Parliament of practically one party only, the party from the trades hall, and only discourteous treatment was meted out to those who criticised the actions of the Government. While we on this side took our share of the responsibility, that was only a small share, because the Government had a free hand and a big majority and they did practically what they liked. We shall feel the ill effects of the war in the future, but possibly this great national crisis will bring with it some blessing. Australia has had periods of great prosperity, and we have never been troubled with anything in the nature of war. We have produced great wealth all over Australia, yet to-day we find that an unemployed problem exists everywhere.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What is the cause of it?

Mr. ALLEN: The people have not been thrifty enough, and now that we are faced with difficulties everyone rushes to the Government for assistance. While I sympathise with those who find themselves in predicaments, I think some good will come out of it all, because the people will learn from it the lesson of thrift. We do not yet fully realise what our position really is. While our countrymen are fighting for our existence, we here are immune from danger, but I am

afraid we do not appreciate the true position, but in the near future we shall do so. Parliament last night was asked to do something in a small way to show the outside public that we are sincere in our desire to contribute with others towards the national revenue and the relieving of the financial strain. The railway man's time has now been reduced to 44 hours, and of necessity his wages have been reduced also. How much time do we put in? About four months in the year. Last night we were prepared to make some sacrifice—not necessarily in accordance with the terms of the motion as moved by the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) which, however, might easily have been amended—but the matter was taken out of our hands and the opportunity was missed.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in referring to a motion already dealt with.

Mr. ALLEN: I am sorry. I notice that the estimated revenue for the current year is £5,307,782, and the expenditure £5,647,675, showing a deficiency of £339,893. Seeing the position we are faced with one would have thought that every attempt would be made to economise in all directions. Yet if we look through the different departments we find incidental items, such as postage, stationery, travelling, inspection, survey, services rendered by departments, entertaining distinguished visitors, Ministerial and Parliamentary trips, and the rest—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in referring to items at this stage.

Mr. ALLEN: I have no wish to refer to any one item, but in the aggregate the items under "Incidental" total nearly £100,000. Included in these are such items as the Agent General's Department, and the London Agency. We find there provision for a new motor car, £710, and for entertaining, £300. Surely in view of the seriousness of the position these items could have been left out. The Agent General's Department is a very costly one, amounting as it did last year to £6,287, notwithstanding

which there is hidden away in another place one little item of £602 which it cost the State to have the pleasure of seeing the Agent General's face for a couple of months. It is a pretty big item, seeing that he was out here for only a couple of months. The return trip could have been done for £120.

The Minister for Mines: You do not suggest that the ex-leader of the Liberal party is extravagant?

Mr. ALLEN: I merely suggest that this item is considerably more than it ought to be, costing as it did last year £6,287.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Some of that was for immigration.

Mr. ALLEN: No. none of it, but it includes £602 for the Agent General's trip out here. The Commonwealth is represented in London by Sir George Reid, and I think the time has arrived when we as a State should have a commercial agent rather than an Agent General.

The Minister for Mines: He is a commercial agent also.

Mr. ALLEN: Well, the department is far too costly for us in the present circumstances. We require to find new markets for a great deal of our produce, our old markets having been disturbed by the war, and we should have a good commercial agent in London to open up those fresh markets for us.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: He is doing that to-day.

Mr. ALLEN: But it is costing us too much. South Australia has in London a man attending to her requirements at far less cost. Indeed I do not think that any of the Agent Generals representing the other States costs nearly so much as ours. While in view of the terrible position which we are faced we should be casting about for practical economies we are actually increasing expenditure. The Government have asked for suggestions, but when we offer them they are for the most part ridiculed. To come to the question of the Government motor car service—

The Minister for Mines: Now for a statesmanlike policy.

Mr. ALLEN: Hon. members do not like me touching upon this service. I once called for a return in regard to it, and my motion met with a very poor reception. The Government motor car service is costing £2,042 per annum. It does not sound much, but there is another item of £1,800 which is transferred to other departments. I think that at a time like the present one is perfectly justified in calling attention to these items. Wherever one goes the outside public are asking, "What is Parliament doing to economise?" and "What are the Government doing to economise?" Yet we see motor cars galore rushing Ministers round about the place. Surely to goodness at such a time the trams and the railways should be good enough even for Ministers, who in the circumstances ought to be content with what has to content others. It seems there is a new car to be purchased at the cost of £935. Last year the wages and overtime for motor cars cost £1,121. It is all very well to laugh, but these figures tot up in the aggregate.

Mr. McDowall: You would do away with these things altogether,

Mr. ALLEN: They could be done away with very largely. Why should we not let the men on the rank have a chance if a motor car be required?

Mr. Wisdom. The whole thing could be done by contract.

Mr. ALLEN: In regard to the tramways, I have on previous occasions asked that the time for the use of workers' tickets should be extended to 9 o'clock in order that shop girls going to office might have the same privilege as the men and secure a return ticket for 3d. It is a very reasonable request. Many girls do not have to be at office until 9 o'clock while 8.45 a.m. is the time for large numbers of shop girls. On two occasions I have asked for this concession and been refused, notwithstanding that I thought the Minister would have jumped at the opportunity of granting the request, especially seeing we are told that the trams represent anything but a losing proposition. When we reach the item I propose to test the feeling of the Committee as to the reasonableness of my request. Again,

the other morning a crowded tramcar bound to the City went past the corner of Colin-street at two minutes to eight o'clock. Several men with workers' tickets were waiting to board the car, but could not get on. There was no other car for three or four minutes, by which time the hour had passed. When the next car did come the conductor refused to allow these men to travel on their tickets, explaining that it could not be done after 8 o'clock. I suggested to him that in the circumstances he might reasonably accept the tickets, but he said it was not to be thought of. I really think that to meet such a case the conductors should be allowed some little discretion. The service through West Perth is not of the best, Subiaco having the first call on the trams, with the result that frequently the cars are loaded up before West Perth is reached. I suggest to the Premier that he take this into consideration and give the conductors some latitude in regard to workers' tickets or, alternatively, extend the time; for it is manifestly unfair that because the one car cannot take a passenger, he should be refused the concession on the next car. Apart from this, the service on the Hay-street West line is most unsatisfactory, and there is little room for doubt that the Government are losing hundreds of pounds per annum through people having to walk into the City.

The Minister for Mines: Now that we have the tramway poet back it will be all right.

Mr. ALLEN: In regard to the public service. I hope that if the Government cannot see their way to immediately paying the £4,000 represented by the appeal board's award they will not repudiate it altogether.

Mr. McDowall: Just now you wanted to reduce everything.

Mr. ALLEN: This is an honourable obligation which cannot be reduced. The hon. member refused to have his salary reduced last night. If the Government cannot pay this money at once, let them give the public service an assurance that it will be paid in course of time, with some small interest added. The high cost

of administration of the service has always been commented upon. The public service has grown enormously, but it is going to be very much greater if the Government continue their policy of State enterprise, for the time will come when we will all be State servants, although there is no denying that the same results cannot be obtained from State service as from private service. In regard to workers' homes I was at one time a supporter of the scheme because I believed it would supply a legitimate want of the working man. I did not imagine that it was going to provide for a man drawing £300 or £400 a year. Unfortunately, I think we have missed the mark with this workers' homes scheme. We should have had, as in South Australia, a scheme for the provision of workmen's blocks.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: To grow grass on?

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, for the hon. member to eat. It is good food for asses. Working men's blocks would have been of more advantage to the workers of the State. We could have given the worker an acre of land for a few pounds, erected on it a decent jarrah cottage for a couple of hundred pounds, and provided him with a water service; and thus advantaged he could have grown his vegetables and fruit, and kept his fowls, his ducks, his bees, and even his cow, as they do in South Australia. He could have supplied ample for his own requirements and a little over for sale. It is not even too late now for the Government to consider the question, and see whether it would not be wise to amend the present Act and go in for workers' blocks rather than workers' homes. A good deal has been said in regard to the Electoral Department and the state of the rolls. With some of the remarks respecting the stuffing of rolls I have no sympathy. In my own electorate there were twice as many names on the roll as three years before, but I did not believe that names had been stuffed on the roll for any particular purpose. I would not give credence to such a suggestion and I had a sufficiently good opinion of my old electors then outside my district to believe

(that they would not attempt to vote wrongly. But I cannot understand why the West Perth roll came to be in such a condition. I can quite understand it happening in some of the other districts, because many names were transferred from the Federal rolls, but the boundaries of the West Perth electorate are practically identical with those of this particular subdivision of the Federal district of Perth, and I cannot understand how those 3,000 odd names came to appear upon the roll. I have been invited to inspect the working of the Electoral Department and I intend to do so, but apparently there was something radically wrong when such a state of things could occur. The Government claim a good deal of credit for what they have accomplished in the way of State enterprises. For my part they are welcome to all the credit, because I cannot see that State enterprises have brought about any very great benefit. The Premier has told us that they have opened up fresh avenues of employment, but how, I ask, could they do so? They have simply had the effect of diverting men from one avenue and placing them in another, and we are really taxing people for revenue with which to bring about their own downfall. It is not the duty of any Government to adopt a policy causing people to provide the very weapon with which to bring about their own destruction. It may be said that State enterprises have not had this effect, but I could give illustrations to prove that such has been the result. What we in Western Australia want more than ever is to encourage capitalists to come here and to encourage people to invest their money in our industries. Never had the State such an opportunity as will be presented when the war is over to open up new industries, but what inducement is there for people to do so when the Government may step in, set up opposition and tax them for the money with which to bring about their downfall. I have indicated more than one direction in which the Government could effect economies. Whether the Government will give serious con-

sideration to the suggestions which have been offered, I do not know. The Government have suggested the idea of increased taxation, but it would be better if the Government first effected economies.

