

minimum average depth of 13 feet 6 inches of the material is present. The lime is for the most part quite impalpable, and has been produced by an accumulation of tiny gasteropod shells, exfoliated shells, shell fragments, and chemically precipitated lime, the last mentioned substance forming apparently the bulk of the deposit. Associated with this material are numerous diatoms.

Doubtless hon. members who are experts on this subject will later inform the House what diatoms are. Mr. Simpson, the State Mineralogist and Analyst, has reported on this lime deposit as follows:—

The variety of the lime in the sample is not calcite, which is that found in almost all limestones, but "aragonite." This is of importance in connection with the utilisation of this material as a fertiliser, since aragonite is known to be more susceptible to the attack of rain water and ground water than calcite. The minute size of the particles of aragonite will ensure a maximum activity in the soil.

These reports go to show that the Lake Clifton lime deposit is of wonderful quality, equal to anything of the kind that we have had. The Bill is before hon. members; I commit it to their careful consideration; and I am sure that all who are interested in the development of this State will assist in passing the measure through the House.

Mr. Angwin: The lessee intends to put up cement works as well.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. I had intended to mention that the lessee also purposes utilising the lime in conjunction with marl, which is found in the vicinity of the lake, to make cement. Indeed, I think the cement is what the lessee expects to make his money out of, because there is a great demand for cement throughout Australia. Moreover, when normal times return, as I hope they will before long, that cement may be exported to all parts of the world.

Mr. Angwin: Cement is 25s. a cask now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Anything which will assist in that direction will be an advantage to the State. I believe that the gentleman primarily interested in this undertaking is one likely to carry it through, a gentleman of good repute, a gentleman who, having resided on the gold-

fields for many years is, I understand, well known to many members of this House. I believe he is in a position, as a business man, to carry the project through. I trust the House will look favourably upon this Bill, in which, I know, the late Minister for Lands, the present leader of the Opposition, is keenly interested. I am sure the hon. member will assist in passing the measure through the House. That having been done, and the measure having received the endorsement of another place, I hope the lessee will as soon as possible enter upon this important work. When his railway has been built and the lime begins to arrive in Waroona, one of the greatest services ever rendered to our South-West will have resulted from the passing of this measure. I again commend the Bill to the House, and trust that with the assistance of hon. members it will soon become law. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. W. D. Johnson debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 4th October, 1916.

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

QUESTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY TIME TABLE.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Why the Midland Railway is not running a daily train in each direction in accordance with Clause 39 of their agreement with the Government of Western Australia, dated 27th February, 1886? 2, Will the Government, in the interests of the settlers, see that the conditions of this contract are complied with?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Clause 39 of the agreement referred to also gives the Commissioner of Railways power to authorise the Midland Railway Company to run less frequently than once a day each way. In framing the winter timetable, which came into operation in May last, the Commissioner decided to cut out two trains per week each way between Walkaway and Geraldton, as they were unprofitable, and at the request of the Midland Railway Company, he agreed to the cancellation of two "up" and two "down" trains per week between Midland Junction and Walkaway, subject, however, to review at any time should the public be inconvenienced. 2, So far as the Commissioner is aware, the present service is sufficient for all requirements, no complaints to the contrary having been made.

QUESTION—GERMAN OR ALIEN SUBJECTS.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Premier: How many German or alien subjects have been put off since the present Government took office?

The PREMIER replied: Up to the present two specific cases on the salaried staff have been dealt with under "The Public Servants Act, 1915." The return of wages men is not yet available. The Government has decided that all persons who are or have at any time been subjects of an enemy country shall be retired under "The Public Servants Act, 1915." The Public Service Commissioner is now engaged in taking action in accordance with this decision. In the case of persons whose parents (one or both) were at any time subjects of an enemy country, the Public Service Commissioner has been

directed to inquire and advise the Government as to whether, in his opinion, such persons should be retained in the Service.

QUESTION—WHEAT HARVESTS AND MARKETING SCHEME.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, In view of the fact that practically two-thirds of our last harvest is still stored at our ports and railway stations, and will not all be shipped before the end of June next, what arrangements are being made for holding and storing the coming harvest at seaports and country stations? 2, Has the question of permitting portion of the crop to be stored on the farms in approved cases, and granting an advance on a fair basis under the wheat marketing scheme, been considered, in view of the saving of railage, cartage, and other charges which would thereby be effected, and to avoid waste? 3, What has been done in the matter of making agency arrangements for handling the coming crop?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, 14,987,506 bushels have been received, and 6,764,333 bushels shipped or milled. The matter of storing the 1916-17 harvest is now under consideration. A conference of Ministers will meet in Sydney in two or three weeks' time to discuss the question. Nothing will be decided until after this conference. 2, Yes, this has been considered, but in view of the many difficulties connected with its adoption is considered impracticable. 3, This will be decided by the conference referred to in (1).

QUESTION—MARKETS AND REFRIG- ERATING WORKS, PERTH.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, At what date was the present city markets and Government refrigerating works in Perth erected? 2, What further provision has been made (a) for increased facilities at the City Markets, and the approximate cost; (b) for increased cool storage at the Government refrigerating works, and their cost? 3, What is the total storage capacity for cool storage of fruit at these works, and what is the estimated number of cases of fruit produced annually? 4,

When is it intended to make a commencement with the central markets and cool storage in Perth?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 1896-7. 2, (a) Only minor internal structural improvements were made from time to time; (b) nil. 3, From 5,000 to 7,000 cases, according to the period of storage. The total number of cases produced annually it is very hard to estimate with any degree of accuracy, but it will possibly be one million and a half; the total number of cases marketed is about 850,000. 4, The position has not been lost sight of, and when circumstances permit, the matter will be taken into consideration.

QUESTION — JUSTICES APPOINTMENTS, CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS.

Mr. FOLEY (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the Premier inform the House whether it is the usual practice for confidential letters written by members of Parliament on the subject of the appointment of justices of the peace, to be submitted to the wardens of the districts concerned, for their consideration?

The PREMIER: I do not quite understand what the hon. member is referring to. I do not think that such letters are referred to the wardens; at any rate I do not know that letters from members of Parliament on such a subject are regarded as confidential.

Mr. Hudson: There is no need to submit the opinion of a member of Parliament to a warden.

The PREMIER: It has never been done during my experience.

Mr. Foley: I received a letter to-day in which I was informed that a communication I had written on the subject of the appointment of a justice had been submitted to the warden of the district. I do not think that is fair.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will supply me with particulars I will make inquiries.

PRINTED PAPER—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [4.40]: May I call attention to a statement appear-

ing on a printed paper which was laid on the Table of the House yesterday, dealing with the Electoral Districts Bill, 1916. The statement in question is a footnote on page 3 which reads, "The 1913 Bill provided for only three seats for present four North-West districts." That is absolutely incorrect and I expect it to be corrected. The 1913 Bill provided for three seats in the three North-West constituencies.

Mr. Taylor: We ought to have an explanation about this statement which is not a fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is not the time for making statements on the Electoral Districts Bill.

Mr. Taylor: When is the time?

Mr. SPEAKER: When the Bill is before the House.

Mr. Taylor: I would like to know whether the statement will be corrected.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Pilbara did not ask a question; he merely made a statement.

Mr. Taylor: May I ask, then, in reference to this matter whether the Attorney General will withdraw what appears on the printed paper and substitute the facts.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The information contained in the schedule was supplied to me by the Registrar General and I have yet to learn that that officer supplies inaccurate information. If the hon. member will tell me what he is complaining about, I will look into it personally and if it is wrong I will have it corrected. I have no reason to hide anything from the House.

Mr. Underwood: It is absolutely incorrect.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have only the hon. member's word for that.

Mr. Underwood: It is as good as yours.

BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, Postponement of Debts Act Amendment. (Introduced by the Premier.)

2, Special Lease (Stirling Estate). (Introduced by the Minister for Lands.)

3, Permanent Reserves (No. 2). (Introduced by the Minister for Lands.)

4, Wheat Marketing. (Introduced by the Minister for Industries.)

MOTION — RAILWAY IRREGULARITIES, CASE OF HUGH McLEOD, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [4.45] : I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into (a) the circumstances leading up to the suspension and subsequent dismissal of Hugh McLeod, station-master at Torbay Junction, and (b) his subsequent treatment by the Railway Department.

I move this motion, honestly believing that the inquiry I ask for is fully justified. Probably it will be said that, as an employee of the State, McLeod had his case heard before the appeal board. I am prepared to admit that, but I say he has not received justice, and I think I can prove the statement. In respect to the appeal board, the principal reason why I say he did not receive justice is that the chief witness whom he desired to take before the board refused to turn up and give evidence. A subpoena was obtained, and still the witness refused. The appeal board regulations do not empower the board to compel witnesses to give evidence. Again, I want the inquiry in the interests, not only of McLeod but also of McLeod's superior officer, for there is a suspicion among the officials of the Railway Department that the gentleman I refer to was in some way implicated in the forgery. It is a strong statement to make, but the whole of the circumstances point to its being correct, and an inquiry should be held, if only to give that gentleman an opportunity for clearing the stigma from his character. Let me just run over the facts of the case. On the 14th March, 1914, when the Albany express arrived at Torbay Junction, the district superintendent, Mr. Davis, was aboard the train. On the journey Mr. Davis had drawn the attention of the ticket collector to three passengers on

the train, namely Casey, Garry, and another, and had asked that their tickets should be examined. On examination it was found that Garry had a correct ticket. When the train arrived at Torbay Junction, the district superintendent alighted to ring up Albany to ascertain to which station the tickets had been issued. Failing to get Albany on the telephone, he instructed Sullivan, the ticket collector, to ask McLeod to ring up Albany as soon as he could after the train had gone. McLeod succeeded in getting Albany on the telephone, and secured the desired information. McLeod came to the conclusion that the tickets, Nos. 394 and 399, from Albany to stations on the Denmark line were not correct. He advised that the police be present on the Albany railway station to await the arrival of the train, and that the men travelling on those tickets should be given in charge. When the train reached Albany there were four police officers on the station. Mr. Davis took those three passengers into his office at Albany and questioned them, but, at the request of the station-master, he refused to give them in charge, saying that he would summon them later on, for travelling, I take it, on crook tickets. This he did, and two of the three passengers were taken before the court, convicted, and fined each £10 and costs. Mr. Davis withdrew the case against Garry and, on being asked why, said he did not know what to charge him with. I do not say there was anything wrong in that. The explanation was given before the appeal board. Some little time after the incident on the railway station, the Chief Traffic Manager telegraphed to McLeod asking to where he had issued ticket No. 467. McLeod wired back stating that he had issued that ticket from Torbay Junction to Cranbrook. The Chief Traffic Manager then wrote to McLeod, asking him to confirm the information and state the amount he had charged for the fare. On the following day McLeod telegraphed to the Chief Traffic Manager as follows:—

Blank paper ticket No. 467. Yours of 27th inst. Confirm my wire of the 26th. Blank paper ticket No. 467 was issued to Cranbrook on 26/1/14, and the fare charged was 8s. 11d.

I emphasise this, because that was the very ticket in respect to which McLeod was practically on his trial. Mr. Davis, the district superintendent, admitted before the appeal board that he did not suspect McLeod until he got hold of that particular ticket. Evidently the Chief Traffic Manager had suspicions also, for he got Detective Ebbesen to work. Ebbesen went to Albany and made inquiries, with the result that he and Mr. Davis went to Torbay Junction and had a conversation with McLeod; after which Mr. Davis suspended McLeod on the score of his being implicated in the forging of these tickets.

The Minister for Works: In the forging of them?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, in forging ticket No. 467. Just prior to that Mr. Davis had gone to Torbay Junction and held a conversation with McLeod in his office, on, I believe, the sixth of the month. At that conversation Mr. Davis accused McLeod point blank of having forged the other two tickets, in respect to which the two men had been fined £10. McLeod immediately went out and called in the guard of the train, before whom he asked Mr. Davis to repeat his charge. Mr. Davis refused to do this and, instead, ordered the guard out of the room. McLeod was naturally incensed at his superior officer charging him with forgery and refusing to repeat the statement in front of a witness. McLeod then sat down and wrote to the Chief Traffic Manager, through the district superintendent, asking for an inquiry. Now here is where a very serious charge comes in. Mr. Davis suppressed that letter and did not send it to the Chief Traffic Manager. I have a copy of the letter here. It was a very serious thing for an officer to do. Mr. Davis has since admitted the suppression of that letter, his stated reason being that he desired to see what McLeod's next move would be. McLeod wrote again to Mr. Davis, asking on which date he had forwarded the letter. He received no reply. He then telegraphed to Mr. Davis, and again he got no reply. Later on Mr. Davis and Ebbesen arrived by train from Albany and took a statement from McLeod, after which Mr. Davis suspended him. Immediately he

was suspended McLeod wrote again asking for a full inquiry, and on the 27th May he received a notice of his dismissal in the following terms:—

From the Chief Traffic Manager's Office, 27th May, to Mr. Hugh McLeod, Torbay Junction. On the 26th January, 1914, whilst station-master at Torbay Junction, you issued a second class return blank paper ticket No. 467, Torbay to Cranbrook, fare 8s. 11d., and you altered the return portion to read "West Leederville to Torbay Junction," and the date to 19/12/13, and the fare to £2 2s. 10d. I am also satisfied that you altered the return half of second class return holiday blank paper ticket No. 394, which had been issued at Albany on the 6th February, to Youngs, fare 3s. 2d., by inserting "Cottesloe to Albany," and 14/2/14 as the date, and £2 3s. 11d. as the fare; also the return half of second class holiday excursion paper ticket No. 399 issued at Albany to Torbay Junction on the 21st February, fare 1s. 4d., by inserting "Fremantle" in lieu of "Torbay," and the date as 7/2/14, and the fare as £2 4s. 3d. For these grave irregularities it has been decided to dismiss you from the service as from the 2nd inst., the date on which you were suspended from duty. Please vacate the departmental house as soon as possible and hand in all other property of the Commissioner in your possession to the acting station-master at Torbay Junction. (Signed) N. Douglas, Chief Traffic Manager.

After having been dismissed from the service, McLeod brought the matter before the Railway Officers' Association, and they appealed. The appeal was upheld, and McLeod reinstated in his former position. My reason for saying that he has not had justice is this: First of all in respect to ticket No. 467, which was the principal ticket on which he was charged, he asked them to produce the ticket. They did not do so. He demanded at the inquiry that they should let him know who handed the ticket in. That they also refused to do. Consider the position the man was in. He was accused of having forged ticket No. 467, but they refused to show him the ticket, or tell him who handed it in, or whether or not it had been

travelled on, and he had no possible chance of making any inquiries whatever. The only thing he could do was to employ a man to make inquiries on his behalf. Between him and the Railway Officers' Association they employed a private detective by the name of Doc. Boardman to make these inquiries. This gentleman eventually found these three men, the two who had been fined £10, and the other whose name was Garry. He accused Garry pointblank with having forged the ticket, and told him that he was getting an innocent man into trouble. He went further into the business as a private detective, and said that if the man would turn King's evidence he would guarantee him £20, and certain persons would take him to the Attorney General and get him a free pardon. The man wanted the money, but did not like the job. After some conversation he made an appointment to meet him on the next day, but Garry failed to keep the appointment. He searched for Garry and found him and brought him along, and when he put the question pointblank Garry said, "I am not going. If I go and clear an innocent man I have to put another man in, and I will not do it." I will read the statement made by the detective himself, when he was suing the Railway Officers' Association for his fee. This has appeared in print and gone out to the world. The statement is—

I pointed to Kenafick and McLeod who were standing close by, asking "Which is McLeod?" He replied "I do not know." I was satisfied then they had not seen each other before. We waited for Garry 20 minutes the next day, but he did not turn up. I went and found him and brought him up. He said he could buy basketsful of tickets on any line in Western Australia. He said "If I save an innocent man I have to lag a guilty man and I won't go." They had to get a subpoena from your Worship and then he would not come to the Court.

They were in that position. The man who did know something about it, who happened to be Garry, refused to give evidence. It has been said with regard to the ticket itself that the reason they cannot find out who handed the ticket in is that the gentleman in handing the ticket in to the Department did so to Mr. Neil Douglas, under the

condition that his name was not to be divulged. Mr. Douglas has since died and the secret died with him. The statement, however, is absolutely incorrect. It is not the truth. As a matter of fact, the evidence was heard before the Appeal Court. Mr. Connor, who is chief clerk to the Chief Traffic Manager, before the Appeal Board distinctly said that the ticket was handed in to him by a reputable man, and when asked and pressed to give the name of the individual he refused pointblank, and said it would defeat the ends of justice for him to do so. They have no respect, however, for poor McLeod. They did not care how much the ends of justice were defeated so far as he was concerned, so long as someone else was sheltered. In the interests of the service and in the interests of justice to humanity, I say that man's name should be divulged, and that a select committee should be appointed for the purpose of making inquiries and clearing the names of those who were in a higher position than Mr. McLeod is to-day, and for Mr. McLeod's position to be cleared, if it can be. It may be argued that McLeod had never ceased making efforts to clear himself. The very persistence of the man goes a long way towards convincing me that he is absolutely innocent. He wants satisfaction. He took the matter to the Railway Officers' Association, but that association practically failed to get him any satisfaction. He went from there to the Western Australian Railway Association, but that body refused to take the matter up. He also laid his case before the Albany District Council of the Australian Labour Federation, which sent it on to the executive of the A.L.F., and there have been many deputations to the Minister for Railways, then the member for Boulder (Mr. Collier), and also to Mr. Scaddan, while he was Minister for Railways. McLeod also wrote to the Farmers and Settlers' Association and various members of the House. I have copies of the letters he wrote and the replies thereto. He also wrote to the then leader of the Opposition. So far as the previous Ministers for Railways were concerned, they took up this stand. There was an appeal board appointed, and that board had come to a decision. It had reinstated McLeod and had granted a certain amount of costs, and the two Ministers refused to go

above that amount or to pay anything which would either form a precedent or get away from the appeal board. With that action I agree to a certain extent. Later on I went with a deputation to the late Premier, then the Minister for Railways, and put the question to him. We argued the matter out, and when he refused to give any recompense to McLeod for his out of pocket expenses, which amounted to some £90, in connection with the railway appeal board, I asked him if he had any objection to the appointment of a select committee in the House, and if such select committee found any other information and would recommend that McLeod was deserving of some recompense, if he would agree to make that recompense. He distinctly said he would not oppose the appointment of a select committee, and was satisfied that if the committee recommended that McLeod should be reimbursed for his out of pocket expenses he would find the money. I undertook to move for the appointment of this select committee prior to the going out of office of the late Government, and I have kept my word in the matter. In the interests of the service itself, and to clear that suspicion which rests upon quite a large number of the railway employees, and in the interests of the officer who has suffered, and of others, I think this inquiry should be held. There is a lot of other evidence which will be brought forward. A certain amount of suspicion does exist in regard to other individuals. When Mr. Davis was giving evidence before the appeal board, he said first of all that he recollected asking Guard Wansbrough, who was acting station-master at Albany, to send for McLeod's ticket book. After making that statement he contradicted it, and said he thought he had made a mistake, that he did not think he had McLeod's book at all, and he wrote a letter stating that the evidence he had given on the previous day was incorrect, and that he never had McLeod's ticket book. After catching these two gentlemen on the station—they were eventually fined £10—he turned round that day and gave to Wansbrough, the station-master, a wire to repeat to both Wagin and Torbay, asking them for their blank paper ticket books. It was a Saturday. McLeod forwarded his ticket book the very same night by the last train

through. Wansbrough received the book, wrapped it up, and addressed it to the district superintendent, put it in a safe and locked it up. On the Sunday morning he was sent for by the station-master. He came down to the station, and the district superintendent, Mr. Davis, was there. The station-master asked him if he had received McLeod's ticket book. He said it was in the safe. He went to the safe, took it out and handed it to Mr. Davis, and he swears to that on oath.

The Minister for Works: Did Mr. Davis say he did not get it?

Mr. MUNSIE: According to the inquiry, he sent a letter contradicting the statement that he ever had it, whereas the other man distinctly states that he handed it to him. He had control of the ticket book for four days before it was returned. In the ticket book was the issue of two tickets from Torbay Junction to West Leederville. He there had what was regarded as the absolute forgery in McLeod's hand writing, and had it in his possession for four days. McLeod had the issue of the tickets in the same book to West Leederville—not No. 467—and they had "West Leederville" in his handwriting. That being the case, it was quite possible—and I believe did happen—that the tickets were traced from McLeod's handwriting on No. 467. Who traced them I am not prepared to say. I do not believe it was McLeod, or that he had anything to do with it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You do not suggest that the district superintendent would lend himself to that?

Mr. MUNSIE: I want to say candidly that on the evidence that has been produced, I am convinced that there are only two men about whom there can be any suspicion, and that these two men are Garry and Davis.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I have no suspicion about Mr. Davis.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not know either gentleman, but am positive that McLeod did not do it.

The Minister for Works: It is such a silly thing to do. The proof is there in the department. There are three things signed, one at the start of the journey, the ticket for the return, and the ticket for the journey itself.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is just where the trouble comes in. Up to date McLeod does not know, and I do not know, whether anyone outside the railway authorities ever knew whether ticket 467 had been travelled on.

The Minister for Works: There are the other portions of ticket 467 which they must have.

Mr. MUNSIE: The other portion is from Torbay Junction to Cranbrook. It is the return half which has been altered to West Leederville.

The Minister for Works: It would be such a silly thing for Mr. Davis to do.

Mr. MUNSIE: It would be equally as silly a thing for McLeod to do. People usually get caught for this sort of thing. When Casey, who was fined £10, was called to give evidence before the appeal board, he admitted that he had obtained his ticket on the Perth railway station for the sum of 10s. Someone evidently had been doing this sort of thing.

The Minister for Works: Someone had been ticket scalping.

Mr. MUNSIE: It was the return blank paper ticket, exactly the same as the other which had been forged, that this man bought for 10s. on the Perth railway station. Hon. members will not succeed in leading me away from the point, or in making me definitely accuse anybody. I want the House to agree to a select committee to inquire who is responsible for the forgery of the ticket. Mr. McLeod is certainly entitled to that inquiry; and, beyond that, I hold he is entitled to be reimbursed certain out-of-pocket expenses in connection with the affair. It has been stated in print that Mr. McLeod, having been brought before a court and practically charged with being a forger, a robber, and a liar, only got the Scottish verdict of not proven. That statement is absolutely unfair to him. That stigma has been cast on him in the eyes of the world. Although he has been reinstated, it has gone forth to the public that he obtained merely a Scottish verdict. If the man is innocent, as I honestly believe him to be, that is a dastardly thing. Unless it can be ascertained who handed the ticket in to the department, I fail to see how it can be ascertained who forged the ticket or where the ticket came from. For the life of

me I cannot see why the department wish to withhold the information who handed the ticket in. Probably, at the time the department had reasons for refusing that information; but I know of no reason why they should hold it back any longer. Immediately after the inquiry, when the department had refused to allow costs, except to a certain amount, the Railway Officers' Association sent a large deputation to the then Minister for Railways (Mr. Collier) and pointed out to him, among other grievances, the need for altering the service regulations so as to empower the appeal board, when a witness was subpoenaed, to compel that witness to give evidence. The then Minister absolutely agreed with that contention. Up to date, unfortunately, the necessary power has not been conferred on the board. Replying to the deputation, the then Minister said—

With regard to the appeal board and amendment of the regulations, I do not see that there can be any objection to that whatever. It seems to me that this board deals with matters of very great importance to the employees at times, inasmuch as it deals with their livelihood, or position, or standing in the department; and there should be some means of compelling a witness to come and give evidence material to the issue. If it is possible to attain that end by amendment of the regulation without an amendment of the Act, I will have it done at once. It should have been possible for either yourselves or the Railway Department to have power to deal with witnesses at the late inquiry, or at any other inquiry, because very often the absence of any witness may result in an unjust decision being given. We do not want to see that continued. I will have inquiries made to see if it is possible to have your wishes met, and if it is possible to do it by way of regulation or of amendment of the Act I will have it done. Which proves conclusively that the then Minister for Railways, at all events, agreed that it is a bad principle if a material witness can defy the board and refuse to give evidence.

The Minister for Railways: What is the date of that paper?

Mr. MUNSIE: It is not a letter, but a report of the interview; and I cannot give

the date. I wish to touch on one or two additional points. It has been stated publicly that Mr. Roe, who was then police magistrate in Perth and also chairman of the appeal board, made in his report a statement to the effect that Mr. McLeod was "lucky to get out of it." I hardly think that statement was ever made. I have not seen that statement either in print or in writing; but, just to refute it finally, I wish to read a brief paragraph from a letter written by Mr. Roe to Mr. McLeod on the 21st April, 1915. The latter portion of the letter reads—

Referring to my conversation with Mr. Bryan about your appeal case, I remember telling him that I had been terribly worried over the appeal, as it was such a complicated case; but I have no recollection whatever of the other part.

This is the point I want to stress. The letter continues—

I certainly would not have taken up this costs case had I deemed you to have been a guilty man in the appeal case. (Signed) A. S. Roe.

The Minister for Railways: That is written by Mr. Roe as a lawyer.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes; and I am prepared to believe Mr. Roe.

The Minister for Railways: So am I.

Mr. MUNSIE: Then the Minister must admit that if the statement has gone out that Mr. Roe was adverse to Mr. McLeod, it is an incorrect statement.

The Minister for Railways: Mr. Roe has become lawyer for Mr. McLeod.

Mr. MUNSIE: All these trivial little points can be raised, if the Minister chooses. But Mr. Roe is still Mr. Roe.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: And he wrote as Mr. Roe.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. This letter was written in connection with a court case in which Mr. Haynes sued Mr. McLeod for money which, in my opinion, the Railway Officers' Association should have paid—Mr. McLeod's share of £21. I wish now to refer briefly to another incorrect statement, made by the then Minister for Railways (Mr. Collier). Why that hon. member made the statement, or how he came to make it, I do not know. After a long and varied experience of the McLeod case, the then Minister wrote a final letter, closing the matter so far as he was

concerned; and in that letter, which was addressed to Mr. McLeod, he made the following statement—

You may rest assured, however, that the ticket was not put in in evidence against you.

The then Minister underlined the words "evidence" and "you." That is the definite assurance of the then Minister to Mr. McLeod that ticket No. 467 was not put in as evidence against him, whereas, in point of fact, the department had two handwriting experts engaged for two days scrutinising that ticket. The statement of the then Minister is, therefore, also incorrect, and proves that the then Minister was misled or badly advised, or possibly that he did not know what he was writing about when he penned that sentence.

Mr. Willmott: Does the sentence perhaps mean that the ticket was put in as evidence against somebody else?

Mr. MUNSIE: No. The ticket was, in fact, put in as evidence against Mr. McLeod. Detective Ebbesen, in his evidence before the appeal board, said he was absolutely positive that McLeod had forged the ticket and that it was in McLeod's handwriting. He said, further, that in his opinion it was an impossibility for anyone to imitate so accurately Mr. McLeod's writing of the words "West Leederville." Subsequently there were handed to Detective Ebbesen various specimens of handwriting—some written by Mr. McLeod, some traced from his handwriting, and some forged; and the detective could not tell which was which. That shows how much of an expert he was. I have the evidence of the handwriting experts here, and I can say that both of them were absolutely definite in stating, before the appeal board, that McLeod had forged the ticket, that the ticket was in McLeod's handwriting. Mr. Cyril Bryan, who conducted McLeod's case, with the chairman's consent obtained some 30 specimens of handwriting from another station. Some of these he caused to be traced, and some to be copied, and, further, he procured some forgeries of this handwriting. These were handed to Mr. Roe, who said that in order to make sure of knowing exactly which was which he would number the whole lot. It is stated in the report that Mr. Roe said it would be bene-

ficial and conducive to accuracy if he numbered the specimens, and that he did so. The two handwriting experts were given all that afternoon and the next day to examine the specimens. When they were called for the purpose of giving their version—this was on the third day of the hearing, the 23rd July, 1914—one of them, Mr. Villiers, said in reply to Mr. Bryan—

The six slips handed in herewith were all written by Mr. McLeod. That was wrong; five of the six were not. Such is the true state of affairs. Here is one of the department's own handwriting experts saying, after examination of the specimens, that the whole six were written by McLeod, whereas five were not written by McLeod. As regards the others, the expert was not too sure, but said he did not think that McLeod had written any of them or that any of them had been traced. Here, again, the expert was wrong, as half of them were tracings. This goes to show how much reliance can be placed on handwriting experts. The other expert failed just about as miserably as Mr. Villiers. The point I wish to drive home is that I personally believe Mr. McLeod to be absolutely innocent of tampering with tickets in any shape or form.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I am quite sure Mr. Davis is innocent, too.

Mr. MUNSIE: Let us have inquiry into that. In my opening remarks I said that, in the interests of Mr. Davis himself, and also in the interests of the railway service, a select committee should be appointed to make inquiry.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think you should attack Mr. Davis here.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: The member for Hannans is merely putting up a case for inquiry.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not attacking anyone. I am giving the absolute evidence, just as I have it here. Mr. Davis himself admitted having suppressed Mr. McLeod's letter.

The Minister for Railways: Letter to whom?

Mr. MUNSIE: To the Chief Traffic Manager. Before the board Mr. Davis admitted having suppressed that letter, and he said

that the reason for the suppression was that he wanted to see what McLeod's next move would be. Mr. Davis may have had some justification for his action. If he had, well and good; let him come along and give that justification to the select committee. In connection with the case, I honestly believe, Mr. McLeod has incurred expenses of at least £90, of which not a penny has been recouped to him up to date. Further, he has suffered the inconvenience of having bailiffs put in. Again, whereas he now has 14 years' continuous service in the department, it cannot, I think, be gainsaid that the case is hampering his improvement in the service and injuring his chances of promotion. The department may take the point that he has been offered promotion. I want to deal with that. A suggestion was made to the late Premier while he was Minister for Railways—not by McLeod but on McLeod's behalf—that probably they could get over the difficulty in a manner which would enable McLeod to meet his obligations, provided the Commissioner had no objection, by giving him a transfer to a higher position in the service carrying with it an increase of salary. The Commissioner said he had nothing against him, and that he was quite willing to give him a transfer. The Commissioner offered him a transfer from Torbay Junction to Dumbleyung, the duties of the two positions being similar except that there was no Sunday work at Dumbleyung. The salaries are the same, £160 to £170 per annum. Mr. McLeod refused to accept that transfer. Let me say that it meant a monetary loss to Mr. McLeod, for, although the position at Dumbleyung is in the same grade as Torbay Junction, there are no Sunday trains at Dumbleyung, while there are at Torbay Junction. To have accepted the transfer would have meant to him a reduction in wages amounting to 4s. a week. That was the benefit he was to have and the assistance to be given him to enable him to meet his obligations. At Torbay Junction he was receiving £160 per annum and 4s. per week additional for Sunday time in working two trains. He was proposed to be transferred to Dumbleyung, where there were no Sunday trains at £160 per annum; therefore he would have been losing 4s. per week. I

contend that that was not promotion. The argument has been put forward from the Commissioner's office that in making McLeod the offer of this transfer they were giving him promotion and placing him over the heads of three other officers, in sending him to Dumbleyung. I wish to contradict that, and to point out that when making the arrangement for his transfer to Dumbleyung they brought a man at least five below McLeod in the service to take his place at Torbay Junction; and further, after McLeod had refused Dumbleyung they sent there a man who was at least five under him. That blows out the argument that he was offered promotion.