Mr. Thomas: How?

Mr. ALLEN: A sum of £100,000 is provided for incidentals, travelling expenses, postages, wood, fuel and cleaning. Surely these items could be cut down considerably.

The Minister for Mines: Incidentals are just as necessary as many other items.

Mr. ALLEN: There are many items which could be considerably reduced if the Government were in earnest.

Mr. Thomas: Let us have them.

Mr. ALLEN: The Chairman would not permit me to deal with items now, but at the proper time I will do so. I have pages of them prepared in readiness.

Mr. Thomas: Who wrote them out for you?

The Minister for Mines: The *Daily News*?

Mr. ALLEN: That is a rather impertinent question. I have never asked who wrote the hon. member's speeches for him.

Mr. Thomas: I do not write them.

Mr. ALLEN: No, the hon. member learns them off like a parrot. It is the duty of the Government to economise, and many instances have been given to show where economies could be effected. It is all very well to blame the farmers' arrears of rent and the drought for the present position of affairs, but the Government must accept their share of the blame. Before we give them tens of thousands of pounds more to expend, the Government should indicate where they are prepared to effect economies. Let them start with themselves, with the motor cars. The public will think none the less of them for it. Labour members used to criticise the Liberal Government for flying around in motor cars. At that time they possessed only one, but to-day there is a garage full of them and a big staff is employed, and this year the

cost will be £2,000 odd. In addition, £1,800 has been transferred to other departments, and if the vote is exceeded as was the case last year, motor cars will probably cost the State this year £6,000 or £7,000.

Mr. Thomas: Do not they save time and expense?

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, but there is a rank of motor cars on the stand in Perth. Is it necessary to have a motor car to convey the Premier from his home to the office every morning? I have to ride in a tram car.

Mr. Thomas: Your time is not of so much importance.

Mr. ALLEN: Judging by results, I should say it is of very much greater importance. The big overdraft of the Government is frightening people out of the State and it is up to the Government to economise. If the Government tackled the question seriously, they could bring about considerable economies before talking of providing for fresh taxation. My sympathies are more with the farmers who are contending with the drought than with the Government who attribute the cause of their financial troubles to the drought. No doubt the drought is responsible to a small extent, but it is largely their own mismanagement which has brought about their present trouble.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Greenough) [9.35]: So much as already been said during this discussion that little new ground remains to be covered. When the session opened, we were told that no contentious legislation would be introduced, but that measures would be brought forward necessary to assist the people and keep the wheels of industry moving. There was an almost unanimous desire on the part of members that for the time being the political hatchet should be buried and we should do our best to pull the country through the troublous times confronting it. The present is a critical time in the history not only of Australia but also of the world. Most of the great nations of Europe are engaged in a life and death struggle. Our Empire is a party to that struggle, and we are likely to feel severely the shock and

strain of it. We have just experienced one of the severest droughts ever known in Australia. At present we are feeling the pinch of the drought more than the shock of the war but during the current year we shall feel the stress most severely. Touching the financial affairs of the State, there are two matters which cause us deep concern, firstly our indebtedness and secondly our deficit. The one is largely responsible for the other, because we have a large interest Bill to pay. Our indebtedness is chiefly due to the progressive public works policy adopted in the past. Railways are largely responsible for our indebtedness, but as railways are the principal factor in the development of the country, the money we have expended for their construction has been justified. Owing to indifferent seasons since many of these railways were built, we have not derived that measure of benefit which was expected when we undertook their construction, but with a return of normal seasons we should experience the full benefit from our expenditure on railways. It has been said that a few years ago the Government increased the salary of railway employees from 8s. to 9s. a day and thus increased the cost of running and thus increased the cost of running the department by something like £112,000 per annum. Some people were of opinion at the time that it would be necessary to increase railway fares and freights in consequence, and others considered that the great amount of development in the country for which the railways were largely responsible would lead to such an increase in the volume of trade, that the augmented earnings of the department would prove sufficient to more than meet the extra running cost. I have heard very few people contend that the increase should not have been granted, and I contend that 9s. is only a fair day's pay for those responsible for the working of our railways. A large amount of loan money has been expended to develop our industries. This is a vast country and if we are true to our citizenship we must do something towards developing it, and the best thing we can do is to encourage



our primary industries. If we had to wait until we were in a position to provide this money out of revenue, our progress would be indeed slow. Therefore, I do not regret the expenditure we have incurred to promote the advancement of our primary industries. When normal seasons return and the shock and strain of war are felt no more, we shall realise the full benefits from this expenditure. Good roads prove a great aid to the development of our primary industries, and the Government in the past have provided fair subsidies for their upkeep. The construction of new railways entails the construction of new roads, because when a line is built through new areas, the old roads generally fall into disuse and new ones have to be made to give access to the sidings. When new lines open up new districts, the settlers who take up land are exempted from rates for a time, and so roads boards are dependent upon the Government subsidies for the funds with which to construct roads. I can quite understand the action of the Government in cutting this year's subsidies down by 50 per cent. We have been asking the Government to effect economies during the present strident period, and while it was perhaps necessary to reduce the roads board subsidies, I hope it will not be long before the full amount is again forthcoming. Some members have complained about the vote for parks and gardens being cut down by £500. There are no parks and gardens in the electorate I have the honour to represent, but that is no reason why I should say there shall not be parks and gardens in other parts of the State. I think these beauty spots and pleasure resorts are very necessary. The complaint in regard to cutting down the vote is a matter that I am prepared to leave for settlement between hon. members representing electorates in the metropolitan areas and the Government. While on this subject I may say I do think that other parts of the State are entitled to some consideration in this respect as well as the metropolitan area. The people of Northampton, which is one of the oldest town-

ships in the State and around which there is a great deal of agricultural settlement, have no pleasure resort at all. They are not asking the Government for a grant for a pleasure resort in the shape of parks and gardens, but they are asking for a grant to enable them to construct a road to the beach. The beach is their only pleasure resort. It is also a place from which they derive their fish supplies.

The Minister for Works: We will consider that when money becomes freer.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I am glad to hear the remark of the Minister for Works. I believe he is sympathetic in this matter and will do what he can in regard to it. There is a sum of over £2,000 voted for parks and gardens in the metropolitan area. I believe also, the Government are going to some expense in providing the people in the metropolitan area with a fish supply. Therefore, in the circumstances, I think that the request of the people of Northampton for a grant of £300 for constructing a road to the beach is only a reasonable one, because it is only a request that will come once in regard to that particular subject. We have heard a great deal with regard to the State Savings Bank. I think that institution has proved, and will prove, of advantage to the State. It is an institution from which the Government can derive profit, and more profit than they can derive from most of their trading concerns. I also hear that it is likely that the Government will come to some arrangement with the Federal Government with a view to transferring the State Savings Bank. One of the grounds for taking up that attitude is that we cannot very well have a State Savings Bank together with a Federal Savings Bank, that these two banks are run by the same people, and are run in opposition to each other, one by the Federal Government, and one by the State Government. In private business, we find that there are the associated banks running in opposition to each other, and they all seem satisfied enough with the profits they are making. Therefore, I think, we should be very careful before we transfer our

State Savings Bank to the Federal authorities.

Mr. Taylor: You are not in favour of the transfer.

The Minister for Works: He is in favour of anything that we can get most money from.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: My personal opinion is that the matter should be very carefully considered with a view to the best possible bargain being made for the State.

Mr. Taylor: The best bargain for the State is to keep the savings bank.