The Minister for Works: It may have been necessary to do that in order to fit in with other arrangements.

Mr. MUNSIE: When asked later on by McLeod for an explanation, the Commissioner for Railways said that the man who had been previously at Dumbleyung had been in receipt of £170 per annum and that if McLeod went there and proved satisfactory it had been his intention to give McLeod that salary. It was poor compensation for McLeod, and in any case he did not know that he was to have the higher salary. It was poor treatment of a man after 12 years' service in the department—he has now had 14 years' service—and is still in receipt of £160 per annum. I assert that this case has for the past two years retarded McLeod's progress in the department. I want an inquiry in order to see that McLeod gets justice and a just deal from the department so far as promotion is concerned.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [5.34]: I second the motion.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [5.35]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. Munsie: I desire to point out that it is proposed the House shall adjourn for three weeks. I notified the Minister three days ago of my intention to move this motion and by doing so I think I have given the Minister ample time, and he should now be prepared to go on.

The Minister for Railways: I should like to have a little time before speaking on this

motion. Members will realise that in matters of this description it is necessary that the Minister should give the question some consideration before speaking.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.36]: I do not propose to speak on this motion at this juncture further than to say that in my opinion the reflections cast by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) against Mr. Davis are absolutely unwarranted. I regret exceedingly that a question of this nature should have been raised by the hon. member who could have advocated McLeod's case without in any way reflecting upon Mr. Davis. Mr. Davis is an officer who has had a long and honourable career in the Railway Department and a reputation which is above suspicion. I shall refer to the McLeod case after I have had an opportunity of hearing the department's statement.

Mr. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.38]: In my opinion, the remarks of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) were distinctly unfair. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) said distinctly that a large number of men in the Railway Department were affected, and that there was a possibility of there being an accusation brought against Mr. Davis and others. The desire of the member for Hannans in moving this motion for a select committee was for the express purpose of bringing to light the accusations going about in connection with officers of the Railway Department. This case has been repeatedly considered by the late Government and the inquiry which was held was thought to have been sufficient to meet the case. But when a man goes to the extent of spending so large a sum of money with the object of trying to prove his innocence, I submit there might be some possibility that some error has been made. The appointment by this House of a select committee would not in the slightest interfere with the present Government; it is merely a matter of ordering an investigation in order to find out whether or not there has been an error of judgment committed, whether any person has been wrongly accused. For that reason I think an inquiry is necessary. It is scarcely reasonable to believe, if this man were guilty, and knowing that the facts of

his case were in the hands of the department, that he would have continued spending a large sum of money for the purpose of proving his innocence. He might go to a certain point in that direction, but not to the length he has done. I think the House might agree to the appointment of the select committee. If the investigation were made, not only would it be a means of clearing McLeod but a means also of absolutely clearing up the allegations made against some other officers. In my opinion, the statement made by the member for Williams-Narrogin is absolutely uncalled for.

On motion by the Attorney General debate adjourned.

MOTION—FLAT RATE FOR CHAFF.

Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.42]: I move—

That this House is of opinion that the principle of a flat rate for chaff and other produce as laid down by the Industries Assistance Board is not consistent with justice, and strongly recommends that for produce supplied to settlers under the Act, the market rates ruling at the time of purchase be charged.

I do not propose to take up much time in connection with this matter. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) told us he was endeavouring to get justice for one individual, I am endeavouring to obtain justice for a great many individuals who are at present suffering under the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. Angwin: They get everything they want now, do they not?

Mr. THOMSON: Whilst the previous Government was in office I approached the Minister and also the Industries Assistance Board, but all I could get from them was that they had decided a flat rate should be struck, and there the matter ended. I maintain that this flat rate is inflicting great hardship upon some of our most worthy settlers who, unfortunately for themselves, have had to take advantage of the Industries Assistance Board. I propose to quote only three cases. The first is that of an English settler at Nyabing. He was in a fair way

in the Old Country and came here with the idea of bettering his position, not so much for himself but more on account of his family—he has three boys. He went out to Nyabing and, like many others, found the conditions there not exactly similar to those in England, and certainly not up to what was represented to him before leaving England. This man, unfortunately for himself, had to take advantage of the Industries Assistance Board. He required eight tons of chaff. He wrote to the board telling them that he had made the necessary arrangements with a neighbour to purchase the chaff at £6 10s. per ton, and asking if they would give him permission to do so. Under his arrangement with the neighbour he had to assist in the work of cutting the chaff, to supply his own bags and do his own carting. The standard of chaff was inferior but he was prepared to make it do in the circumstances. Judge his astonishment, after the board had written giving him the authority he sought to purchase this chaff at £6 10s. when the first intimation he received that this was not the price was in the form of an account for chaff at the rate of £10 10s. per ton, or £32 more than the chaff actually cost. I think members will agree that this man has a grievance and is justified in protesting against this action of the Industries Assistance Board. His friends have been endeavouring to have the matter righted, but thus far we have not met with much success. The late Minister for Lands declined to interfere in the matter. It must be apparent that when a man is in the unfortunate position of having to take advantage of the Industries Assistance Board he is not in a position financially to have imposed upon him a surcharge of £32 on the actual cost of his chaff. I leave it to members' judgment to say whether that was a fair and a just charge for the board to make. Not only that but they were charging him 6 per cent. on top of it. The second case I desire to refer to is that of a man who had been working on the timber mills and he thought he would be improving his position by making a home for himself on the land. Like many others, he was not as successful as he would like to have been and he unfortunately had to go to the Industries Assistance Board. I have a letter

here from him, an extract from which I would like to read—

Referring to your communication No. 3094/14 *re* chaff. I beg to state that I am charged more than other settlers, inasmuch as I supplied all my own bags; being hand filled it took 32 bags to the ton, which means an extra charge to me of £1 per ton. I also carted it direct from the producer at a cost of 10s. per ton. Your board paid the producers, Kenward Bros., for chaff on my behalf £35, viz., 5 tons at £7 per ton, and charged me £52 10s., a difference of £17 10s., for which I decline any liability.

If the matter were taken to court I do not think the Industries Assistance Board would be able to defend its action. I am prepared to admit that the Minister will say he had the authority, under the Act, to fix the price. But I do not think that there is justice in charging in the one case £32, and in the other case £17 10s. was not what one might call a reasonable charge to make for writing a letter to the settler and instructing him to purchase chaff from his neighbour. I will quote one more case and then I shall finish. I know of another man who got permission from the Industries Assistance Board to purchase chaff at the rate of £8 per ton, and to save himself expense, as he thought, instead of having that chaff sent, he made the necessary arrangements with a farmer who resided 20 miles away to have it carted that distance. Hon. members can judge of his amazement when he found he was charged £10 10s. He tried to save money and had an additional charge of £18 10s. put upon him. These, briefly, are the facts I desire to bring under the notice of the House. Members are justified, when they believe their constituents have not had a fair deal, in bringing under notice a motion such as the one I have submitted, and in that way directing the Government to see that justice is done. I know that hon. members opposite will say, "What about those men who received chaff at £10 10s. per ton, which cost the department £14 a ton?" All I can say is that those who secured chaff at that price were fortunate, but where settlers themselves made arrangements such as were made between neigh-

bours, I think it was a bad piece of business for the Industries Assistance Board to strike the flat rate. If they had struck it on the chaff, or other produce, delivered from their depôt, and railage had been paid on it, I could understand; but they should have had enough business ability to exercise discrimination where arrangements were made between settler and settler, to see that a reasonable charge was made simply to pay for cost.

Mr. Angwin interjected.

Mr. THOMSON: If the member for East Fremantle makes the statement that it is a fair proposition to charge a man who is unfortunate enough to have to use the Industries Assistance Board, the amount of £32 more than the article cost, then if that is what is called assistance, all I can say is, God help the man who has to receive such assistance from the board. Not only did the individual have to pay £32 to the Industries Assistance Board, but he had to pay six per cent. in addition. I have placed the matter as fairly as I can before the House and I trust hon. members will support the motion. We all believe in justice, and if the motion is agreed to we shall be doing justice to a number of men in the community who have been made to suffer the grievous wrongs to which I have referred.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [5.53]: I desire to put the other side of the question before the House and I do so in fairness to the present Minister, because, after all, it was a decision arrived at by the previous Government after very careful consideration. I sympathise with the member for Katauning in regard to the particular case he first mentioned because it is one which deserves special consideration. But it has no bearing at all upon the declaration of a flat rate. The particular circumstances surrounding the case quoted by the hon. member are that the bags were supplied by the purchaser.

Mr. Thomson: It was the same in the second case.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The point is that the flat rate of £10 10s. was declared in regard to the supply of all chaff, but we know that if chaff is supplied to a man who pro-

vides his own bags there should be a consideration for that fact.

Mr. Walker: Or does his own carting.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: Exactly. But the hon. member must not use those special cases as an influence to get the flat rate condemned or put aside, because, after all, they were specific instances which should receive special consideration, and if they had been represented to the board they would have received that consideration. Personally, I never heard of them before and the only representation made by the hon. member, so far as my memory serves me, was against the flat rate being declared because his constituents would be unduly penalised. The declaration of the flat rate was made for this reason: in the early stages of the difficulties which surrounded farming at the time of the passing of the Act, and previously as well, a number of farmers had a certain quantity of chaff, but realising that there was going to be a shortage, they made application for more. These people got in early and obtained sufficient for their requirements, getting it also at a cheap rate. There were other farmers who had less on hand and possibly their cases were more deserving, so far as the quantity to be supplied to them was concerned. But, considering the difficulties surrounding the industry at that time, those particular farmers made up their minds that they would struggle through and use their own chaff before applying to the board for more, and in those cases it was only as a last resource that they appealed for assistance. At the same time they required the chaff just as much as the man who had applied earlier, but their applications came in when chaff had gone up in price. It was only fair that both should receive consideration, the one man because he declared he would struggle through, if he could, on account of the existing difficulties, and the other man who made up his mind to get in early.

Mr. Wansbrough: You advised him to get in early.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: No. The board advised that applications should be made by those who required chaff, so that a quantity might be secured later. I am dealing now with the earlier stages and the men who

tried to struggle through and delayed their applications, and the other men who disregarded everybody else and made up their minds to get in early. There is another point, that a number of farmers believing that they would be able to get through, did not make an application to the board. In the initial stages the board were not able to estimate the full quantity of chaff which would be required. The result was that they bought a certain quantity in the earlier stages and they got it at the lower rate. Later on further applications coming in necessitated the purchase of an additional quantity, with the result that the second and the subsequent lots bought were dearer in price. It is unfair to say that although the chaff was bought at different stages, a particular man should have got it at the cheapest rate at which it was bought.

Mr. Wansbrough: The board approved of the farmers buying chaff at a certain rate.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The motion deals with the principle of the declaration of a flat rate.

Mr. Thomson: There were plenty of opportunities to investigate.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so, and I did not approve of departing from the flat rate. The hon. member did not bring any specific cases under my notice.

Mr. Thomson: I did.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: Not the one where the man supplied his own bags.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, in this House.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: By question?

Mr. Thomson: Yes.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I have no recollection of having refused to grant consideration to such a case. If a man supplied his own bags for the chaff the man who supplied the chaff would not be put to the same expense as he would if he had been obliged to supply the bags as well. To depart from the flat rate will mean that a few, possibly a fair proportion, of the farmers will get their chaff at £5, £6, or £8 per ton, while others will have to pay up to £16 or £17 per ton. While it may assist some, it will serve to pass the burden on to others, who will have to pay from 50 per cent. to 75 per cent. more than the £10 10s. flat rate. Per-

mission was given to certain farmers to buy chaff, and, the chaff having been purchased, it was for the board to settle the account.

Mr. Thomson: It it had been known that you were going to charge the farmer £10 10s. his neighbour would have charged him that.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: To carry this motion and depart from the flat rate would be to give consideration to some while imposing upon others a penalty of £6 or £7 per ton. All under the Industries Assistance Board should get equal consideration and justice. It would be a grave injustice to allow those who got in early to reap an advantage, while those coming later had to carry the burden. Certainly the only equitable way of dealing with the matter is by the flat rate, which I heartily endorse.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [6.3]: The carrying of the motion would impose a tremendous amount of work on the Industries Assistance Board, and in my opinion we would be in a worse condition than we are to-day. I myself was penalised by the flat rate, but I know several in my own district who, if they had not had the advantage of that flat rate, would have had to pay £3 or £4 per ton extra. The position is that, although under the proposed alteration we would have a few reaping a benefit, a great many others would be penalised, in addition to which the accounts of the Industries Assistance Board would be thrown into a most complicated condition.

Mr. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [6.4]: This question was forcibly brought before me in the early stages of the history of the Industries Assistance Board. To a certain extent I am in accord with the member for Guildford (Mr. W. D. Johnson), but in the specific cases I have in mind the board distinctly advised in writing certain farmers to purchase at a specific price. In every such instance that price should be charged. In the case mentioned by the member for Kataning (Mr. Thomson) the man was charged with his own bags. Obviously that is most unjust. Some modification of the flat rate is necessary.

Mr. Harrison: But the motion will not meet the case.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: It will serve its purpose. I hope the Minister will look into the matter and do justice to those concerned.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [6.5]: If the motion was to be carried and put into effect, we should have to vary the price to everybody, for the price would be continually fluctuating. The declaration of the flat rate was not objected to by farmers. Of course there are cases in which apparent injustice has been done. The member for Kataning (Mr. Thomson) has referred one or two cases to the board, and in each instance the board decided that the flat rate must stand. There is the question of bags supplied by farmers who bought from their neighbours, and also that of carting. Certainly the man who supplied the bags ought to have consideration, but generally speaking it would cause hopeless confusion if the motion were to be put into effect. As for the price to be charged being the ruling rate at the time of purchase, how is that to be determined just now? In any event, it is unlikely that many farmers would benefit. Last year chaff went up rapidly, and very soon reached the £10 mark. While a good deal of money was made on wheat charged on the flat rate, very little was made on chaff, and so the farmers, in the aggregate, got their chaff just as cheaply as it could have been supplied by individual farmers. I do not propose to defend the flat rate, but the flat rate has been applied, and I intend to ask the House to let it stand. If any alteration is made, it will result in no end of trouble, together with considerable heart-burning on the part of a great many farmers who got their chaff under the flat rate much more cheaply than they could have got it under any other system. In one of the specific cases of hardship mentioned, the man who sold the chaff got very much less than £10 10s. for it. Certainly it does not seem right to find the board buying at £6 and selling at £10. It may be that, in that particular case, the man who sold the chaff was willing to assist his neighbour by accepting a low price. The position should be considered from the point of view of the man who made the sale. I can assure the House that so far as possible I will rectify these anomalies, but I am not willing to al-

low the motion to pass without uttering a warning. We would have some difficulty in resisting any claims at law in instances where we had charged above the ruling rate.

Mr. Harrison: What about the man who gave his order two months before it was delivered?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I doubt if any farmer who received produce under the flat rate is making complaint, except perhaps in cases where one farmer has endeavoured to assist another by selling to the board at a low price. I hope the House will not ask us to go into the whole question of adjusting prices on the basis set out in the motion. It would be well-nigh impossible, and would cost a tremendous sum of money. If the House asks that this shall be done, we will see whether it can be done, but I hope the Government will not be placed in that position. Except in very few isolated instances, the farmers have not made any objection to the existing order of things. It would perhaps be better if the hon. member withdrew his motion.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [7.30]: Before tea we were discussing the motion introduced by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) regarding a certain gentleman down in his district, I presume, who had tried to get in and do a bit of punting with the money of the Industries Assistance Board. I am charging the expression up to the member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick). My experience with the wheat growers—and I desire to make a strong distinction between the farmers and the wheat growers—is somewhat astounding. I found that there was an absolute religion with the wheat growers, though there are some who do not belong to that religion, to rob the Government.

Mr. Thomson: You do not infer that he robbed the Government.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He tried to, but did not get there.

Mr. Thomson: That is a very unfair statement.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will not infer it; I will deliberately state it.

Mr. Thomson: I ask that the hon. member should withdraw that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the statement?

Mr. Thomson: The hon. member made a statement that the gentleman, whose case I have quoted, deliberately robbed the Government.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He tried to.

Mr. Thomson: I ask that it should be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot force the hon. member to withdraw the statement. If he said that the hon. member had tried to rob the Government it would have been a different matter.

Mr. Thomson: He might just as well have said so, for he would have been just as much in the wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot make a statement; he will have the right of reply.

Mr. Thomson: I will take it, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The position is that this gentleman foresaw that the price of chaff would rise.

Mr. Thomson: It shows how much you know about it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He had not the money which which to speculate in chaff himself, but he got to his neighbour and said, "I will take all the chaff you have got." Then he tried to pay for the chaff with an order upon the Industries Assistance Board. He was absolutely speculating in the price of chaff with the money of that board. In all seriousness I say this is a practice which no men, not a Government, should countenance. The Industries Assistance Board was brought into existence to carry those people, who have been labouring under very serious difficulties, over a very bad season, and this man seeing that attempted to get in on that money, acquire the chaff of his neighbour at a very low price, get the Industries Assistance Board to pay for it, and then, if he had the chance, doubtless dispose of it to someone else at a profit. That is the sort of man that the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) is championing.

The Minister for Railways: You should not make such a statement.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member has an absolute lack of conscience in bringing such a motion before the House.

Mr. Thomson: You cannot have any conscience to make such a charge.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The flat rate is all right and had to be introduced to protect other farmers against such men as the one for whom the member for Katanning by this motion to-night is endeavouring to gain a pound or two. I do not think I have ever known of a more impudent proposition being brought before any Parliament in the British Empire.

On motion by Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister) debate adjourned.

MOTION — NATIONAL CABINET DURING WAR TIME.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.37]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the time is now opportune for the formation of a National Cabinet to carry on the business of the State during the period of the war and six months afterwards.

When I gave this notice of motion it was on the occasion of the first sitting of the House, since which there has been a change in Government, and the gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury bench were then in opposition. That, however, does not alter the principle for which I stand. If I believed then that certain conditions would be in the best interests of the State, there is no reason why I should not bring them forward to-day. I should like hon. members to throw their minds back to the year when Western Australia first had responsible Government, namely, the year 1890. Sir John Forrest was the first Premier of this State, and he was remarkably well fitted for the position he occupied. He was brought up in a rural district, and subsequently entered the Government service. Later on as an explorer he travelled throughout the length and breadth of the State. He knew full well the primary wealth that it contained, and his objective was to bring forth all the latent wealth and all the great possibilities of this State, and all its primary resources. An example of his great under-

takings is seen in the goldfields water supply scheme, which has been an advantage, not only to the goldfields, but to the State at large. We follow on then to the year 1904, which marked the birth of the Labour party. In that year the Labour party returned, I think, six or seven members to Parliament.

Mr. Angwin: In 1904 there were two members.

Mr. HARRISON: Be that as it may, the party came into being in the interests of industrialism, and organisations were formed directly in the interests of the industrial community. Two years ago we witnessed the birth of the Country party, which came about in the interests of primary enterprises and those engaged in primary industries, for whom it was sought thereby to give direct representation in Parliament. We have then the three parties existing at the present time, looking after the interests of different vested interests in different portions of the State. I take it that the primary industries are represented by the Country party, the industrial by the Labour party, and the commercial interests by the Liberal party. During the period of this war, and for a term afterwards, I think it would be to the advantage of this State if the mental energies of these parties were combined in dealing with all measures affecting the collective interests of these industries, as each individual industry is an essential part of the State and each is connected with the welfare of the people of the State. I am fully persuaded that, throughout Western Australia, there is a large percentage of those who are interested in its welfare, who join with me in believing that party issues and party politics should cease for the present. We should be able to arrive at a basis of the various values of our voting strength and throw our minds into the carrying out of those measures—and into their administration—which we already have on the statute-book, and which would be for the good of every unit in our community. After military expenses cease and we have no longer in circulation the amount of money that is in circulation to-day and we have to find the money to meet the military obligations with regard to interest and sinking fund, the chances are that we shall pass through a time of

severe depression. It may be that we shall have to economise in some direction and we cannot do so without bringing into account some particular vested interest. Whatever requires to be done to meet the demands of the occasion should be done by the full weight of this House, and no one party should be able to make political capital out of what is done by any other party at this time. I trust that this House will say whether it is not a step in the right direction that we should have an elective Ministry to carry on the business of the State during war time and for at least six months afterwards. If ever there was a time in the history of Western Australia when all party issues should be subordinated for the sake of the common weal, this is the time. We could prove to the rest of the Commonwealth, and also to countries older in experience, whether the system of elective Ministries cannot be more than a matter of mere experiment—a source of real good. Let us reduce the proposal from theory to practice. If the best brains of the House were united to further such measures as those for the repatriation of our soldiers, for the absorption of the brave men returning from the Front where they have stood for our security, risking life and limb on the battlefields of Europe, and for the care of the dependents of the dead and the disabled, nothing but good can result. It has been said that to get a Ministry drawn from all sides of the House to work together is almost impossible; but surely gentlemen who have sent their sons to the Front—and some of those sons have lost their lives in the trenches—can sink party differences, forget the past, and join hands. Otherwise, they would be unworthy of their sons. I trust some other member will take the matter up, and give it the earnest advocacy it merits. The assessment of the distribution of portfolios will be easy on the present basis of the House. Dividing the House into groups of eight, we have eight country members, who will be entitled to one seat in the Cabinet; and then there are 16 Liberals and 24 Labour members to be allotted, on the same basis, the remaining portfolios. There will be no difficulty in reducing the scheme to practical form if we recognise the necessity for all working together for the common good.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [7.50]: I second the motion, but have not come prepared to say much on the subject to-night. It seems to me, however, that nothing but the war counts, though we cannot as yet get the people to realise that fact. I agree with everything to which the mover has given utterance; but I fear that both he and myself are only, as it were, voices crying in the wilderness. I have spoken on this subject to members of various parties, and they tell me that the Constitution stands in the way of the realisation of this proposal. But a Constitution made by man can surely be altered by man. From what has been said to me by many members of this Chamber, it appears that the seriousness of the matter is not yet realised. I should have thought hon. members would be seized of the importance of my colleague's proposal and would not be inclined to jeer at the very laudable attempt of the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) to bring the matter to an issue.

On motion by Mr. E. B. Johnston debate adjourned.

RETURN—YANDANOOKA ESTATE OPERATIONS.

Mr. VERYARD (Leederville) [7.53]: 1 move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House, showing—1, The number of acres placed under crop on the State farm at Yandanooka, under contract, for the 1915-1916 season; 2, The cost per acre, including ploughing and drilling; 3, The number of acres placed under crop for the same season by day labour; 4, The cost per acre, including ploughing and drilling; 5, The total average of bushels of wheat per acre; 6, The number of acres reaped for hay; 7, The average weight of hay per acre; 8, The number of acres let on the share system; 9, The terms of the share system; 10, The profit accruing on the share system; 11, The number of bushels of wheat delivered by contract to the railway line; 12, The total value of all machinery now on the farm; 13, The amount of stable accommodation provided on the farm for the working horses; 14, The number of horses that have died on the farm for want of care and medicine.

I understand that the Minister for Lands has no objection to the passing of this motion. Therefore I need not labour the question.

Mr. Bolton: You must give some reason for asking for the return. Otherwise the motion will be opposed.

Mr. VERYARD: Some months ago I met, a few miles beyond Yandanooka, a gentleman who had been employed on the estate for some months previously. He made no secret of certain information which he possessed, and I have thought proper that inquiry should be made into the correctness of his statements, both in the interests of good Government and for the good management of the State farm. If the statements are true, the manager should have an opportunity of refuting them. If the statements are true, the manager should be dealt with accordingly. I have been given to understand that various valuable pieces of machinery are practically without shelter from the weather, which, as all hon. members know, must mean deterioration in value. I am informed that there is no stable accommodation whatever, but that the horses, after working hard all day, are simply turned into a yard, where they are exposed to all weathers. If that is correct, it amounts to cruelty. I have heard that a number of valuable horses on the estate have died, absolutely for want of care and medicine. I am given to understand that there is nobody on the farm capable of administering medicine to a horse. I make no reference whatever to the correctness or otherwise of these statements. The department will have the opportunity of showing whether the statements are correct or incorrect.

Mr. Bolton: What statements? You have not made any statements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [7.56]: I have no objection to offer to this motion. The information asked for will be furnished to the hon. member, and I hope it will prove as interesting to the House as to the hon. member himself.

Mr. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.57]: This motion not only asks for a return, but makes an accusation.

The Premier: Where is the accusation?

Mr. ANGWIN: Let the Premier look at the last paragraph of the motion. If that does not convey an accusation, I do not know what an accusation is. There is not in the Government service to-day a man better qualified for his position, or giving greater attention to his duties, than the manager of the Yandanooka Estate, Mr. Lee Steere. This gentleman managed the estate for a private person during a number of years. The whole of the stabling and other buildings required for the working of the estate were there at the time Mr. Lee Steere took control on behalf of the Government. Some time ago we had a fair number of unemployed in the State, and it was necessary to provide work for them. Mr. Lee Steere was asked whether he could make provision for some of the unemployed on the estate. He did so, clearing a large area, which he put under crop. What the result of the undertaking is up to the present, I am not aware. I shall be only too pleased to know—and I am sure other hon. members will be glad to know—what has been the result of the work that was provided for the unemployed. Mr. Lee Steere, immediately on being applied to, took on 100 men, and consequently there was not immediate accommodation for these men. A large number of them had to live in tents. Some complained that they were not given sufficient money for their work.

The Premier: That has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr. ANGWIN: Yes. The motion inquires the cost per acre placed under crop by day labour, and so forth.

The Premier: Get the return, and then argue the question out.

Mr. ANGWIN: That is all very well for the Premier; but I think it would be wrong to let a demand for a return like this go out unless something is said here in favour of the man in charge of the estate. While many men complained that they were not being paid sufficient, others thought the terms were very good. Doubtless the member for Leederville (Mr. Veryard) has got hold of one of the discontented men—

The Premier: Very likely; it is generally so.

Mr. ANGWIN: One of those men who immediately want to condemn the manager for anything and everything—possibly for

something that the man himself was responsible for. I am surprised that the mover has not asked for another return, namely the accommodation for stock when the estate was in the hands of a private owner. If he were to get that he would probably find that it contained some information for him. So far as I am concerned, and I think I may speak for other members on this side, I am most anxious to know the result of that work done at Yandanooka. That estate, like many others in that district, unfortunately suffered from rust, and consequently the returns did not come up to expectations. We know that many farms in that district suffered severely from rust, and unfortunately Yandanooka suffered in the same way. I do not believe that any horses died on the estate from want of attention; and if any member asserts here that Mr. Steere is a man who is likely to neglect any stock placed under his charge, I will not believe it.

Member: Mr. Lee Steere is not always there, you know.

Mr. ANGWIN: He goes there very frequently, though; not only does he go there, but he spends a lot of time on the estate, a lot of his own time. He spent many Sundays there. He takes a pride in the estate, born of his many years connection with it. I regret that No. 14 should have been included, and I say that if there be any accusation against the manager, we should have that accusation openly, and not in this underhand manner. We would then be in a position and have the opportunity of replying to the accusation.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [8.3]: I shall support the motion. I do not think we have had sufficient information with regard to Yandanooka, and I am absolutely confident that if we have full information regarding that undertaking, it will thoroughly justify the purchase of this estate and also justify the management. With the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) I desire to take exception to the manner in which this motion has been brought forward. If there is any complaint against the late Government, let us have that complaint straight out. This motion is an underhand manner of making a complaint. I desire further to support the motion for the reason that I wish to have the

figures, which will, I am sure, refute the statements made the Hon. Hal Pateshall Colebatch with regard to this particular estate. I notice that hon. gentleman has made the statement that there was a loss of £20,000 or £30,000. That statement was wired across to Victoria and the *Age* published it as an instance of what State farming is worth in Western Australia. I think we should have those figures, and if possible have Hal Pateshall Colebatch wire them to Vic——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not refer to Hal Pateshall Colebatch; he must say the hon. the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And we should ask the hon. the Colonial Secretary to send the figures over to the Melbourne *Age* again. I think we should do this because, in my opinion, the interests of the State have been placed at considerable disadvantage owing to statements appearing in the Eastern States, chiefly by that hon. gentleman. I trust the motion will be carried and that the return will be laid upon the Table of the House; and I trust, further, that the Government will endeavour to have that return published in Melbourne in order to refute the statements made by the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. VERYARD (Leederville—in reply) [8.5]: I do not think there is much for me to reply to. I have cast no reflection whatever on anyone connected with the State farm, nor on the Minister who formerly controlled the farm. The member for North-East Fremantle has made certain statements, but I am not prepared to take information from him. The manager of the estate is, doubtless, a very capable gentleman, and it may be true that he has been up there on one day a week, but no officer putting in one day a week on a farm like that can give it the supervision it requires. The hon. member also referred to the question of shelter for stock which are not in work. No reply is needed, for stock not in work are not provided with shelter. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) keeps up his reputation by imputing improper motives for the bringing forward of this motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Do you say that the member for Pilbara imputed improper motives to you?

Mr. VERYARD: I withdraw that. The hon. member referred to the bringing forward of this motion as being underhand. He may be capable of doing that sort of thing himself but I am not. I do not think I am called upon to say anything further, and will leave the motion to the House.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—FREEZING WORKS, WYNDHAM.