The Minister for Works: That is questionable.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: With regard to the Moratorium Act, there are many people in my electorate who have approached me with a view to bringing pressure to bear upon the Government and having the Act proclaimed. I have made inquiries and find that the proclamation of this Act, although it may help in some way, in other ways would, perhaps, create hardship, and we find that the Government very wisely have delayed its proclamation until they consider that its application would be justified in the interests of the State. At the present juncture I am quite prepared to accept the explanation given in that connection.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You do not think it is justified to-day.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: From the point of view of the farmer I should say it is justified, but there may be other points of view which will have to be considered also. I believe if other measures are introduced they will be the means of giving the farmers the assistance they require without inflicting any hardship on others. We have heard a lot about taxation and economy during the last few weeks. We were told last night that the farmers owed the Government something like £400,000. I believe there is a good deal owing on land rents. But the farmers are not to blame, and I think the Government are to be commended for the assistance they have rendered to these people. We know that if the country is to be prosperous every industry must be helped in every possible way. I wish to

give credit where credit is due, and I think the Government are deserving of credit for the efforts they have made during the session to go to the assistance of the farmers. I only hope that they will also give assistance to other industries, particularly the mining and timber industries. We find that people in the Geraldton district are hampered in their mining operations for want of a market. We take up the papers and find that the market price of ore is high enough to enable them to carry on their business at a profit, if only they could find a market. I understand that the Government are making every effort to find a market for this ore, and are prepared to make advances against it to enable prospectors and others to keep going. I hope that course of action will be brought about and believe, if it is successful, that it will mean that many of our people will be kept in employment and that the money which would be constantly turned over would prove a benefit to the State generally. We have had the pleasure recently of hearing reports from various parts of the State that the rainfall has been very general inland. This renders the pastoral industry practically safe for the next twelve months at any rate. I believe that those rains will be continued and that the drought has already broken up. It has been my experience that when we get good rains inland they are generally followed up by a run of good seasons. In my opinion that will be the case in this instance. I have faith in the country, and if our indebtedness is rather high I think we should not be alarmed at the fact. Most of our money has been spent in promoting the development of our industries, and in opening up our country by means of railways, and when we can get a run of normal seasons we should be able to derive such benefit as to meet our obligations without any trouble. With regard to the question of taxation this is not a time when the people can bear great burdens in this respect. If increased taxation is necessary I think it should be applied in a way that will cause it to be felt as little as possible. It is time that we studied

economy as far as we can. I think that enough has already been said on the question of economy without it being necessary for me to take up any more of the time of the House on the point. I think our indebtedness and our deficit are rather large but that the time will come when we shall be able to wipe that off. Let us have patience, and let us not, through any feeling of panic, place undue burdens upon our people. Let us go steadily whilst we are passing through a time of stringency and whilst we are feeling the pinch of drought and the shock of war. I feel sure that in a few years all will come right.

Mr. HARDWICK (East Perth) [9.55]: It is not my intention to tax the patience of the House at any length at this juncture, realising as I do that the Government are having a very anxious time. In my opinion they are beginning to wear a very anxious look. It will, therefore, perhaps be unfair for me to criticise them too much at this particular time. It is perhaps a matter for congratulation—and it is also consoling to the Opposition—that the Government are not adopting that cavalier attitude which characterised them during the last session. It is just as well that they are not, because the thought expressed through the ballot box at the last election has no doubt had some influence in that direction. It has provided rather an item of amusement for this corner of the House to have noticed from time to time the expressions of eulogy which have emanated from many hon. members of the other side of the House in respect of the leader of the Country party (Mr. James Gardiner). They have been rather extravagant in their expressions concerning him, and have been constantly heaving political bouquets upon him. I do not know the reason for it, neither am I going to make any effort to determine them. It somewhat impressed my imagination—

Mr. Heitmann: Your what?

Mr. HARDWICK: That they are like some shipwrecked mariners, who were sending out wireless messages in the hope that some friendly allies would

come to their assistance and take them off the rocks before they were torpedoed.

The Premier: How could you torpedo a boat that was on a rock? Your naval knowledge is deficient.

Mr. Taylor: You should go to Nedlands to gain some nautical knowledge.

Mr. HARDWICK: The Honorary Minister the other evening expressed the opinion, rather in an undertone, that he did not like criticism; that it was rather nasty. The Government, and the Honorary Minister in particular, ought to welcome fair and honest criticism as some means of providing suggestions for improvement. Of course the great monster that is causing so much anxiety and alarm throughout the State is the deficit of a million. I think I may remark—

The Minister for Works: Have you felt the effect of it?

Mr. HARDWICK: That if this million deficit was only a dream or a delusion we could be a happy community, but such is not the case. It is a reality, and an extremely grave one at that. My particular complaint against the present administration—

The Premier: Don't forget I am President of the Million Club.

Mr. HARDWICK: I promised the Premier I would not be too caustic in my criticism. They will not find in me the individual who has supplied the last straw that will break the camel's back. Therefore, I will not be too caustic in my criticism.

Mr. Thomas: You are a fairly substantial straw.

Mr. HARDWICK: My complaint against the administration is that they have never made any genuine effort since they took hold of the reins of administration to bring their expenditure within their revenue. They have rushed right ahead in a reckless manner, regardless of the principles of economic law and the needs of the situation. They have gone on in this reckless manner, and like our great hearted friend, Micawber, are now waiting for something to turn up. There is a lot of important matters which I would like to have touched upon to-night, but for the fact

that I promised the leader of the House not to speak at any length. If you will permit me, Sir, I would like to make a comparison with past administrations and the present administration. We have had a Labour Administration in possession of the Treasury benches for practically four years. Let us review the progress of the State for the past 20 years, since the inception of the Coolgardie goldfield. We have heard a lot about the unsatisfactory administration of Liberal Governments. Liberal candidates were described on some platforms during the election of three years ago as political robbers and pickpockets, as birds of prey of unequalled rapacity. Practically every corner post and every decomposed and rotten log from Fremantle to Midland Junction blazoned forth the ultimatum, "Vote for Labour and honest politics." We hear from almost every member of the House how great this country is, how great are its potentialities and possibilities, how capable it is of achievement. If we go back in our history it will be found that during 18 of those years the country has been under a Liberal Government, and for four years under a Labour Administration. Seven or eight years ago the Labour party came into power for the first time. On that occasion they were in office 11 months, and I do not think it can be successfully denied that those 11 months, which have been designated the "mark time period," comprised one of the worst periods in the history of government in this State. That Labour Government was followed by a Liberal Administration, and during their term the country progressed steadily until three years ago, when a Labour Government again came in. Things then slumped once more, despite the fact that millions of revenue and loan money were being spent. It may possibly be only a coincidence that the country slumped under a Labour Government seven years ago, and again slumped during the past three years under a Labour Government. This is shown if a comparison be made, leaving out the last year which was a bad season, and comparing the three immedi-

ately preceding years with the last three years of the Liberal Administration. During the three Labour years the country produced probably double the quantity of wheat that it did during the Liberal term.

The Premier: Because of the increased area under cultivation. While you were talking we were working.

Mr. HARDWICK: In my opinion the depression to-day is largely due to the fact that the Government have entered upon a number of trading concerns. I know it has been pointed out that the sum expended on capital in those trading concerns is infinitesimal when compared with the total deficit of one million. But what good have they done?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They provided employment for over 400 men at Rocky Bay.

Mr. HARDWICK: Quite so. But you could put 400 men to work to-morrow on Mt. Eliza with equal advantage to the State. I desire to point out that there can be only one end to the financial drift, it means eventual bankruptcy when money is spent without any return. Against expert advice the Government have rushed into these things, without any desire for economic trading. The result is that when they are brought into direct competition with business people it is not the amount of capital put into the business ventures which is causing the trouble, but the direct interference which it causes with commerce in many directions. Such interference causes business to slump, and the effects are far-reaching. I believe that two or three local firms were about to start when the Government stepped in with the people's capital and prevented it. I think it is time the Government should take a pull with their State enterprises. I think they must admit that they have ventured upon trading concerns without advantage to the State. When the large amount which has been expended both from revenue and loan is considered it is difficult to understand why the deficit is so large.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): How much has been spent?

Mr. HARDWICK: About twenty-four millions.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): On trading concerns?

Mr. HARDWICK: How can I tell you when the Government will not provide us with a balance sheet? I am certain the hon. member himself does not know.

The Minister for Mines: Less than £400,000.

Mr. HARDWICK: That may be right but I would not like to vouch for it. I wish now to refer to a statement made by the Premier that it was intended to spend £7,000 per month in the erection of workers' homes. In the same issue of the newspaper in which that statement appeared there also appeared an advertisement intimating that the Government had a dozen or more houses to let in different parts of the City. That expenditure has also had this effect upon the progress of the State, because while the expenditure on workers' homes has probably resulted in making some workers comfortable, which I do not envy, I think it has been overdone, and the time has arrived when the Government should stop spending loan money on workers' homes and wait till the tide turns.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: It is a reproductive expenditure, is it not?

Mr. HARDWICK: In my opinion the Government have had to yield too much to the organised affiliated bodies. No doubt the Government's intentions are good, and if they were untrammelled by the organisations and allowed to pursue their policy, probably results to-day would have been better. The Government cannot deny that in certain directions they have had to yield to the influences of organised bodies.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Chamber of Mines.

Mr. HARDWICK: No; you know the organised bodies to which I refer. I wish now to refer to a matter of local concern in my own electorate, the pollution of the Swan river. It must be admitted that the septic tank system has proved a failure, because when the location of the tank was decided upon the

small rise and fall in the river, some four or five inches only, was not taken into account. My objection is not to the tank itself but to the pollution of the river. The mud banks have become polluted and so has the atmosphere. I regret that provision has not been made on the Estimates whereby the Government might, during the coming season, remove some of those mud banks, which might be carried down the stream and the people of Crawley given a taste of what we have to put up with in East Perth. I desire before concluding to point out how necessary it is in my opinion that all sections of the House should work amicably. At the present time there is particular need for this, and before the Government go into recess I should like to see some arrangement arrived at under which the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Country party might during recess be consulted by the Government—not necessarily that their advice be acted upon—but consulted on matters of importance. However, we must realise our position; because at the present time—if we are to take any notice of the mutilated, censored cablegrams which reach us—we must naturally conclude that the statesmen of the Motherland find the tension very high. Even at the present moment, for all we know, our national supremacy may possibly be threatened. In conclusion, I desire to say that Europe is now ablaze, in conflagration, and that its soil is being fertilised by the blood of innocent nations. Let us hope, then, that He who guides and directs the destinies of nations will smite our enemies, and that Australia's sons will not be sacrificed upon the battle field.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe—in reply) [10.16]: I think it is something approaching three weeks since I delivered my financial statement to this Chamber, and at divers times since that evening we have had from various parts of the Chamber speeches supposed to be on the subject of the State's finances, but mostly in the nature of appeals to the Government to spend further moneys in order to help

certain people to retain their positions as members for particular constituencies. It is very well for members to rise in their places and talk about economy.