Nevanas contract, to inquire by Royal Commission.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narogin) [57]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that a Royal Commission, consisting of a judge of the Supreme Court, should be appointed to inquire into the whole of the transactions between the Government of Western Australia and Mr. S. V. Nevanas and the companies with which he was associated, and concerning all matters affecting the State upon which Mr. Nevanas negotiated with any other party or parties, with or without the authority of the Government of Western Australia, or with or without the authority of any Minister of the Crown acting or professing to act on behalf of the said Government, and particularly into (a) the published arrangement under which Mr. Nevanas was to take control of the Wyndham freezing works, when completed, for a lengthy period at a generous rate of commission; (b) the withholding of the letter alleged to have been given by the Premier to Mr. Nevanas respecting this arrangement from the select committee which investigated the Nevanas contract; (c) the accuracy or otherwise of the evidence given to the select committee on this point, and (d) whether such arrangement has been terminated or not. The Royal Commission to have power to take evidence directly or by commission outside this State.

When I went before my constituents for re-election I gave them certain undertakings

in respect of broken promises made by the late Government. I said that I would move for an inquiry at the earliest possible moment into what was known as the Nevanas contract. I also referred to the broken promises in regard to the repricing of land. I gave the people a pledge that if returned I would move for a Royal Commission so as to secure an unbiassed investigation into the whole of the transactions with Mr. Nevanas at the earliest possible opportunity. It is in performance of that promise that I am now moving this motion. A very great deal of public interest has been taken in this question. I do not propose to go over all the matters of maladministration which were referred to in the evidence given before the select committee, and in the very damaging report, subscribed to by three members of the Labour party and carried almost unanimously, which was presented to this House. Every one in Western Australia remembers how shocked the community was at having such a report laid before this House. Members will remember many of the details of Mr. Nevanas' meteoric career in this State. For a short period he exercised all the powers of a royal favourite in ancient times in some European state where there was no constitutional Government. The people of this State remember to their sorrow that they are nearly £10,000 worse off as a direct result of Nevanas' visit to this State. Mr. Nevanas first appears on the file as a capitalist anxious to arrange for the erection of private freezing works at Wyndham. At that time all he wanted was a concession of land on which to erect the works, and some grazing lands on which to graze the stock that would come to his privately-owned works. A little later he appears to have blossomed out as an expert and supplied a report for a fee of £1,000 and the whole of his travelling and other expenses. That is only a small item; but it is characteristic of the whole of Nevanas' methods whilst in this State, that although he was supposed to pay his own expenses, he travelled by the State steamers to Wyndham and back and left the steamer fare, amounting to £45, unpaid. The fare was subsequently paid by the Government in the same way as they paid every bill Mr. Nevanas sent along to them. In short, Mr. Nevanas was a good

spender, and the State had to pay the whole of the cost. We next find Nevanas adopting a new rôle and appearing as a designer and architect for proposed State Government freezing works at Wyndham. This, despite the fact that Nevanas was neither an architect nor an engineer. At that time we had professional officers in the Works Department as good as, if not better, than any in any other Department.

Mr. Bolton: They were better officers than some we had had in the Lands Department.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It was given in evidence before the select committee that if they had been given the chance those professional officers could and would have done this work quite as well. But the Engineer-in-Chief was not consulted in this matter at all.

Mr. Angwin: He was away.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Engineer-in-Chief wrote a minute to say that as he had not been consulted in the first place, he would not take the matter up when you wanted to use his services.

Mr. Angwin: But he was away at the time.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, the evidence discloses that there were officers in the Public Works Department who could have done this work and done it better and cheaper than Nevanas.

Mr. Angwin: Is that the reason why they recommended that another engineer should be appointed?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Will the hon. member keep quiet. The next thing we find is that Nevanas is promised 3 per cent. commission on the value of the plans of the proposed works, estimated to cost not more than £106,000. Mr Scaddan sent a telegram advising him that the plans had been approved and that he was to proceed with the work on a commission of 3 per cent. on an estimated cost of £106,000 but ultimately Nevanas received commission on £155,000. After the Government had paid Mr. Nevanas £4,600 for the preparation of those plans, it subsequently transpired that Nevanas had sublet the work, that he had paid Mr. Dunkerley £700 for the preparation of the plans. That payment was portion of a total of £1,600, which Nevanas paid Mr. Dunkerley for all the work that

gentleman did for him in connection with his negotiations with the Government, including his sub-contract. Although the Government paid Mr. Nevanas £4,600 for being a principal and sub-letting the work to Mr. Dunkerley, we have it in evidence from Mr. Cairns and others that the plans and specifications were incomplete. In fact they were never properly completed up to the time that Mr. Nevanas departed from these shores. On turning to the file again we find another surprising change in Mr. Nevanas' relations with the Government of Western Australia, that all of a sudden the Minister for Lands has let a contract to Mr. Nevanas to carry out these works for £155,150. May I point out that this contract was let to Mr. Nevanas on plans and specifications which he, the contractor, had himself prepared. We find him in the extraordinary position firstly, as a private enterprise individual wanting a concession, secondly as Government adviser, thirdly as architect, and fourthly as a contractor, and a contractor at his own price, since no one was permitted to compete against him by public tender.

The Minister for Works: He had the tender in his own pocket.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: He was an architect, and he knew he had Dunkerley's tender, and any other architect who might have taken a secret commission at that time might have landed himself in gaol.

Mr. Underwood: Where did you land yourself when you left the Lands office?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I landed here with the hon. member. The hon. member told the distressed farmers in Western Australia to go and get work, and they sent me here to assist the hon. member to go out and get work, and I look forward to the time when the electors of Pilbara will adopt the same attitude and send the hon. member out to find work.

Mr. Underwood: What about the land agency at Narrogin; tell us about that.

Mr. Foley: He was all right as long as he was a Labour member.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I was a loyal supporter of the hon. member's party for four years, and that party were very glad to have me. They sent the leaders of the party

to Narrogin to tell the people of that district that I was in every way worthy of their support.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member please get back to the subject.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I wanted to say that the hon. member for Leonora was fair and honourable enough to admit that the interjection from the member for Pilbara was only one dictated by party spleen and unworthy of being made towards one who had supported his Government loyally while they deserved that support, and perhaps for a little longer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If you, Mr. Speaker, asked the hon. member to be less disorderly I would not be tempted to get away from the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member himself is now disorderly, because he is making a reflection on the Chair. If the hon. member will direct his remarks to me, and not to hon. members on the other side of the House there will not be any disorder. He may proceed.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Mr. Nevanas was a contractor at his own price since no one was permitted to compete against him by public tender for the erection of the freezing works, and in this matter the Scaddan Government not only offended against all principles of sound government, which demand that public works of this magnitude should be let by public tender, but they also made a by-word and mockery of the plank of the Labour platform which reads "Departmental construction of public works." That plank was thrown to the winds, and no tenders were called. However, when the select committee started its work it quickly discovered that at the time Mr. Nevanas submitted to the Minister for Lands, and that Minister accepted, the tender to construct those works for a total of £155,150, Mr. Nevanas had in his own pocket a private tender from Mr. Dunkerley, a sub-contractor, who was prepared to carry out the whole of the work for Mr. Nevanas for a sum of £137,000. A bonus of £7,000 was to be added to this sum in the event of the prompt construction of the work, and that would have brought the total which Mr. Dunkerley would have received as sub-contractor to £144,000. It will be seen that

Mr. Nevanas's good fortune, or his ability, or a combination of both those qualities, enabled him to secure a private contract from Mr. Scaddan and the member for Guildford (Mr. W. D. Johnson) which carried a profit to Mr. Nevanas of at least £11,000, merely for standing as a principal and employing Mr. Dunkerley to do the work. That, of course, was subject to Mr. Nevanas and Mr. Dunkerley completing their respective contracts, which, unfortunately, was not brought about. There have been a great many extraordinary features brought to light in the select committee's report. For instance, we find that although the contract was given by the Minister for Lands to Mr. Nevanas on the 9th April, 1915, Mr. Nevanas, on Monday, 22nd March, 1915, brought from Geo. Wills & Co., 1,500 casks of cement, valued at £1,250. Between the 24th and 26th March, 1915, Mr. Nevanas purchased from Elder, Shenton, & Co., reinforcement material valued at £6,000, and on the 20th March, 1915, he entered into a contract with the State Implement Works for the manufacture of pipes for the water supply connected with the freezing works, the contract price being £11,000. Hon. members will remember that the contract with the State Implement Works, as well as other documents, was signed "for S. V. Nevanas Propy., Ltd., under arrangement with the Government of Western Australia, S. V. Nevanas, Governing Director." The select committee reported that they had no evidence to show that Mr. Nevanas had authority for adopting this form of signature. If the motion which I have moved is approved, and if a Royal Commission is appointed to go into all these matters, it will have little trouble in finding out that Mr. Nevanas did have authority at that time to sign documents in that extraordinary way. The select committee reported, "It appears incredible that Mr. Nevanas could have placed orders in Western Australia alone to the extent of £18,250 unless he had received some authority from the Government to support his action in that respect." In the minutes of the select committee's meetings, I observed that the member for Menzies moved to insert the word "documentary" before "authority." This amendment was defeated, but in other respects the minutes show that the report was

practically unanimous, and probably if the word "documentary" had been inserted it would have more accurately described the position, because I believe Mr. Nevanas did have documentary authority at that time to sign the contract and other documents in the way I have described. The select committee point out that unfortunately Mr. Nevanas's evidence was not obtainable. On only one point was he consulted by the select committee through Mr. Nicholson, his lawyer, and that was in regard to two disputed letters which he said he gave to the Minister for Lands, and which that Minister denied having received. In fairness to that Minister, the evidence of Mr. Nevanas should be obtained, and with that object I have added to the motion that the Royal Commission, if appointed, should have power to take evidence outside Western Australia. At the time I gave notice of the motion, I had my eye on Mr. Nevanas, and I knew exactly where we could find him so that we might obtain his evidence. Since that date, however, I noticed a paragraph in a newspaper to the effect that Mr. Nevanas had suddenly gone to Japan. It has been suggested to me that Mr. Nevanas went away to avoid having to give evidence on this subject, but I do not think that is so.

Mr. Angwin interjected.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not know where he is, but if the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) can assist the Royal Commission to lay hands on Mr. Nevanas I will be much obliged to him. If Mr. Nevanas in any way deserved the high character given to him by Mr. Nicholson—whose word we all have confidence in—who was acting as Mr. Nevanas's solicitor, I cannot imagine that Mr. Nevanas would endeavour to evade giving evidence. I trust, therefore, if the Commission is appointed, every effort will be made to obtain that gentleman's evidence. The report which has been submitted by the select committee, which did not include the evidence of Mr. Nevanas, resembles the play of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark in it. It seems to me incomprehensible that some further effort was not made to get Mr. Nevanas's evidence some time ago. If the Commission is appointed I hope the report of the select committee will be placed in the

hands of the Commissioner, who will be authorised to carry out the investigation, and that the Commissioner will examine not only the statements which were made in the course of the various debates in this House last session on the subject, but that he will follow up the evidence of all the witnesses referred to. The select committee's report and evidence and copies of *Hansard* should form the basis of the Commissioner's investigations.

Mr. Angwin: You are welcome to investigate anything you like.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think the hon. member will come out very well, whatever happens. When he came on the scene there was a marked change in the treatment which this contractor was receiving from the State. The Royal Commission should investigate the question of the ships and the negotiations that were carried out under which Nevanas for some weeks had possession of the "Prinz Sigismund," and the representations that were made by the Government in regard to the charter of the "Susan Vinnem" to Nevanas should also be inquired into. There are the questions of the negotiations for oil contracts, and Nevanas's promises to submit quotations for a motor driven ship. The select committee comments on Nevanas's remarkable energy, and it seems to me surprising that he did not carry out his promise to submit those quotations to the Government. If they are in existence, I should like to see them brought out. There is the question also of the companies with which Nevanas was associated. It appears that one of them was an English company of financial stability, but when Mr. Nevanas got into communication with the Western Australian Government and found them willing to enter into agreements with him, he saw to it that our contracts and other agreements were made with what appears to be a bucket shop company which he registered in Melbourne under a somewhat similar name. The reputable English company was in no way liable to this State for the performance of the contract which, unfortunately, was made with this bucket shop company, without capital, registered in Melbourne. I think I can expect but little opposition from the Labour party to this motion, because if the state-

ments that the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) made in Northam are correct, then, in justice to him and his colleagues, it is necessary that we should have a proper inquiry by a judge of the Supreme Court, who will see fair play to all, in lieu of the select committee's report, which the hon. member very strongly condemned. The hon. member went to Northam at the time of the recent election, and I can imagine that the people of Northam had a rhetorical treat. In the *Northam Courier* of Friday, 4th August last, appears the report of a speech delivered by the hon. member, from which the following is taken—

And what about the Nevanas affair?

The whole business had been submitted to a special committee of inquiry hostile to the Government.

Yet three of those gentlemen, the members for Menzies (Mr. Mullany), for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), and for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) were members of the Labour party, whose loyalty to the democratic opinions of that party and to the personnel of the Scaddan Ministry, as far as I know, has not been questioned. Then we had on that select committee the leader of the Country party, a gentleman who, at that time, together with other members of his party, was a supporter of the then Government. The fifth member of the select committee was the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George), who was virtually the only straight out opponent of the then Government, but who, I think, endeavoured to carry out his duties on that committee in a fair and honest manner. Yet the member for Kanowna went to Northam and said that it was a select committee hostile to the Government.

The Premier: He does not mind what he says.

Mr. Walker: It was a hostile committee.

The Premier: It is a slanderous statement.

Mr. Walker: It was appointed for the purpose of condemning the Government.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In view of the statement that the select committee was hostile to the Government, I hope that every member of the Labour party, including the member for Kanowna, will support my motion to have the whole of this business referred to a judge of the Supreme Court,

whose report will certainly be acceptable to the whole of the people of this State. The member for Kanowna when at Northam continued—

That committee laboured for days and days. What had it found? It could not find a flaw in the whole affair.

Mr. Walker: How do you know the report is correct? Those are not my words.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I understand that this newspaper was supporting the candidate whom the hon. member was also supporting. At any rate, here is the report, and it has never been contradicted.

Mr. Walker: I have never seen it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is probably a fair, if condensed report of the hon. member's utterances. However, in view of the fact that in this Chamber a minute or two ago the hon. member repeated his charge that the select committee was hostile to the then Government, I think we can assume that the newspaper report is correct. If it is incorrect, I am prepared to accept the word of the member for Kanowna on that point, but so far I have not heard him deny it. The hon. member continued—

And while the time of the country had been wasted so that the committee might go on a white elephant hunting expedition the work of the Wyndham freezers had been held up, and cables were coming to the Government from Britain and her Allies asking for meat, meat that had not been supplied, largely because every obstacle had been placed in the way of the progress of the freezing works.

The Minister for Works: That is absolutely incorrect. There were no such cables.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The report of the hon. member's speech continues—

Who was Nevanas? Was he a stranger, a rogue, an exploiter? Where had the Government got hold of him? Had he any reputation at all?

The Minister for Works: Who said this?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This is the report of a speech by the member for Kanowna at Northam. It continues—

Nevanas was giving testimony before the New South Wales Meat Commission and was a member and representative of a reputable firm engaged in fighting the meat trust. The Government took advan-

tage of his presence in Australia in order to use his knowledge in assisting them to establish the Wyndham Freezing Works. He subsequently separated from his firm and could not finance the thing he was so well qualified to perform.