Mr. Nairn: Fulfil some of your election pledges.

The PREMIER: When we do, we shall probably relieve the hon. member of his Parliamentary responsibilities.

Mr. Nairn: Fulfil your election promises, I say.

The PREMIER: We cannot fulfil all our promises at once. May I say that it is a very easy matter for hon. members to talk about economy. One would imagine, however, that hon. members who impress upon the Government the necessity for economy, would at least suggest some method of effecting economies. The only suggestion in this direction that the Government have received has been tendered by the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith), and his suggestion was that we should carry his North Perth constituents in to the town hall for a penny instead of charging them threepence.

Mr. Smith: Get rid of the Government motor cars.

The PREMIER: The hon. member apparently imagines that it would be an economy if he were to sell his newspaper to North Perth constituents for a penny instead of threepence.

Mr. Smith: We give value for the money.

The PREMIER: Economy, it seems, must always be in the direction of some further expenditure by the Government, or else of some additional sacrifice of revenue. When we endeavour to introduce economy, what is the result? We have not, it is true, done very much in that direction; and I want to say, right here, that we do not propose to do over-much in that direction if it means a dislocation of the business of the State. It would be a palpable absurdity for the Government to enter upon wholesale retrenchment, or wholesale reduction of wages and salaries, and thus immediately interfere not only with the business of the State but also with every private

business carried on in Western Australia. No economies have been suggested, except wholesale reduction of salaries and wages, or else retrenchment of numbers of the people employed by the Government. Some members suggest that we should cut our garment according to our cloth. I think I have heard that particular piece of advice on many occasions. So soon, however, as we propose to reduce the quantity of cloth pertaining to that part of the garment figurately represented by the hon. member's constituency, he immediately protests that that particular portion of the garment urgently requires an extra allowance of cloth. Such hon. members are prepared to allow the country, so to speak, to walk about in a coat with one sleeve in and one sleeve out, so long as the sleeve that is in covers their particular constituency. The railway revenue has been falling off tremendously during the past two months, and I issued instructions to the Commissioner of Railways to meet the deficiency by either bringing about a reduction in the number of the staff or else a reduction of hours. I also impressed on him that no trains must be run unnecessarily. Thereupon, one of the first things that I had to contend with was a monster deputation comprising representatives of every province as well as of every constituency affected with the exception of one—and that exception was Albany. The deputation interviewed me as Minister for Railways and suggested that the Government should not cut out certain trains, but should continue to run them for the convenience of the public, whether they were wanted or not.

Mr. Thomson: You have reinstated those trains.

The PREMIER: We have done nothing of the kind. I know what the hon. member is alluding to, but we have not reinstated the trains which were cut out. As a matter of fact, we have continued the passenger train to Katanning; but we have cut off the goods train; and I anticipate that, in the course of a day or two, the hon. member interjecting will come

along with a suggestion that the goods train should be continued irrespective of traffic available, just for the convenience of the public. I gave an instance of the running of a train representing 110 tons tare in order to carry one ton of goods. Certain hon. members would say that because it conveniences one particular individual we ought to continue running that train—running 110 tons tare in order to carry one ton of goods.

Mr. Smith: I said all along you were running expensive trains for very little traffic.

The PREMIER: The hon. member talked about trams, and not about trains. Again, let me point out that to-day it is not a matter so much of studying economy by reducing necessary expenditure in Government departments, as of recognising and appreciating the fact that we are to-day permitting a large number of individuals to obtain Government services without rendering payment for such services. At this particular juncture, it would be nothing less than suicidal to compel people to pay for certain Government services in the same way as big machinery merchants are attempting to obtain payment of accounts at the present moment. Only this afternoon I have been informed by an hon. member of this Chamber that one particular firm of machinery merchants, one of the strongest of the combine of machinery manufacturers, have harassed a farmer for a paltry amount of £4 7s. 6d., due on a bill which ought to have been met this month. Those people proposed to sell him up and take his machinery from him if he did not pay that wretched amount. And yet hon. members, in their desire to attract public attention, urge that we should economise by compelling the farmers to pay the £400,000 they owe the State.

Mr. Smith: No such suggestion was ever made.

The PREMIER: I admit that no such suggestion was made explicitly, but that was only because those hon. members have not the courage to admit that this is what they want.

Mr. Robinson: We would not be so foolish.

The PREMIER: I admit those hon. members would not be so foolish as to say outright a thing that the public would not tolerate. But there can be only one position arising if the Government were to give effect to the wishes of certain hon. members. I say that nothing would please those hon. members better than that the Government, by closing down on the farmers, should bring about agricultural and industrial chaos.

Mr. Nairn: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Robinson: No.

The PREMIER: Let me tell hon. members who talk so much about economy that almost the whole of the deficit to-day can be accounted for by moneys which are due to the Government, either by the farming industry, or else by other industries which have suffered owing to the drought and the war. Almost the whole of it, I say.

Mr. Nairn: The whole of the £1,060,000?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Nairn: Does that account for the slump in the railway revenue?

The PREMIER: I would not expect the hon. gentleman interjecting to know much about the railway service. In the case of that hon. member he who expects little will be blessed. That this particular period, when under normal conditions our railways would be fully occupied in carrying wheat to the seaboard and bringing back fertilisers for the purposes of the next harvest—

Mr. Nairn: Your Estimates are not dealing with this year.

The PREMIER: Our Estimates are not dealing with this year? Then I should like to know what we have been discussing?

Mr. Nairn: Your deficit does not apply to this year.

The PREMIER: The deficit at the 30th June, 1914, was £464,000.

Mr. Nairn: We had no drought then.

The PREMIER: Of course we had no drought; but, notwithstanding that fact, if the hon. member will turn up,

the Auditor General's report he will find in it an admission that on the 30th June last there was revenue outstanding—that is to say, money due to the Government for services rendered during the previous year—an amount of £327,042. But—to be fair—side by side with that was an item of £35,727 representing moneys due by the departments to creditors outside. A deduction of this amount would leave a net revenue due, after paying all Government accounts owing at the 30th June, 1914, of £291,315. Further, let me tell the hon. member what he may not know—that our deficit on last year's operations was £135,411; so that, had we been paid at the 30th June, 1914, all the revenue owing to us, and had we disbursed all that we owed to creditors, we would have had not a deficit of £135,000 but a surplus of something like £20,000.

Mr. Robinson: Impossible.

The PREMIER: Of course it is impossible. All these things are impossible. But those are the Auditor General's figures, and the hon. member interjecting can turn them up for himself.

Mr. Nairn: If you had that record in a good year, what do you expect in a bad year? That was the best year in the history of the State.

The PREMIER: I am prepared to admit it was, in respect of its showing the greatest output of wheat. But what the hon. member forgets is that during the last four or five years the pastoral industry has suffered tremendous losses. Pastoralists are being sold up to-day who have been in the industry almost all their lives, and others are battling on against tremendous difficulties. The pastoral industry has suffered even more than the agricultural industry has suffered; and thus the wool output has been largely decreased. Our flocks and herds have been depleted owing to the drought. Then there is another fact which the hon. member forgets. The very first year we took office, 1911, there was a partial drought in this State, the main portion affected being the eastern areas, where the latest settlement had taken place. The Government had placed on those areas men

with practically no capital of their own. We provided the capital through the Agricultural Bank, and that institution received no return. The settlers were not able to pay either their land rents, or the amounts due for the seed wheat and fertiliser with which they had been supplied by the Government. Not only did we carry the amount owing on to the next year, but we have not been paid it even to this day. Those settlers were not able to pay interest on the money loaned to them for the purpose of developing their holdings. As I say, not only was all that money due carried over from 1911, but it is owing to-day. There are hundreds who maintain that I should go along to those farmers in the eastern areas and say to them, "There has been a good harvest over the State as a whole; I am not going to worry myself about an individual suffering still by reason of want of rainfall in a particular district; you must pay up or get out." Certain hon. members may desire me to adopt that course, but I am not going to adopt it. Somebody else may come along and do it, who has the heart to do it. I have not.

Mr. Nairn: Who wants you to do it?

The PREMIER: What does the hon. member mean by his criticism on the deficit if he does not, in truth, mean what I have plainly stated? Either the hon. member cannot understand or will not understand, or else he is simply actuated by party motives to make an endeavour to move Ministers from the Treasury Bench. Now, let me give the hon. member some other figures.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I would not worry about him.

The PREMIER: I am not worrying about the hon. member, and I am not giving these figures for his particular benefit. The figures will do good to other members. As for the member for Swan, he is past learning; and I recognise it. On the 30th June, 1914, there was a net amount of revenue due, according to the Auditor General, of £291,000. During that year we had a deficit of £135,000. That left a balance of £155,000.



Now, in 1911, when we were squaring the finances, what did the Auditor General show? We have had the Auditor General quoted pretty freely by the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Well, what does he show?

The PREMIER: That there was revenue outstanding to the amount of £40,521, and expenditure outstanding, according to the statements furnished by the departments, of £25,140, or a net revenue due of £15,391. Thus we had what may be described as a surplus of £2 00 on that year.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Not on that year.

The PREMIER: However, when the Auditor General went into the question he discovered that there was not merely a sum of £25,000 due by the Government to creditors, but that there was no less than £53,569 unpaid. This is the Auditor General's statement; and I want hon. members to be fair, and to take their figures from the man who is appointed by Parliament, who holds his office by the will of Parliament alone. I want hon. members to accept that officer's statement that if the figures were correctly taken out for last year, which ended on the 30th June, 1914, and for the year which ended on the 30th June, 1911, the Labour Government show better results than the Liberals achieved for their particular year. The burden of the criticism of our friends opposite in addition to the finances is in relation to our trading concerns, which they say are responsible for all the difficulties we are in. What is the position? Every member opposite, even those on the Opposition cross benches, have declared that the trading concerns are responsible for the deficit.

Mr. Smith: Not all the members.

The PREMIER: Well perhaps not those who have not already been taken in by the St. George's-terrace farmers. Let us take the trading concerns and see how they stand. The balance sheets, which were duly audited last year, show that the following concerns ended the year with a loss:—Boya quarries £296; cattle £2,773, steamships £17,273; and under the control of the Minister for

Works the State Implement Works showed an approximate loss of £3,000 or a total loss of £23,342. The following trading concerns, for which we have been responsible, showed a profit in the same year; I am quoting now from the Auditor General's statement which allows for interest, sinking fund, depreciation and all other charges, even to rent for Crown lands:—Trams £20,521—

Mr. Smith: Extortion.

The PREMIER: Moola Bulla station £230, meat stalls £16, sawmills £2,493, milk supply £859, ferries £1,259, hotels £1,856, or a total of £27,230. The net profit on all the trading concerns for the year was £3,888.

Mr. Smith: And you have over a million deficit.

The PREMIER: Even taking into account some trading concerns showing a cash loss, I contend they have been of tremendous value to the people of the State. Members can say that we have lost on the steamers, but those steamers have done more than any other single administrative act by any Government in Western Australia for the development of the North-West area. I heard the remark only this evening from the leader of the Opposition, when he was discussing another matter, "Did any one ever hear of such a mad-brained idea as the State steamers?" The leader of the Opposition seems to forget that when he was Premier appealing to the electors he declared himself in favour of State steamers.

Mr. Smith: But he would not have appointed a boy manager.

The PREMIER: Of course the State steamers are all right so long as they are introduced and controlled by the Liberals, but they are all wrong if administered by the Labour party. It is merely party prejudice.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is the class of steamers that we object to.

The PREMIER: I do not propose to go into the question of the steamers we have employed.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I would if I were you.

The PREMIER: It was my friends opposite who were largely responsible

for the purchase of those steamers by the "crook" advice they gave in regard to them.

Mr. Robinson: Who gave you the "crook" advice?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Moore and Gregory.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You should be ashamed of yourself.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I am only ashamed of you.

The PREMIER: Let us take the implement works, which are to-day employing nearly 600 men. These men all have dependants, and we can safely multiply the 600 by five, which gives 3,000 who are being provided for as the result of those implement works at North Fremantle. Our friends are such patriots to Western Australia that they would prefer that the International Harvester Co. should manufacture the implements. These are the people, too, who threaten to sell up a man who owes them £4 7s. 6d. Hon. members opposite prefer that a trust of this description should carry on business in Western Australia rather than our own people should be employed in an industry conducted by the State. We say moreover that in addition to finding employment for such a number of people the implements which are manufactured at the State works are of a better class than were previously supplied to the farming community. When we get beyond the position of our friends opposite, who merely ridicule and endeavour to damage our party, we shall have forgotten all about the State trading concerns and we shall be held up as models. The member for Northam was one of the most onergetic supporters of the establishment of implement works when he wanted them established in his own electorate. This applies also to many of the speeches which have been made on the Estimates. Those members who have State concerns in their electorates are quite satisfied. The member for Leederville said the State milk supply was a very good thing, and he also told us that the trams were all right. Another member told us that the ferries were all right, but all the rest of the trading concerns were not. The

member for Gascoyne (Mr. Gilchrist) spoke in terms of praise of the State steamers because they were serving his electorate. The member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) told us that the State sawmills were a good thing in the karri forest.

Mr. Willmott: What was said from here was that the State enterprises, so long as they were properly conducted, that is, conducted on business lines, would be supported.

The PREMIER: That is all right and I want to assure the hon. member so that his sleep may not be disturbed to-night, that they are being well managed and conducted on business lines.

Mr. Robinson: You are the only person who thinks so.

The PREMIER: I can also produce evidence to show that members opposite have approached the Government for further State enterprises. A little resolution, very nicely worded, and probably it was drafted somewhere in Perth—I have a fair idea where it came from; I am not accusing the member for North Perth—this resolution came from a little place somewhere in the Pingelly electorate where they had condemned the Government for not doing something to reduce the deficit. These people had said that the extravagant Government was responsible for financial chaos, and a week afterwards I received this resolution from the Progress Association there asking the Government to spend £6,000 or £7,000 on the establishment of a State hotel at that particular place. They want anything they can get from the Government so long as someone else pays for it. Apart from these matters, one or two of our State enterprises are assisting the Government and the State materially. Take the sawmilling industry: The position is that while Millars' combine are threatening to close down for lack of business, we are in a better position than when we commenced operations. We have more men employed in the sawmills to-day than we had at the outbreak of the war, and more hewers are employed by us to-day than ever previously. Had not the

Government taken over the hewers and given them part payment for their sleepers, many of them would have been in straightened circumstances to-day, receiving free meals and free beds from the Honorary Minister, or at least they would have been working short time for some of the other mills. We have in the forests nearly £80,000 worth of hewn sleepers to-day.

Mr. Smith: That is bad business.

The PREMIER: No, it is exactly the sort of business the State should undertake at such a time; for while the private individual can only carry on business as long as his bank is prepared to stand by him, the State has to carry on its citizens at all costs and all hazards. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) always asserts that the State trading concerns have not meant the employment of an extra individual. I say they have been the means of employing a great number of our citizens who, were it not for these State enterprises, would have been out of employment to-day. The hon. member can consult the *Bulletin*, which although not usually very kind to me, prints this—

The war has not made much difference to Westralia; less difference in fact than to any other mostly mining country in the world.

But there is not the slightest evidence of a particle of patriotism to the State in any member of the Liberal party. There never has been a time in the history of Western Australia demanding more spirited endeavours to bolster up the State in order to maintain its credit. If our friends opposite were at all patriotic they would recognise and appreciate the matters I have mentioned and would assist the Government, if it were only to the extent of saying nothing if they could say nothing good. The leader of the Opposition, in his criticism of the financial statement, merely read what I believe to have been, not so much his own opinions as the opinions of the Auditor General. My reason for making that statement is that I know the leader of the Opposition was closeted with the Auditor General in his office just before the financial statement was

made in the House. It may be all right for a member to go along to the Auditor General, but it is remarkable that at the very moment the leader of the Opposition is expressing certain opinions, those same opinions are being expressed by the Auditor General. The Auditor General is entitled to the freest criticism, but he, above all others, should be fair in his criticism and his actions.

Hon. J. Mitchell: So he is.

The PREMIER: He is not. Last year, for the first time since Responsible Government, at my request we had from the several departments a reply to the criticism of the Auditor General, and almost without exception the departments were able to reply satisfactorily to all his criticisms. Indeed they went further, and the then Under-Treasurer asserted that the Audit Department frequently put every possible obstacle in the way of other departments, instead of helping them with the accounts. It is asserted by all the Treasury officials in the Eastern States that the respective Auditor Generals are there to give them advice at any moment, that the Auditor General meets the Under-Treasurer on every possible point, and in short, recognises that he is there to see that the funds of the State are properly received and expended in accordance with the law of the land, and is not there for the purpose of placing obstacles in the way of the Treasury officials. However, we have it on record that the leader of the Opposition criticised the Government policy after having interviewed the Auditor General in his office.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Auditor General could not refuse to see any member.

The PREMIER: Of course not. But I want it to be understood that the statements of the leader of the Opposition were not his own, but were in fact the Auditor General's. I have no objection. I have here a complete answer to every criticism offered by the Auditor General. Here are the answers, but I am not going to weary the House with them. The member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) was very unfair in his

statement that the Government had reduced the wages of the lowest paid men in the service without touching those of the higher grades. The statement is hardly fair, seeing that we have not reduced the wages of any public servant. Of course I know what the hon. member had in mind, but he should have been just, and stated the position fairly. The hon. member recognises that the Railways are losing revenue, in consequence of business having fallen off, and that there is not work for the men we have in the service. What does the hon. member suggest? That I should put men off and rob them of the whole of their earning capacity, of their wages, by a system of retrenchment? Is it not better that I should do what the men themselves asked me to do at the outbreak of the war?