I have read that report to show the statements that are floating around the country. And when we have this select committee as a poor reward for all its arduous services condemned as hostile to the Labour party, I think, in justice to it and to the late Government, we should have a Royal Commission to give the public a fair and honest report as to the methods of administration which the late Ministers adopted.

Mr. Taylor: Without the evidence of Nevanas, how much further forward would you be?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think I can show that some further evidence can be secured, even if that of Mr. Nevanas is not obtainable. The hon. members constituting the late Labour Ministry are again trying to attain office. They are fighting hard to get the reins of Government once more, and so they should welcome this Royal Commission as an opportunity to dissipate any injustice they may have suffered as the result of the report of the select committee which has been described as hostile to them.

Mr. Underwood: We are going to vote for it; why keep on talking; why not sit down and let us vote?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The hon. member is not entitled to speak for his party. When some recognised leaders of his party have something to say I shall be glad to hear them.

Mr. Underwood: If they were to speak of some of your land agency business, their remarks would be interesting.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: You go and get work again. The hon. member told this House we would never get to the bottom of this Nevanas affair.

Mr. Underwood: The House would find it difficult to get to the bottom of your land agency affairs.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am making an effort to prove him wrong, and to get to the bottom of the Nevanas affair, and that is the reason why he is breaking out in this nasty way.

Mr. Angwin: No matter how successful you may be in getting to the bottom of it, you will find everything clear and square.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At all events, these hon. members are desirous of again returning to the Treasury bench, and as it appears to me that this is a very fair sample of the manner in which they were administering some of their deals, I shall be glad to see this one, which has already been a little investigated, reported on by a judge of the Supreme Court, who is competent for that purpose. A political report such as we had from the select committee gives no satisfaction to anyone, and can never be looked upon as final. The speech of the hon. member for Kanowna at Northam proves that. Further, if proof were required, reflections have been cast against the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) all over the goldfields, simply because he voted on one or two small amendments against the members for Menzies and for Hannans. I want to deal with another phase of the question, and point out that ever since the no-confidence motion on the subject was defeated in the House repeated statements have been made in the Press, and elsewhere, that important evidence was withheld from the select committee respecting the control and management of the works at Wyndham, which were then in process of erection. It will be remembered that Nevanas from the very start sought to get control of these works. He was a meat commercial man, interested in the meat trade, and what he wanted to do was to get control of the meat trade that emanated from the Wyndham district, and he seemed prepared to get that control by any means that he could. I think in the first place he was willing to build, and would have done so, the freezers at Wyndham as a private scheme. But when he found himself able to get the Government to approve of a suggestion under which the people of this country found the money to build the works Nevanas undertook to build them, making a handsome commission out of doing so; and seeing that in addition he was to get control of the management of the works and control of the meat production of the works, he naturally decided that such a suggestion suited him very much better.

Mr. Munsie: Who suggested it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Nevanas suggested it, and did so first on the 16th June, 1914. On that date Nevanas asked the Government to erect the works at Wyndham, his company to be managing, selling, and distributing agents for the meat at a commission of 2½ per cent. on the gross sales, 2½ per cent. buying commission and 10 per cent. on the profits, together with other conditions of management very favourable to the firm of Nevanas & Co.

Mr. Angwin: It was not accepted.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It was accepted. On the 17th June, 1914, the then Premier (Mr. Scaddan) wired to Nevanas at the South Australian Hotel as follows:—

Forwarding by next mail draft agreement for a report, and if report is adopted and works undertaken the sum of £1,500, and £500 for expenses, covering costs of inspection and advice and supervision over erection of works. If report only is made the sum of £1,000 to cover report and expenses. If report adopted and works erected Government agree to proposal for Nevanas & Co. to act as agents and managers on conditions to be provided by subsequent agreements.

That telegram was received by Nevanas from the late Premier on the 20th June, 1914, and he replied to Mr. Scaddan as follows:—

Many thanks for your telegram. Agree to terms. Post schedule of steamers.

It has been contended in this House that that interchange of telegrams, with the offer and acceptance, constituted a definite agreement to give Nevanas the management of the works.

Mr. Angwin: It was subject to an agreement.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I will deal later with that phase of the question. Throughout the proceedings before the select committee this management agreement assumed the utmost importance. The questions addressed to all the different Ministers before the select committee showed this, and the report of the select committee on the subject is as follows:—

Management agreement.—It is evident from correspondence and statements of

witnesses that such an agreement has been in process of negotiation. The Solicitor General states that he prepared a draft and settled same with Mr. Nicholson—the attorney for Nevanas & Co.—and this draft passed from his office to a Minister of the Crown, but he does not know to whom, or where it may be now. The committee have been unable to obtain this draft agreement until the 19th Oct. None of the Ministers appear to have known of the whereabouts of it, but as all witnesses examined on this point, including Mr. Nicholson (*vide* Questions 2032-4), are of the opinion that this agreement has never been completed, the committee do not think it necessary to further pursue the matter, but attention is directed to the evidence of Mr. Sayer (Questions 1769-73).

Mr. Willmott: Like a dog chasing its tail—we knew it was there but could not catch it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That simile exactly meets the case.

Mr. Munsie: Mr. Nicholson definitely told us that it was never completed.

Mr. Willmott: We did not see it.

Mr. Munsie: He read it out to the committee.

The Minister for Works: I think that is wrong.

Mr. Willmott: He said he would show it to us.

Mr. Taylor: He held up something but we could not see what it was.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Questions 1823 to 1828 also deal with Mr. Sayer's evidence. I had wished to have read this evidence, but owing to the lateness of the hour will content myself with merely quoting the numbers of the questions and answers for the information of the Royal Commission. The whole question of the validity of the arrangement made between the Government and Nevanas depends upon whether there was an agreement for the management of the works in existence or not, because under the articles of association of Nevanas' Melbourne Company, Mr. Sayer, the Crown Solicitor, agreed that the interim contract entered into between Nevanas & Co. and the State for the erection of the works at Wynd-

ham was absolutely valid and binding if there was an agreement for the management of the works in existence at that time. It was contended by Mr. Sayer that Nevanas & Co. had not the power to construct the works. Nevanas knew well what he was doing. He did not enter into an agreement which was beyond the powers of his Melbourne Company under the articles of association, and the case against the validity of that contract absolutely falls to the ground if there was a management agreement in existence at that time, as I say was the case. We also have the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin), in questions 2090 and 2004, stating that he knew nothing of any agreement for the management of the works being made between the Premier (Mr. Scaddan) and Nevanas.

Mr. Angwin: You do not question that, I suppose.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do, and am going to say something about it presently. We have the late Minister for Lands (Mr. Johnson) interrogated in questions 2281 to 2290. Quite a debate hinged around the question as to whether Nevanas had authority to manage the works or not, and that hon. gentleman also, according to his evidence, knew nothing about the matter. In questions 1405 to 1417 the late Premier (Mr. Scaddan) also denied that Nevanas had, or at any previous time did have, the right to control and manage these freezing works.

Mr. Angwin: I say definitely that no agreement was entered into.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I say there was an agreement.

Mr. Angwin: There was no agreement to my knowledge.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The motion which I have moved asks for a Royal Commission to go specially into the question of the missing letter which was talked so much about in the Press. The importance of the management agreement to the people of the State, concerning which all these ex-Ministers gave evidence, cannot be over-estimated, both from the Labour standpoint and from the standpoint of how such an arrangement was entered into behind the backs of the people, and the people's money was being spent on

the construction of these works. The Labour Government were pledged to a policy of nationalisation. That is the main plank of their platform. They nationalised meat-shops, brickworks, and other enterprises in competition with the citizens, and yet when it came to this public monopoly, these freezing works built with the money of the State, which works all sections of the community might well agree should be run by the State, we find that Mr. Scaddan gives a letter to Nevanas under which the control of these works passed into his hands under a management agreement for a lengthy term of years on a most generous rate of commission.

Mr. Angwin: I deny that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have made a definite charge, which has appeared in the *West Australian* and other sections of the Press, that Mr. Scaddan gave to Nevanas a letter couched in complimentary language giving him the management and control of the works, when erected, for a term of 10 years.

The Premier: Do you deny that the letter was ever written?

Mr. Angwin: I say the agreement was not decided upon.

The Premier: Was anything ever entered into?

Mr. Angwin: I do not know anything about such an agreement.

The Premier: Why did you not ask Mr. Scaddan to withdraw the letter?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I make this definite charge again. The letter also provided for special rates of commission on the profit of the meat sold in and out of the Commonwealth.

The Premier: The letter constituted an agreement.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The letter also gave Nevanas power to buy stock and otherwise act on behalf of the Government, in connection with the works at Wyndham and the chilling chambers at Fremantle. Nevanas was to get 2 per cent. commission on the gross sales of meat, 2½ per cent. buying commission, 15 per cent. of the profit made by the works outside the State, and 5 per cent. of the profit made by the works inside the State.

Mr. Angwin: I say again definitely that so far as my knowledge goes no agreement was ever entered into.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This letter was in Nevanas's possession, and was the framework of the agreement that was subsequently drawn up by Mr. Sayer, and which left his hands ready to be signed. We have it that this letter was found by the acting Premier on the files immediately after Mr. Scaddan had gone East on the 16th April, 1915, and when the letter was found by the members of the Cabinet who stayed here and who were pledged to the principle of nationalisation, and who thus discovered that their chief without the knowledge or consent or acquiescence of most of them had handed over the control of these works to Nevanas & Company for this lengthy term of years, under conditions so adverse to the interests of the people of the State, we can well believe how incensed they were.

Mr. Angwin: It never took place.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I say it did take place, and I say it shocked several Ministers, including the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin).

Mr. Angwin: I repeat, it never took place.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The hon. member found that, contrary to the principles of the Labour party, Nevanas had obtained a private contract for the erection of the works, out of which contract, by subletting it to Mr. Dunkerley, he stood to make anything from £10,000 to £18,000.

Mr. Angwin: I wish he had had the money to go on with the contract.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The hon. member found, further, that when the State works had been built with public money they were to pass into the control of Nevanas. Why Nevanas, I do not know. I do not know why applications were not called from other men in Australia who might have the necessary knowledge and ability to manage these works. The whole thing reads to me like a new chapter out of the *Adventures of Get-Rich-Quick-Wallingsford*, or some other hero of the same type. Ministers took exception to Mr. Scaddan's action, which had been carried into effect without their knowledge. That action of Mr. Scaddan justified the charge I made against him on the platform

nine months ago, that in this matter he had treated the State as if it were his private property, to deal with as he pleased. Hon. members will recollect that when I made this charge previously, Mr. Scaddan promised to come to Narrogin and face me and explain that matter and other matters there. The public will also remember that, instead of keeping his promise, which was thrown out by himself, which was his own idea, Mr. Scaddan went to Augusta instead. As the result of the discovery by the acting Premier of this letter on the files, some heated telegraphic exchanges took place between the Premier and the acting Premier as well as other Ministers. These telegrams, which were on the file—

The Premier: Where are they now?

Mr. Taylor: The select committee never saw them.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: These telegrams were never produced to the select committee.

Mr. Thomas: They are denied.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hear no denials on the subject. I am all attention. Let hon. members concerned speak for themselves.

Mr. Munsie: Where did you get that information from?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I make the charge, but it has been published in the *West Australian*.

Mr. Munsie: A thousand and one other things have been published in the *West Australian*.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am making the charge with a due sense of responsibility.

Mr. Thomas: On an unsigned article.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No; on my own account. An article appeared in the *West Australian* after I had taken the matter up. The article is on somewhat different lines from those I took, and the information on which it is based did not come from me.

Mr. Thomas: The article was not signed.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The article was printed, and it was never denied. Denials are not wanting when other unsigned statements affecting Labour Ministers are printed. There is the little incident as to whether Mr. Scaddan and Mr. Collier did, or did not, get their respective sewerage connections done departmentally; whether they had them done by private arrangement. The very

next day both gentlemen were in the newspapers spreading themselves out to correct the mis-statement and to put themselves right. Yet the statements I made on the platform at Narrogin in connection with this matter have never been answered. Mr. Scaddan promised to come to Narrogin and refute those statements, but he failed to do so. The same statements I am repeating now. Then there is the article published in the *West Australian* not in any way inspired by me, repeating those statements. The same charges have appeared in the *Sunday Times*, and also in other papers. Yet no notice has been taken of them by the ex-Premier. They are simply ignored. I have now brought the charges here in this House, by means of this motion for a Royal Commission, so that they can no longer be ignored, so that the matter will have to be cleared up definitely one way or the other.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Mr. Scaddan will be here next week.

Mr. Thomas: If the Royal Commission is appointed and says that that agreement is not in existence, will you believe the Royal Commission?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If the House decides to carry my motion, and if a judge of the Supreme Court makes inquiry into this matter, I will fully believe the report of that Royal Commission.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: You will get the Royal Commission.

Mr. Thomas: If the judge's report is against you, will you accept it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not anticipate that eventuality at this stage in the least; but will the hon. member take the same action as I have taken in regard to following Mr. Scaddan, if the charge I have made is proved correct? That is the question hon. members opposite have to consider for themselves.

The Premier: That is a fair thing.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Those very interesting telegrams between Mr. Scaddan and his Ministers, public documents which at one time existed on the file, were never produced to the select committee. The production of the letter from the Premier to Nevanas would undoubtedly have placed a very different complexion on

the whole report of the select committee. The absence of that letter affected the whole report. I have said that these charges have already been broadcasted all over Western Australia. They have never been answered or denied in any way.

Mr. Angwin: Those charges were made here, and they were investigated by the select committee, and the committee could not find them.

The Minister for Works: We could not get all the papers.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I ask hon. members, are they prepared to let public documents of that nature disappear without anything being said about it? The select committee of this House were absolutely hoodwinked. Information which ought to have been supplied to them was suppressed. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) tonight told us that at that time he said we would never get to the bottom of the matter. I contend the select committee did not get to the bottom of it, or get as far as they would have got had these documents been produced.

The Minister for Works: We did our best, I hope.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes. I know the select committee asked for the documents, but did not get them; and that is the gravamen of my charge. I hope the House will grant the Royal Commission, which will get at the true inwardness of these transactions, which will give the public a fair and square account of how their business has been conducted. The honour of the House is concerned in this matter. When a select committee of the Assembly inquire into any matter of public importance, their findings should be final, and should be accepted by the people with every confidence and with all safety. In this case the public cannot accept the select committee's report, owing to the circumstances I have pointed out. The missing letter, to my mind, explains much that was dark and doubtful during the investigations of the select committee. The existence of that letter explains to me why at that time Mr. Beasley thought Nevanas was in partnership with the Government. In view of the circumstances, that was the only thing Mr. Beasley could think. The letter also explains why Nevanas signed letters and contracts, "under arrangement

with the Government of Western Australia." He had an absolute right to do that, in view of the arrangement entered into by Mr. Scaddan. The letter also explains why Nevanas bought £18,250 worth of material for the work three weeks before the contract for the erection of the works was given to him by Mr. Johnson. In my opinion, the letter also explains why the Government were compelled to pay, in the humble way they did, for cement or for anything else that Nevanas bought. It also explains my desire to have a Royal Commission appointed, so that the truth, and nothing but the truth, of the Nevanas transactions may be firmly established by a Supreme Court judge, in whose verdict the people of Western Australia will have every confidence. I have to say, also, that the true reasons for the termination of the contract with Nevanas were, in my opinion, not the reasons given to the select committee. The true reasons were, firstly, that Mr. Drew tendered his resignation by way of protest against the arrangement entered into by Mr. Scaddan without his colleagues' knowledge or control.