Mr. Smith: What about the silver-tails in the service?

The PREMIER: They are all subscribers. The railway association asked us to do it. I have a copy of a letter signed by Phil Hunt, the general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees dated 10th September, 1914.

Mr. Smith: Did you read the report of the Kalgoorlie meeting?

The PREMIER: The letter states—

At the Triennial Conference of the W.A. Amalgamated Society of railway Employees (at which every branch is represented) sitting at Perth, the following resolution was unanimously carried, and I am instructed to convey a copy of same to all members of the Parliamentary Labour party. The motion is as follows:—"That this conference protests against the proposed action of the Government in recognising unorganised labour and making provision for agreements between them and the employers before the commission appointed under the Industrial Act, and further we wish to emphasise the point that if any rearrangement of industrial rates and conditions becomes necessary through the slackness of work as a result of the war, the workers' wages be not altered, but rather that their hours be shortened."

Mr. Smith: You succeeded in doing both.

The PREMIER: That statement is not correct, and no one knows it better than the hon. member. I want to place the position fairly before him and tell him we have introduced the 44 hours week in the railway service in the teeth of the strongest possible opposition from the railway officials.

Mr. Bolton: That is so.

The PREMIER: We recognise there is the keenest possible desire on the part of some of our friends opposite, and the Employers' Federation in particular, to use the Government to bring about the first reduction in wages and salaries, so that they can follow suit in regard to private employment.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are not justified in saying that.

The PREMIER: They are not justified in doing that. What then is the position? We have reduced the working hours in the railway service from 48 to 44 a week with one object in view and that is to retain in the service the men now in it, or as many as possible, rather than that we should lose their services and rather than that they should lose their wages. If it is not a fair proposition to ask the whole of the railway service to lose four hours a week rather than that 20 per cent. of the men should lose the whole of their employment, I want to know what is fair.

Mr. Smith: What about the Kalgoorlie meeting?

The PREMIER: I do not care where the protest comes from, whether from Kalgoorlie or elsewhere, the man who is opposed to the 44 hours' week, as against the proposal to reduce wages or hands, is neither patriotic to himself nor to his fellow-employees in the service.

Mr. Smith: The Kalgoorlie branch of the A.L.F. did not think so.

The PREMIER: I do not care what they said; I do not think they understand the position. A number of them appear to be following the Press—the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily News* and the *West Australian*—and taking their information from this source which is not very correct. The member for Perth

asserted that my financial statement was rather doleful, but I say it was not as doleful as it might have been in the circumstances existing, and I ask him to read it again and point out a statement which was doleful in the sense in which he applied the term. I would be exceedingly pleased if I could feel in my heart that we had reached bottom, but we have not done so.

Mr. Smith : Not by a long way.

The PREMIER : The hon. member admits that and yet he talks about the doleful note in my statement. No one knows this fact better than he and Ministers of the Crown, and I hope it will be appreciated as we proceed, but we are determined on one thing, namely that no power will force the Government to introduce a scheme for the reduction of wages and salaries to help outside industries to reduce wages, salaries and working costs.

Mr. Nairn : No one asked you to, or suggested it.

The PREMIER : No, but let me tell the hon. member that the Liberal League in this State is financed principally by the members of the Employers' Federation.

Mr. Nairn : I know nothing about that.

The PREMIER : No, they just took the hon. member in ; he is a rank and filer and is not consulted in these matters. I repeat for his information that the Liberal organisation is financed principally by the Employers' Federation.

Mr. Nairn : I know nothing of the kind.

The PREMIER : I am telling the hon. member.

Mr. Robinson : It is not correct.

Hon. J. Mitchell : Of course not.

Mr. Foley : The hon. member for Canning is a member of Packer's Union.

The PREMIER : The hon. member says it has never been suggested that wages and salaries should be reduced.

Mr. Nairn : I said from this side of the House and you have no right to assert that it has been asked.

The PREMIER : The hon. member depends largely on the attitude adopted

in another place towards measures introduced by the Government to keep the flag flying.

Mr. Nairn : Members of this Chamber have not said so.

The PREMIER : Officials of the Liberal organisation have in another place definitely stated that they were in favour of a reduction of wages and salaries at this juncture.

Mr. Bolton : So did the leader of the Opposition.

The PREMIER : I say the principal support of the Liberal organisation comes from the Employers' Federation.

Mr. Robinson : Nonsense !

The PREMIER : The Employers' Federation sent delegates to a conference at which the Australian Labour Federation was represented. The conference took place in this building in the presence of the Food Commission and I was present by the courtesy of each. We were considering ways and means to meet the position so far as our industries were affected, and the Employers' Federation delegates said the only method of getting over the present crisis was to suspend all awards and agreements, set aside the Arbitration Act for the time being and allow the employer and employee individually to fix up their own arrangements for the future. I want the hon. member to take his share of the responsibility for our present and future action. I want to ask him if he favours that proposal.

Mr. Nairn : I do not represent employers any more than you do.

The PREMIER : I know the hon. member represents a definite constituency but he is a member of an organisation which exists primarily because of the support of the Employers' Federation.

Mr. Nairn : If you repeat that you will be repeating what you know to be wrong.

The PREMIER : I say it is correct.

Mr. Nairn : I say it is incorrect and you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

The PREMIER : I am never ashamed of the truth ; the hon. member apparently is.

Mr. Nairn : You would not know it if you saw it.

The PREMIER : That is the truth and it cannot be denied.

Mr. Nairn : I do deny it.

The PREMIER : The hon. member is merely a rank and filer and has not been taken into the confidence of the league. I want to enlighten him and to let him know just where he stands. When he supported preference to unionists we did not put him outside, and now that he is in the Liberal organisation he ought to get a full knowledge of their operations as well.

Mr. Nairn : That statement is wrong.

Mr. Robinson : Drop personalities and stick to the Budget.

The PREMIER : The present time is not one when we should unduly interfere with the conditions prevailing in the various industries. If there is not sufficient work to keep all hands going in the different industries and in the Government service, we should divide that which is available as equally as possible. We are paying every man in the railway service at the same rate as previously for every hour he works. There has not been a reduction of a single penny.

Mr. Foley : And he is earning more now than under the Liberal Government.

The PREMIER : Yes, with four hours less work per week he is earning more now than at the time the Liberal Government went out of Office. That brings me to the question of the civil service. I think it has been unfairly stated that I made a bitter attack upon the civil servants. When I introduced my financial statement I made reference to the decisions of the appeal court, which sat to deal with the appeals, and asserted that the time was not ripe when we were entitled to pay the increases which had been granted to date back to 30th June, 1911. I never said that we would repudiate that payment. I assert that we cannot legally repudiate it. What I have done is this. I have submitted the matter to Parliament on

the distinct understanding that so far as we, as a Government are concerned, we consider that these public servants are not entitled to receive these increases at this present juncture. The State is not in a position to pay these increases just now. In one case that I know of this increase represents an amount of £125. When, however, we reach altered conditions, irrespective of what the state of our finances may be, I say that the State is legally and morally bound—bound in every way—to pay these increases.

Mr. Willmott : Right from the jump ?

The PREMIER : Yes. We will not repudiate a single penny. I made that statement by way of interjection when the hon. member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) was speaking on the financial position. I said that our hands were tied as a Government in so far as our dealing with the public service was concerned. I repeat that statement now. I know of my own knowledge of men in the Government service who have been retained in their positions for the reason that the permanent heads have not had the courage to denounce them, to lay a charge against them, and have an inquiry held. Why ? One permanent head was overheard to say "Look at the position I am placing myself in. Under the provisions of the Public Service Act I have to bring this man into the criminal dock and attend the court when he is prosecuted. I do not propose to do it." What is done outside the public service ? Take the case of the mine managers, who are paid huge salaries to control the mines. Take the case of Mr. Hamilton. Does Mr. Hamilton stand at the shoulders of his men and watch over them to see that they do a fair day's work ? No ! He employs an underground manager, but even that underground manager does not stand over the men. He in turn, appoints a shift boss, who is placed there to see that the men are doing their fair share of work and are not shirking. If a man does not do his work the shift boss is empowered to dismiss him without further inquiry. The man who is dismissed cannot go along to Mr. Hamil-

ton and get him to reinstate him. Neither can he go along to the Supreme Court or someone else and be reinstated. He cannot do that. But what is the position in our case? We have to go through all that procedure here. We appoint our permanent heads to control the departments, but they cannot control them because their hands are tied in the same way that the hands of the Government are tied.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They can.

The PREMIER: They could, but the conditions have now changed. When the hon. member was in charge of a department half the departments were made up of temporary employees—his friends. Temporary employees can always be dismissed, and I do not regret any that we as a Government have retired. I assert that under the existing conditions it is the bounden duty of every permanent head and every sub-head of a department to carefully and closely scrutinise the administration of his department or sub-department. That is essential. If he does not do this, the directors of the State—the Ministry—should be able to sack that permanent head or sub-head for neglect of duty. But can we do that?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Of course you can do it.

The PREMIER: When the hon. member was in office that could be done. At that time he was surrounded by his own personal friends. He even employed men to write him up—men who were already drawing their wages from the newspapers that employed them.

Mr. Robinson: Get on with the Estimates and leave out personalities.

The PREMIER: I am giving you the true position.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There is not a word of truth in it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) has referred to the cost of the service. It has been said that there is a considerable increase in the cost of this service. Acting under instructions from the Government the Public Service Commissioner has gone into the question, and has submitted a memorandum which will be printed

and distributed amongst members. He states—

Public attention has been drawn to the fact that for the 12 months ending 30th June, 1911, the salaries paid to the permanent and temporary employees employed under the Public Service Act amounted to £321,923 (permanent £252,769, temporary, £69,154), compared with £386,238 expended for the 12 months ending 30th June, 1914 (permanent £355,236, temporary £31,002)—an increase of £64,315.

There is the difference. When the hon. member was in charge of a department and his Government were in power, they spent £252,000 on permanent employees and practically £70,000 on temporary employees. Last year we spent only £31,000, or more than 50 per cent. less.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Because you would not obey the order of the court.

The PREMIER: In my opinion the action of the Government has soured some of the permanent heads and some of the sub-heads of the departments as well. When we took office, we recognised the fact that a number of men temporarily employed in the Government departments had been put there either by the permanent head or sub-head of the particular department concerned, or by the Minister. This was not done because it was necessary that the temporary employee should do any particular work or that he was suited for that particular work, or because the work was essential, but because it was necessary to find him something to do. The appointment of temporary employees was under the control of Ministers without any interference on the part of anyone. We have now altered all that by providing regulations for the appointment of temporary civil servants, in the same way as regulations have been provided in connection with the appointment of permanent men. We have also provided that, in case of vacancies in the public service for temporary hands, the matter should be submitted to the Public Service Commissioner, who would then select the

most suitable person from those who apply for the office and also keep a register of the applicants. That naturally soured some of those who were in the departments in the time of our friends opposite, and who were in the habit of appointing some friend and finding him work to do that it was not necessary should be done.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We always had a register.

The PREMIER: The memorandum of the Public Service Commissioner continues—

On the 30th June, 1914, the following businesses or departments had been extended or brought under the Public Service Act since 30th June, 1911, and they are accountable for part of the £64,315—Goldfields Water Supply Administration £9,526; State hotels, £1,092; Workers' Homes, £2,388; State Implement Works, £1,224; Seed Wheat Board, £576; State Children, £848; Batteries, £1,296; Woods and Forests (rangers) £3,384; Fisheries, (Mr. Aldrich and additional inspectors) £1,380; London Agency, £360; Savings Bank additional staff, consequent on additional public facilities, £2,249; Additional staff at head offices of departments, Audit and Stores, owing to extra work entailed by some of the items above, and State timber, steamships, butcheries, dairy, brickfields, ferries, and land clearing, say twelve men, attached to the Colonial Secretary, Public Works, Agriculture, Audit and Stores, at an average of £180 each (this item is estimated) £2,160; Total, £26,483, including 128 persons.

So that £26,483 is due to certain departments being brought under the Public Service Act which were not under it in 1911. The Commissioner continues—

The sum of £26,483 of the £64,315 is therefore accounted for, the balance left being £37,832. The actual officers employed under the Public Service Act who were employed on 30th June, 1911, and whose salaries formed part of the £321,923, were receiving salaries on 30th June, 1911, amounting in the aggregate to £25,825 in excess of the

amount they were receiving at the former date.

This former date was 30th June, 1911.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How do you get that?

Mr. Willmott: I know of cases where they were working on the minimum—some of them for 13 years.

The PREMIER: They could not get on to their minimum under my friends opposite. I can prove that; yet they talk now about giving effect to the classification, while under their administration scores of officers did not reach the minimum, much less above it, until they had waited for years. So that £25,000 have been received by the same persons as in 1911 in excess of the salaries they were then receiving. Do our friends opposite want us to reduce that £25,000 and bring the officers back to the salaries they formerly received?

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: No; I know you don't. You are only making an outcry against the Government—

This therefore accounts for £25,825 of the £37,832, and if deducted leaves a balance of £12,007. This balance of £12,007 represents not only new staff taken on during a period of three years, but all increments granted, bringing them up to their present salaries. They are mostly junior officers. The period of which the £12,007 relates, viz., between June 30th, 1911, and June 30, 1914, was one of expansion and enterprise, prior to either the war or crop failure, when all of the public departments were called to increased activity—

That is a magnificent tribute to the Labour Government.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Whose report is that?

The PREMIER: The Public Service Commissioner's; it is a public report—

This fact, taken in conjunction with the head office requirements of new undertakings, naturally caused an all-round expansion in audit, stores, accounts, correspondence, record work, etc., and the question with which the Public Service Commissioner is faced is whether £12,007—not £64,615—is



reasonable. Now as regards the present moment, a comparison between the present condition of affairs and those existing on June 30, 1911, does not show that there exists at the present moment a great inflation of staff employed under the Public Service Act.

Hon. J. Mitchell : No one is attacking the Public Service.

The PREMIER : That is signed by Mr. Jull, the Public Service Commissioner. The hon. member says he did not attack the public service ; but his leader asserted we were not treating the public service fairly because we asked them to defer the payment of increases dating back to 1911, and that hon. members asserted that the cost of public departments had increased enormously—I think he was referring to the past ten years. I am trying to show that during the last three years at any rate there has not been undue increase on the cost of administration of the various departments. In fact, it is a wonder to me that the Public Service Commissioner has been able to keep the additional cost of administration so low as £12,000.

Mr. Willmott : That is because he had a deputy Commissioner to help him. You want two more commissioners. The deputy commissioner was a good one.

The PREMIER : I believe that is right. I may also mention in connection with this question of payments to the public service that the increases granted by the appeal board, dating back to 1911, involve back payments to the amount of something like £4,000. The support of this payment given by the leader of the Opposition is amusing to say the least. I question whether he is sincere in his attitude. Let me remind the House that the Government with which he was associated was in office at the time the first classification was made. Did his Government accept the classification without question, as presented by the Public Service Commissioner, and pay the increases forthwith ? Is it not a fact that there was a regulation known as 141 ? The hon. member for Northam (Mr. Mitchell) will know it very

well. That regulation permitted existing salaries to be drawn in certain cases in excess of the classification—it was part of the classification, framed by the classification board.

Member : Why not reinstate it ?

The PREMIER : It has been reinstated, and we are prepared to take the responsibility for that action. That regulation was part of the classification. It was known that some men might have to suffer a decrease on classification and that regulation was provided in order to save those individuals who had fairly and squarely taken positions thinking it meant promotion and increased payment. The classification is a classification of the position and the work, and it would be unfair to ask such a man to accept a reduction on classification ; consequently it was provided in this regulation that he could continue to draw his then salary until transferred to some other position in the service in which his salary applied.

Member : Practically the same provision as in the Commonwealth service.

The PREMIER : What did the Government of which the leader of the Opposition was the head do ? In my opinion they were as sincere then as they are now. They found a reason why the regulation should be applied ; discovered that it was *ultra vires*, although it had been in force for years, and repealed it, which meant that the men affected had to suffer a reduction. They went further than that. By repealing the regulation they placed the responsibility for the reductions on the Public Service Commissioner ; but what about the increases ? It is a well known fact that many public servants had to wait years before the Government placed them on the minimum fixed by the classification. And yet we now have the members of that Government telling us we should immediately give effect to the classification, that we are honourably, morally and legally bound to do so.

Hon. J. Mitchell : You gave an undertaking.

The PREMIER : Was it not an undertaking on the part of the Government then. They were bound—

Member : But you are repudiating a promise.

The PREMIER : We are not repudiating. We recognise we are legally bound to pay, and we will pay ; but I am telling the House that in our opinion we are not justified in paying increases dating back to 1911 at the present juncture, and we want Parliament to support that attitude. I am not going to detain the House on this question further than to say that the public service of this State has not very much to complain about. I know of no service in any part of the world which would be permitted to attack their employers in the way civil servants have done in recent months through their journal, without receiving something by the way of answer from their employer. No private employer would permit his employees to treat him in the way the civil service through the Journal have treated the present Government. The member for Northam (Mr. Mitchell) would not permit it, neither would the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson). I am not crying out about it. But I want to state the position. I say the civil service have not much to complain of. Up to date, except by a voluntary action of their own, they have not suffered through the drought or the war ; they are secure in their positions ; if we retire them we have to pay them a retiring allowance. Moreover, some of them receive payment for service they have not rendered to the State. I had a case the other day when I was asked to give approval to an application for sick leave I thought I would have a look through the file to see how much leave the man had had since he had been in the service. He had been in the service 18 years and had had 89 weeks leave for which he was paid. In 18 years therefore, nearly 10 per cent. of the period of his service had been paid for without his rendering any service to the State. Yet the civil service complain of the way they are treated.

Member : Was that sick leave ?

The PREMIER : And other leave—long service, recreation,

Member : You do not expect a man to work when he is sick.

The PREMIER : Of course not ; but private employers do not pay men when they are away from work.

Mr. Robinson : Oh, yes ; they do.