Mr. Angwin: Have you read my evidence? You will get the reason there.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The second reason was that Mr. Collier threatened or took similar action. I say the State of Western Australia owes to the late Colonial Secretary and the late Minister for Mines a great debt of gratitude for the action they took towards protecting the public interest as regards these transactions. In conclusion, I just wish to mention that I have here a copy of the *West Australian* of Monday, the 13th December, 1915, which contains a lengthy article making charges similar to those which I have made in regard to the management agreement and the suppression of the telegrams between Mr. Scaddan and his Ministers. The *West Australian* article is headed—

The Wyndham contract. Some Cabinet history. The management of the works. The missing letter. Threatened resignation of two Ministers.

I do not wish to read the article, although it constitutes corroboration of what I have said from an anonymous writer, and without any inspiration from me. I will not read the article unless such a course is necessary to

ensure that it will be duly submitted to the Royal Commission, when such is appointed.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: The article would not be evidence.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No. But some incidents are put in a manner different from that in which I have stated them in this Chamber. However, since the article contains a great deal corroborating what I have stated, I want the whole of that article to be considered by the Royal Commission.

Mr. Walker: Two mistakes do not corroborate each other.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No; they do not. At the same time the corroboration of this article does fortify me in the belief I held on the basis of other information. I am quoting the date of this article in the desire that the whole of the article may be looked at by the Royal Commission.

Opposition members: Read it now.

The Minister for Works: Why not read it if they want it?

Mr. Walker: Who wants it read out? We have read it. It is old news.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If it will please the House, I will read a portion of the article. I will not read the whole of it, but only that portion which is vital to the statement I have just made. I would, however, like the whole of it to be brought to the notice of the Royal Commission, because I want these statements inquired into so far as they affect the fresh evidence available in connection with the Nevanas' transaction. It is as follows:—

Mr. Scaddan was the prime mover in the negotiations with Mr. Nevanas concerning the erection and management of the Wyndham Freezing Works, and Mr. Johnson was the other Minister chiefly concerned. It was the Premier who had an unbounded admiration for the talents of Mr. Nevanas. It will be remembered that the files and the evidence given before the Select Committee show the wonderful confidence of Mr. Scaddan in the abilities of the gentleman whom he had employed first to report upon the Wyndham works and afterwards to erect and to manage them. The business with Mr. Nevanas was largely conducted through the Premier's office. Other Ministers, with the exception of Mr. Johnson, knew little of it in its early stages. When, how-

ever, the Premier went East last April, Mr. Collier became Acting-Premier, and he discovered a curiosity to become more closely acquainted with the details of the Wyndham negotiations than his previous position in the Ministry had permitted. The Minister for Mines had the Premier's file of the Wyndham papers under his hand. Turning them over, the Acting-Premier came across the copy of a letter from Mr. Scaddan to Mr. Nevanas, offering the latter the management of the Wyndham Meat Works when these should be erected.

Mr. Collier was astounded at the tenor of the communication. It has already been made public that a telegraphic proposal that Nevanas should have the management of the works, on terms to be fixed later, was made by the Premier to Mr. Nevanas; and it is claimed that this proposal constitutes an agreement which Nevanas will be able yet to enforce, should he desire to do so. But no reference has been made to the Premier's letter found by Mr. Collier. The Select Committee never came across it. Whether the file containing it was inadvertently withheld from the Committee, or whether the latter in some manner became detached from its file, the latter being seen by the Committee, cannot be affirmed. But a mysterious silence in connection with the letter has been maintained by members of Cabinet. Mr. Collier, however, when he saw it, was grievously taken back. Proposals regarding the management of the works had been from time to time discussed in Cabinet, but owing to the strong opposition of certain members the matter had never been finalised. The offer contained in Mr. Scaddan's letter was altogether outside the Acting-Premier's ken. He hastily called the other members of Cabinet, who were in the City, together. The anger and distress, particularly of Messrs. Collier and Drew, could not be placated nor allayed. They insisted that a message should be sent to Mr. Scaddan in the East demanding that the original of the letter be obtained from Mr. Nevanas, and that the proposal of management of the works contained in it should be as though it had not been made. Mr.

Scaddan, accordingly, was strongly instructed by Cabinet on the point. What passed between the Premier and Mr. Nevanas touching the question is not known; though it is believed that Cabinet's instructions to Mr. Scaddan were carried out. When the Premier returned to the State he took a high stand with other Ministers. He said that in offering the management of the works to Nevanas he had been carrying out the wishes of Cabinet.

A sudden and vigorous opposition to the Premier was suddenly manifested by Mr. Drew. The Colonial Secretary was ready to submit his resignation. He did not like the Wyndham business. For some weeks Mr. Drew had been sorely exercised in mind over it. With him it was no longer a question of the management of the works: At any cost the Government must conclude all engagements with Mr. Nevanas. So spoke the Colonial Secretary. His resignation was for the Premier as proof of his sincerity. Mr. Collier was not less insistent. He would not remain a member of the Government unless the affair was terminated.

As we know, all the arrangements between the Government and Mr. Nevanas have, apparently, been brought to an end; although opinion in some quarters still maintains that Mr. Nevanas has a claim to the management of the works. Anyone who has followed the Parliamentary and public discussions on the Wyndham contract will note that Messrs. Collier and Drew have observed a strict silence during the debates. Whatever be the rights and wrongs of the contract, to these Ministers the public owes it that it was cancelled. Whether they should have carried the matter further, and taken the public completely into their confidence, is another matter. The ties of party are strong. Mr. Collier for ever insists that *Caucus* is the place for the laches or shortcomings of the party to be discussed—and buried. The Minister for Mines cannot be condemned for his ultra-party loyalty; yet, surely, a truer vision would have showed him and Mr. Drew that the public should be informed of the details of the administration of the Pre-

mier, which exercised them so strongly as to compel them to announce their retirement from the Ministry unless the business which so dissatisfied and alarmed them was undone. They should remember that the people who made the Parliamentary Labour party are alone capable of repairing its errors; but the party, if it endeavours to cloak its own offences, is the biggest danger to the Labour movement.

That newspaper report has never been contradicted; neither has any writ for libel been issued by the prominent gentlemen who are criticised in the article. They have never made any attempt to have the statements there made denied. I wish the Royal Commission to go fully into and to report on the question as to whether or not Nevanas had any legal claim at the present time to control those works. I have inquired closely, but cannot find anything which makes it clear whether or not Mr. Nevanas is still associated with the Government in regard to the freezing works. Therefore, inquiry by the Commission, as proposed in the motion, is desirable so that we may know whether or not, when these works are completed, Mr. Nevanas can come along and claim the management.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have already asked the members of the Labour party to support the motion, in order that the reflection cast on the select committee by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), when he said it was a hostile committee, may be removed. In my opinion members of the Labour party are bound to support this motion; to take any other course would be to stultify themselves. I do not move this motion in any spirit of hostility, as some interjector has suggested this evening, but merely to justify my action in refusing to further follow the Labour party, and in refusing to follow the Labour Premier, Mr. Scaddan, after he had entered into secret contracts and negotiations of this kind without any authority from his Cabinet or his party. I move the motion because I consider it to be my duty in fulfilment of the promise I made when I went before my

constituents and asked them to return me as an Independent. The people have done me the honour of electing me as an Independent, and therefore I am bound to carry out my promise that I would have this matter thoroughly investigated.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [9.24]: I second the motion.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [9.25] On behalf of the leader of the Opposition I desire to say that we court the fullest inquiry into this question, and we intend to support the motion. I say that also on behalf of Mr. Scaddan. It is not my intention to controvert the statements made by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) except to refer to his statement that the officers of the Public Works Department are very fine men. In this connection I desire to point out that the officers of the Public Works Department recommended the acceptance of this tender. Mr. Nevanas' tender for the works, including the jetty, amounted to something like £180,000. We have it on the word of the Minister for Works that the cost of the works when constructed by those fine officers of the Public Works Department will be £400,000 or £460,000, I am not sure which. I wish to say further on this question that the Minister for Works has stated he is prepared to dispose of these works. I have written him to-day asking him the conditions under which he is prepared to dispose of them.

The Minister for Works: Are you buyer or agent?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You will get my letter, and then you can answer it. I repeat, on behalf of members of the late Government, of the leader of the Opposition, and of Mr. Scaddan, that we court the fullest inquiry and will support the motion.

Mr. ANGWIN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. 12

ATES.

Mr. Allen
Mr. Angwin
Mr. Carpenter
Mr. Chesson
Mr. Connolly
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Foley
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Hickmott
Mr. Holman
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Mullany

Mr. Munzie
Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Robinson
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Bolton
(Teller.)

NOBS.

Mr. Butcher
Mr. George
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Harrison
Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Nairn

Mr. Plesse
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Veryard
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Male
(Teller.)

Motion thus passed, the debate adjourned.

RETURN — FRUIT INDUSTRY, MARKETING AND STORAGE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [9.35]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House, showing: 1, The area under fruit trees at the date when the Government Refrigerating Works were completed, and the approximate capital invested in the industry, on a basis of £50 per acre. 2, The area under fruit trees at the 30th of September, 1916, and the approximate capital invested at, say, £50 per acre.

During the past 20 years there has been a large increase in the acreage under fruit, and in that period a considerable sum of money has been invested. The member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) will tell the House what was the outcome of a deputation which waited on the Minister for Lands in the previous Government some time back. The fruit growers have been agitating for years past for better accommodation for the marketing and storage of their fruit. This is really a vital matter, and they are sick to death of the humbugging on the part of the departmental officers. Generally speaking, I know that the fruit growers favour that the marketing and cold storage should be under municipal control. One answer which I got to-day in reply to a question I asked was that there was stor-

age at the works for from 5,000 to 7,000 cases, according to the period of storage, and that the total number of cases which will be produced annually, it is estimated, will be a million and a half. The total number of cases marketed was 850,000 and it was stated that the position had not been lost sight of. I am asking that we should have the information placed before us so that the House may be impressed with the importance of the industry and the amount of money which is invested in it.

Mr. NAIRN (Swan) [9.40]: I have pleasure in briefly supporting the request of the hon. member which will have the effect of placing information before the House on the subject of an industry, which, in many respects, has been completely neglected. I am sorry that the member for Guildford (Mr. W. D. Johnson) is not here because I would have reminded him of one promise that he did not fulfil—the hon. member told us the other evening that he always carries out his promises. I would have reminded him of a promise he made to a deputation which waited on him two years ago, which asked him for his assistance in the direction of making use of that splendid piece of land in West Perth for the marketing of fruit and to provide proper and complete cold storage. The Minister told the deputation at that time that our statement had been anticipated. He said he had already made provision for obtaining the most complete and up to date information, and that he had despatched to the Eastern States the engineer, Mr. Hardwick, who would return fortified with knowledge bearing on the question. Then the Minister waved us away with his hand and we left, feeling assured, and again assured, that the matter would be dealt with. From that date, however, the Minister never seriously applied himself to the question. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) has referred to the importance of the industry and the fact that it must become even more important. On looking through our *Year Book*, though it is certainly a year old, I find some interesting figures, which I know will be maintained. The Western Australian orchards embraced an area of 21,000 acres and the yield in apples alone was 369,000 bushels, whereas in Tasmania the orchard area in the same year was

35,000 acres and the yield in apples was a million and a half bushels.

Mr. Willmott: There are larger orchards than ours.

Mr. NAIRN: That is what I wish to emphasise. It only goes to prove that the industry in this State is capable of development, if it is supported as it should be. We find, however, that there is not an industry more seriously and consistently neglected. Representing, as I do, an electorate in which fruit growing plays an important part, I desire to ask the Minister for Lands to give us a little more consideration than we have received in the past. Why this industry should be so neglected in the face of its value to the State, I cannot understand. We find that the wholesale price of fruit as marketed in Perth—apples I would refer to particularly—varies from 4s. 6d. to 12s. and 13s. per case.

The Minister for Works: Apples have been as low as 2s. 3d. a case.

Mr. NAIRN: Unless we get that assistance and storage which is necessary, those engaged in the industry cannot do as they desire. The cost of living and the health of the people should weigh considerably in connection with the appeal for assistance which we are making.

Mr. Angwin: Have they been short of storage this year?

Mr. NAIRN: I venture to say there has been a general shortage. What I want to know, however, is why should the fruit growers have to ask repeatedly that assistance be given to them? Why is fruit so dear? I believe it is for the reason that the former Minister for Lands neglected the attention which he promised to give to the industry and constantly pursued some phantom in another State instead. I ask the present Minister for Lands whether we might expect a little more sympathetic consideration from him.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to remind hon. members that the motion is a formal one, merely asking for a return, and that it does not permit a general discussion on the fruit industry.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [10.0]: I do not desire to cast any reflection on my predecessor in office, but I would like to point out that the

present Government are fully alive to the importance of the fruit industry in Western Australia, and as an earnest of that I would inform hon. members that the Government have already decided to grant assistance for the establishment of canning works in Perth. We propose to see that these are carried out at once so as to enable the orchardists to get the full benefit from their fruit in the coming season. I understand we are likely to have a record harvest of fruit in the coming summer, and we desire by the establishment of canning works within the State to prevent the customary large sums of money going out of Western Australia. It is the intention of the Government to assist and foster the fruit industry in every possible way. I would like to point out to the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) that he could have got all the information he asks here from the *Statistical Register*, from which indeed I will have to get it myself for him. The member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) has given him the answer to one question by telling him that the area under fruit is 21,000 acres. The member for York establishes a basis of £50 per acre as the value of the industry. If he will multiply 21,000 by 50 he will find that on his own basis we have in the fruit industry a value of £1,050,000.

Mr. Willmott: If doubled it might be about correct.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As the hon. member has asked for the information on that basis, I shall be pleased to give him the return on that basis. As I have said, he might have got the whole of the information from the *Statistical Register*. However, I shall be pleased to place the required return on the Table. The Government will do all in their power to assist the fruit industry. In this connection there is nothing more important than that we should endeavour, as far as possible, to free the orchards of the various pests by which, from time to time, they are assailed. I am pleased to say that at the present time the orchards are freer of pests than they have been for many years past.

Mr. Willmott: And the owners of orchards have willingly taxed themselves with that object.

Mr. Angwin: There were strong objections to the Bill at first.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A large majority of the owners of orchards are doing good work in respect to the eradication of pests, and I hope they will continue their efforts. The fruit industry is likely to be of very great benefit to the State, and I trust the time is not far distant when we shall no longer be sending away large sums of money for dried and canned fruits.

Mr. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.50]: I regret that the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) should have taken occasion to make an attack on the member for Guildford (Mr. W. D. Johnson). There is no doubt the intention was to provide markets and refrigerating works for the storage of fruit. Two years ago an officer was sent away to make inquiries, and in due course he returned and reported. But owing to the war and the abnormal conditions prevailing in regard to finances it was inadvisable to go on with the project, because there was already provided sufficient storage for all the fruit then in Western Australia.

Mr. Nairn: That is very different from the reply we had given to us.

Mr. ANGWIN: As I see it, it would be better to provide refrigerators at our ports. There is already one at Albany, and another at Bunbury, and it is to be hoped there will be one at Fremantle. Instead of the money being utilised in providing central markets in Perth, I would prefer to see it expended on storage at our ports, and the markets handed over to the City Council.