The PREMIER : I have worked pretty hard in my time, and under many employers, and I never was paid in my life for a single day when I was sick, nor was I paid for a single holiday. There may be other cases showing even a higher percentage than that. I have not made inquiries anywhere on the subject ; that file merely came into my hands. Another case also came under my notice in which the officer had been in the service nine years and in that period had had leave totalling  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of his service, and during that leave he had been paid in full.

Mr. Robinson : Are those exceptional cases ?

The PREMIER : I do not think they are. I am not complaining about it ; I am not suggesting even that we should alter it. I am pointing out that the civil service have not very much to complain of, and that this Government has improved their conditions during the past three years. I will leave that question now, and refer to another mentioned by the Leader of the Country party. We have had criticisms from members of that party, and I will admit that the criticisms of the member for Greenough (Mr. Cunningham) were fair. Again, the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner), in my opinion, endeavoured to be helpful to the Government. He recognised, as we all should recognise, the present position of this country.

Mr. Robinson : So do many others.

The PREMIER : No. I say there are not many others. The member for Irwin was just and fair in his criticism of the financial administration of the Government, and his aim was to be helpful. One matter to which that hon. member drew attention was the sinking fund provision in respect of the loan out of which the goldfields water scheme was constructed. As hon. members are aware, a sinking fund at the rate of 3 per cent. per annum is not needed in

order to meet that loan at maturity. The member for Irwin mentioned that a sinking fund based on a rate of 3 per cent. would more than meet the loan when it fell due. Having made inquiry, I learn that the rate can be reduced from 3 per cent. to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., which latter rate would allow of the accumulation of funds adequate for meeting the loan at maturity.

Mr. McDowall: I spoke on that subject to the same effect four years ago.

The PREMIER: No doubt; but at that period the hon. member's speeches were not audible. However, it is my opinion that even at this juncture we should not be justified in reducing the sinking fund payment. If we were entitled to reduce the sinking fund rate for the goldfields water scheme loan to merely what would meet that loan at maturity, then we should also be entitled to increase the sinking fund payments in respect of loans which present percentages of sinking fund will not so meet. Thus there is something to balance even what might be termed the excessive rate of sinking fund payable as regards the goldfields water scheme loan. It is certain that the State is not accumulating sufficient sinking fund to meet all its loans at maturity; and therefore, in my opinion, we should not be justified in reducing any rate of sinking fund that happens to have been fixed too high for its particular purpose. In any case, such a course would be undesirable, and would probably be misunderstood by our bondholders, with consequent serious damage to the credit of Western Australia.

Mr. Robinson: You could not do it except by converting the stock.

The PREMIER: Yes; we should have to convert the stock in order to reduce the rate of sinking fund. The only other point worthy of notice that was raised by hon. members opposite related to stores. The member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) said that the quantity of stores held by the State was creeping up, and becoming a very heavy item, upon which, of course, the people have to pay interest. In

the first instance, stores are paid for by loan funds or trust funds. As they are distributed to the various departments, their cost is debited against either loan or revenue, according to the nature of the work or purpose for which they are utilised. The member for Irwin emphasised that the amount of money represented by stores had been creeping up. But what has to be remembered in this connection is that at the period when the member for Irwin held the Treasuryship there were no State trading concerns, whilst the Water Supply Department was administered under a special Act, that department's stores not being then shown in the Government's Stores account as is the case to-day. All additional stores to which I have referred are now held by the Comptroller of Stores, and are charged against the Government's stores account. The natural result—a result intensified by the expansion of the departments since the days of the hon. member's Treasuryship—was a large increase in the item of Government stores. That result was, in fact, absolutely inevitable unless the Government had decided to adopt the suggestion that the merchants of this State should be permitted to carry stores, upon which we would draw as we required them. The advice which has been tendered me on that suggestion is that we should frequently find, when we want stocks, that the merchants are not carrying them. A further objection urged is that, in addition to paying the merchants interest on the cost of stores held by them, we should have to meet a charge for storage. We are paying interest, it is true, on the money represented by Government stores; but the rate is only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., at most; whilst the merchants would require anything from 6 to 8 per cent. Thus, under our present stores system, we effect a saving of interest, as well as saving practically all storage charges; because, as hon. members know, our stores are held on Crown lands and in buildings owned by the Government. Therefore it is considered better to carry stores ourselves than to let the merchants carry them for us.

Again, the fact that numerous railways are in course of construction or about to be undertaken, necessarily leads to heavy increases in the Stores item, because the Government must carry the necessary rails and fastenings and other materials required. Indeed, I can assure the Committee that the rise shown by the Stores debit is occasioned principally by purchases of rails and fastenings and of other material needed to carry on public works. I wish to state that I have impressed on the Comptroller of Stores in the Railway Department as well as on Mr. Simpson the urgent necessity for keeping stores down to the absolute bedrock; and both gentlemen assure me that they are using their best efforts towards that end, more especially by avoiding indents for such goods and material as can be purchased locally.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: There is the question of the moratorium.

The PREMIER: I do not think it is desirable that I should make any pronouncement on that matter at the present stage. If action in the nature of proclaiming a moratorium is to be taken, it must be taken promptly, without prior notice to the public. An extremely probable result of declaring that the Government intend to proclaim a moratorium would be to provoke that very difficulty which a moratorium is designed to prevent. We do not wish to stir creditors into action by the fear of a moratorium. All I need say on this point is that at present the Government have no intention of putting the moratorium legislation into effect. If we should be compelled to do it, we shall do it without saying anything beforehand, and so obviate unnecessary heart-burning and suffering. Returning to these Estimates, I wish to express my well-considered opinion that if ever there was a discussion on the Treasurer's financial statement that was, in the main, devoid of anything in the nature of really helpful criticism, it is the discussion now closing. At the time when everybody is urging that all party feeling should be put aside, especially on the question of public finance, that

everyone should spring to the assistance of the Treasurer and try to show him how the State's financial position may be improved, the debate on the financial statement is marked by displays of the bitterest of party feeling.

Mr. Harrison: Do not you think that the public offices should be modernised? Would not that result in savings?

The PREMIER: Yes; that is fully appreciated by the Government. With the offices situated as they are at present—rabbit warrens all over the place—how is it possible to control the work of public servants effectively? One Minister, in charge of a single department, may be responsible for the working of half a dozen offices distributed over various parts of the City. Under such conditions, how can the Minister exercise the needful supervision? However, it is the intention of the Government to set about the erection of new offices on modern plans. The site selected is that of the old police court. Plans have been drawn, and specifications are being prepared; and we hope to make a commencement within, comparatively, a few weeks. When those offices have been completed, departments which, as I say, are at present scattered about, or housed in rabbit warrens, will be properly accommodated, under one roof, and effectively supervised.

Mr. Harrison: Could not you save a good deal by doing away with the circumlocution that goes on?

The PREMIER: We have the matter of erection of new public offices actively in hand at the present time.

Mr. Harrison: I thought something might be done in that direction while the departments are not working under pressure.

The PREMIER: Something with regard to the administration of the departments?

Mr. Harrison: Yes; while the new offices are being put up. In the meantime, modernise the methods employed in the Government offices.

The PREMIER: That cannot possibly be done until new offices have actually been erected. Under existing conditions, no one walking casually into

a department could tell whether any particular officer was properly applying himself to his duties—not even if he stood at the officer's shoulder all day long. And then there are certain classes of officers whose work it is very difficult to gauge. No man without technical knowledge could tell whether, for example, a draftsman was doing his duty by the State. At present, the doing of one's duty is, for public servants, almost entirely a matter of fair conscience. They are poked away in little rooms, mostly, and this circumstance renders continuous supervision impracticable. What we want to do is to modernise our office accommodation, and thereupon to set about the making of economies. Once we do start, we will continue until we are satisfied that the Public Service is being conducted entirely in the best interests of the community as a whole. However, I wish to say once again that the criticisms which have been uttered upon these Estimates have, with but few exceptions, failed to prove helpful to myself as Treasurer. There are matters which I might bring forward in refutation of much of the adverse criticism to which I have been subjected; but in the interests of the State of Western Australia and of the British Empire I decline to advance certain facts within my knowledge. I prefer to bear my burden. The Government are faced with difficulties which, in the absence of a knowledge of the full facts, hon. members cannot possibly appreciate. In conclusion, I may be permitted to express the hope that a return of normal good harvests, a recovery of the pastoral areas, and a revival in industry generally will speedily bring back prosperity and well-being to the State and the people of Western Australia.

General debate concluded: Votes and Items discussed as follow:—

Votes—His Excellency the Governor, £1,750; Executive Council, £50; Legislative Council, £969—agreed to.

Vote—Legislative Assembly, £1,900: Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11-32 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 16th February, 1915.

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### ABSENCE OF PRESIDENT.

The Clerk reported the absence of the President (Hon. H. Briggs) owing to ill-health.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.30]: We all deeply regret the illness of the President, and we hope it will not be long before he is restored to us. I move—

*That the Hon. W. Kingsmill, Chairman of Committees, take the Chair as Acting President of the Council pending the return of the Hon. H. Briggs.*  
Question passed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. W. Kingsmill) as Acting President took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

On motion by Hon. D. G. GAWLER, the time for bringing up the Committee's report extended to Tuesday, the 23rd February.

### BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

*Report stage, etcetera.*

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

### BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

*Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly having been received notifying that it had disagreed to the Council's modification of