The Minister for Works: The City Council is quite prepared to take them over.

Mr. Nairn: Where is Mr. Hardwick's report?

Mr. ANGWIN: It is in the office. That officer travelled right through Queensland, making investigation. So far from there having been any laxity on the part of the late Minister for Lands, he was always most anxious to press on with those works, and it would have been done if the money had been available for the purpose.

Question put and passed.

BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day for the second reading read.

Point of Order.

Mr. Foley: Before the hon. member proceeds, I would like a ruling as to whether the introduction of this Bill by a private member is in order. As will be seen by Clause 3, it certainly is a Bill which will necessitate the spending of money, and it seems to me that Standing Order 387 is very clear on the point. It will be found in *Hansard* that the point was raised by the then member for Brownhill (Mr. Bath) in 1906, the occasion being the introduction by a private member of a Bill somewhat similar in character. A ruling was given and certain authorities were quoted, one being W. E. Hearn whose book, *The Government of England*, is a standard authority. Hearn says—

It is accordingly a fundamental rule of the House of Commons that the House will not entertain any petition or any notice for a grant of money, or which involves the expenditure of any money, or any motion that will involve a charge upon the public revenue, whether direct or out of money to be provided by Parliament.

It is not a question of a referendum at all, for I think every member has made up his mind; but if we are to go into this question the best procedure would have been for the other Bill to have been gone on with. As that was not done I question the right of any private member to bring down the Bill before us. I would rather have seen the Government come out into the open on the question.

Mr. Speaker: I have given the clause referred to by the hon. member due consideration. As the House is aware, I am firmly attached to the principle that no appropriation should be made unless the Bill for the appropriation is accompanied by a Message from the Governor. Of course, there will be found numerous instances in which I have so ruled, and the House has supported me in that connection. But I have come to the conclusion, even though I

do not like to admit the principle, that the Bill before the House does not provide an appropriation, and therefore is not open to the objection to which the other Bill was. Clause 3 provides that "If an appropriation is made by Parliament of moneys to meet the expenses," but not otherwise. Members may be of opinion that the clause, as worded, is an evasion of the principle. But it is a successful evasion, and if Parliament objects to it, then Parliament must provide some Standing Order to meet it. After due consideration, I have to admit that the Bill is in order.

Mr. Carpenter: Who invented this, the Attorney General?

The Attorney General: I saw that it was all right.

Mr. Carpenter: It is questionable.

The Attorney General: It is absolutely all right.

Mr. Carpenter: There is no precedent for it.

Debate resumed.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.0]: As usual, when a liquor question is touched upon it is found to be as full of points as a porcupine. It was no surprise to me when the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) raised the objection which he did, because he told me it was his intention to do so. I feel somewhat honoured by being asked by the Women's National Movement to introduce this Bill. I propose to give the reasons of that organisation why it considers that a referendum should be taken on this question. A large deputation has been signed, and will in due course be presented to the House. It is something like 1½ miles in length and every signature upon it is genuine.

Mr. Angwin: The petition has altered your opinion.

Mr. THOMSON: I think I shall be able to prove from *Hansard* that my opinion today is the same as it was last session.

Mr. Angwin: That is the reason you advocated the 9 to 9 movement.

Mr. THOMSON: I will deal with that question later on. I also understand that a petition is to be presented to the House against any interference with the 9 to 9

conditions at present existing. That, in my opinion, should decide the members of the House on the point. We have two petitions, then, which will be presented to the House, and members will be afforded an opportunity of knowing what the wishes of the people are in this respect. When the Anti-shouting Bill was before the House the division came to a tie, and when giving your casting vote you, Sir, made use of these words—

From the voting I gather that the Assembly has not made up its mind, and therefore ruling strictly in accordance with precedent I give my vote with the "noes." The Bill will, therefore, be open to further consideration.

I maintain, if the Anti-shouting Bill had been before the people, and a large number of the electors had decided in favour of it, that in the case of a subsequent tie, such as occurred on that occasion, there is no doubt in my mind that the Speaker's vote would have been given with the "ayes" instead of with the "noes." For that reason, therefore, I consider there is justification in the request for a referendum. We also claim to be a democratic country, and state that we are a Government for the people, by the people and of the people.

Mr. Bolton: It used to be that way.

Mr. Angwin: Will you support a referendum for this year?

Mr. THOMSON: I consider that if Opposition members are true to their pledges I should at least have their votes.

Mr. Taylor: Not that of everyone.

Mr. THOMSON: I should have, for they all believe in the referendum.

Mr. Bolton: Do you believe in it?

Mr. THOMSON: I do in this instance. I will go further and say that I believe in a referendum on national questions.

Mr. Bolton: I will support you, too.

Mr. THOMSON: This is a national question.

Mr. Underwood: Bring in a general Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: It would probably be ruled out of order because I wanted to incur expenditure. I have been twitted by both sides of the House with insincerity, and by my hon. friends who are supporters of the referendum with not being sincere. I want

to prove to the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin), though he said I was opposed to the referendum, that I am not.

Mr. Angwin: I said you supported the 9 to 9 movement.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon member said I was opposed to it.

Mr Angwin: So you were, last year.

Mr. THOMSON: I will prove that I was not opposed to it.

Mr. Underwood: You voted against it.

Mr. THOMSON: I will prove that I am not inconsistent. If hon. members on the other side of the House are as consistent on this subject as I have been we will carry this referendum Bill by a large majority.

Mr. Angwin: You will have my vote on this question.

Mr. THOMSON: I am glad to hear it. On 5th August, 1915, as will be found on page 191 of *Hansard*, I made the following statement, following the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas):—

It was pleasing to hear the hon. member who just sat down speaking in such a determined manner on the question of the early closing of hotels. I consider, at a juncture like this, that the people should have the opportunity of deciding whether the hotels should close at an earlier hour. I have no doubt that if the question goes to the people it will be decided by a big majority that the sale of liquor should be confined to restricted hours. The womenfolk, at any rate, will vote solidly for the earlier closing of hotels. Like my friend, the member for Bunbury, I am not a teetotalter, but I am not what may be called a temperance crank.

Mr. Foley: How did you vote?

Mr. THOMSON: I will tell the hon. member how I voted. As will be found on page 2385 of *Hansard* of last session, I said—

I do not think a member should give a silent vote on such a question as this. When the Bill was first introduced, I endeavoured to move an amendment fixing the hours; in fact I did move such an amendment, but withdrew it; and when, later, I endeavoured to move in the same direction, I found the Standing Orders

debarred me from doing so. Sooner than have the Bill wrecked, I will vote with the Government for the retention of the referendum. Having attended the meeting held recently in Perth to consider liquor legislation, I think the general desire is that the matter should be referred to the people. If it is said that the average member of Parliament trims on such a question as this, I do not wish that to be said of me.

Mr. Foley: You want to fix the hours and when you cannot get that for the earlier hours you want a referendum. Now you say you do not trim. You are giving two opinions.

Mr. THOMSON: I moved my amendment that the hours should be fixed by the House because I did not think the Government who introduced the measure were sincere in bringing the referendum before the House.

Mr. Mullany: Now you expect us to give you credit for sincerity.

Mr. THOMSON: I am proving my sincerity, because I had no obligation as a private member to bring this Bill before the House. I do so because I believe that the people should have the right to say at what hour hotels should be closed.

Mr. Angwin: See what you said on page 456 when you withdrew your amendment.

Mr. THOMSON: I have quoted from *Hansard* to show that I am consistent. I do not pose as a fanatic or a crank. Mr. Quinlan, when speaking at a deputation which urged that no notice should be taken of the deputation of the Women's National Movement, which waited on the Premier, referred to the action of people who were only "cranks and fanatics." I consider that if they are cranks and fanatics they are in good company, and they are only asking what should be done here on exactly the same lines as was done in the Eastern States. We find in South Australia that a referendum was taken and that for 6 o'clock there were 1,418 votes, and for the 11 o'clock hour 61,507. In Tasmania for the 6 o'clock hour there were 42,713 votes, and for 10 o'clock 23,153. In New South Wales 347,697 voted for 6 o'clock, and 176,416 voted for 9 o'clock. The Government of Victoria in-

troduced a Bill to fix the hour at 6 o'clock, and the Upper House in the Queensland Parliament passed a resolution that liquor bars should be closed between 6 and 8 o'clock.

Mr. Munsie: Give us the numbers of the goldfields referendum that was taken a while ago in this State.

Mr. THOMSON: I will leave that to the hon. member. That is only one section of the community.

Mr. Mullany: You do want it for the whole of the State at once?

Mr. THOMSON: I do. That is one of the main reasons why I opposed the referendum as introduced by the late Attorney General.

Mr. Foley: You said you were in favour of it.

Mr. THOMSON: That is one of the reasons why I opposed the referendum.

Mr. Foley: How is it you opposed it, when you say you favoured it?

Mr. THOMSON: Because I did not consider the late Attorney General was sincere. Evidently, judging by the opposition which is coming from the cross benches at the present time, goldfields members are antagonistic to anything dealing with the liquor question, and are afraid of losing their seats.

Mr. Foley: On the goldfields we are in favour of the referendum.

Mr. THOMSON: I will quote some figures to hon. members.

Mr. Taylor: Not those figures, I hope; they will not prove anything.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, they will. So far as the Bill is concerned, the only condition under which I consented to introduce it was that the referendum should be a State-wide referendum, seeing that all the people have to abide by the same licensing laws. I also consider that if there is going to be any curtailment it should apply to the whole of the State and not to one particular section. That is the reason why I am introducing this Bill.

Mr. Mullany: Why exempt the North-West?

Mr. THOMSON: I am not. Another reason why the National Women's Movement consider the referendum should be taken is on the plea of economy.

Mr. Taylor: That is one reason why it should not be taken now.

Mr. THOMSON: If the hon. member will read the Bill he will notice that it is going to be taken at the next general election.

Mr. Angwin: I will not vote with you on that.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Government can be prevailed upon to provide the money, I will accept an amendment.

Mr. Bolton: That is reasonable; now I will support you.

Mr. THOMSON: Economy is being urged upon all the people in the British Empire. The authorities consider that economy should be exercised, but so far as Western Australia is concerned I am afraid it has not been exercised that way here. Western Australia has two unenviable distinctions. In the first place we have, I believe, the largest deficit—

Mr. Bolton: Which is getting bigger every month.

Mr. THOMSON: And the largest debt per head of population of all the States of the Commonwealth. Then, I am very sorry to say, we have the unenviable distinction of expending in liquor £2,374,000 per annum, £7,609 per day, or £7 7s. 4d. per head of the population annually. In 1911 we spent £9 5s. 4d. per head.

Mr. Angwin: Someone has been spending my share.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the point I wish to make. There must be a few gentlemen in Western Australia who consume a little more than their fair share of liquor. Western Australia spends in liquor more per head of population than any other State of the Commonwealth. The figures of the other States are: New South Wales £4 6s. 6d., Victoria £4 4s. 4d., Queensland £4 0s. 2d., Tasmania £3 10s. 9d., and South Australia £3 10s. 4d. For New Zealand the amount is £3 13s. 4½d. On the score of economy I think we are just in advocating the early closing of hotels.

Mr. Underwood: What about drapers' shops?

Mr. THOMSON: There is no getting away from the fact that Western Australia is going to have considerably harder times than those we are now experiencing. I certainly believe that it behoves the people of

Western Australia to view this question from an economic point of view. When one comes to consider that we spend £2,374,000 per annum in drink, it is plain that that money expended in other channels would be more productive and certainly would yield greater benefits to the community. There are a great many needs for which money will have to be provided in the near future—for the repatriation scheme, for the support of the dependants of soldiers killed, for the support of crippled soldiers. Then, I think, we shall have to provide a large sum of money for immigration. We should take advantage of the opportunity of bringing to this country soldiers who are desirous of following an open air life. I will now quote from the leaflet to which some hon. members seem to object so strongly. In contributions to friendly societies, our Commonwealth spends annually £1,800,000, in old age pensions £2,579,265, on charitable institutions of all sorts £2,700,000; on primary education £4,370,000; on post and telegraphs £4,523,386; and in normal times we have been spending £5,747,000 in defence. Municipal revenue from all sources totals £6,702,000. The gross value of the annual gold yield is £8,710,471. On liquor the Commonwealth spends just a trifle of 20 millions sterling. Dealing with other reasons why these people consider that a referendum should be introduced—

Mr. Thomas: Tell us what you consider.

Mr. THOMSON: When I speak for these people, I also voice my own sentiments. Reduction of trading hours in hotels will certainly lead to greater efficiency of workers. All employers of labour know that drink destroys efficiency. On this point I can speak from practical, though not personal, experience. On more than one occasion I have had my work hung up owing to the men having more liquor than was good for them. On this point I would quote the opinions of some of the Empire's greatest leaders in the struggle now being waged.

Mr. Thomas: But those opinions apply only to war time.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

Mr. THOMSON: What is good enough for war time should be good enough for all

times. Lord Roberts stated in a letter written to the *London Times* and other British newspapers—

Will you kindly allow me, through the medium of your paper, to make an appeal to my countrymen and women upon a most vital subject, which is causing me very great uneasiness? All classes in the United Kingdom are showing a keen interest in our forces engaged in the struggle now going on for our country's existence as a nation, and they are being munificent in their efforts to supply the wants of our gallant soldiers and sailors fighting abroad. But I feel it my duty to point out to the civil population that putting temptation in the way of our soldiers by injudiciously treating them to drink is injurious to them and prejudicial to our chances of victory. Thousands of young recruits are now collected together in various places, and are having their work interfered with and their constitutions undermined by being tempted to drink by a friendly but thoughtless public, and also by the fact that public-houses are kept open to a late hour of the night. I cannot believe that the owners of such houses are less patriotic and more self-seeking than their fellow-subjects, or that they would deliberately, for the sake of gain, prevent our soldiers being sufficiently trained in body and nerve to enable them to undergo the strain of the arduous service which is before them—a strain which only the strongest, physically and mentally, can be trusted to endure. I therefore beg most earnestly that publicans in particular and the public generally will do their best to prevent our young soldiers being tempted to drink. My appeal applies equally for the members of the oversea contingents, who have so generously and unselfishly come over here to help us in our hour of need. I hear that 300 of the Canadian contingent are to take part in the Lord Mayor's Show to-day, and my sincere hope is that, while extending to them a hearty British welcome, no temptation to excess may be put in the way of these soldiers of the King, men whom the nation delights to honour, which will tend to lower them in the eyes of the world.

Sir John French says—

If men want to see regiments, battalions, squadrons, batteries, smart and efficient, if they have at heart the fame of the glorious regiment to which they belong, they must practise these great qualities of self-control and self-sacrifice.

Next, I will quote Lord Kitchener's appeal to the soldiers—

Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound. So keep constantly on your guard against any excesses. In this new experience you may find temptations both in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and, while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy.

Appealing to the public, Lord Kitchener said—

The men who have recently joined the colours are doing their utmost to prepare themselves for active service with the least possible delay. This result can only be achieved if, by hard work and strict sobriety, they keep themselves thoroughly fit and healthy. I appeal to the public, both men and women, to help the soldiers in their task. I beg everyone to avoid treating the men to drink, and to give them every assistance in resisting the temptations which are often placed before them.

Lord Roberts, shortly before his death, wrote—

There are so many temptations connected with the provision and management of liquor for soldiers that, if it were possible, I would like to see every man in the army a total abstainer.

And Lord Methuen, in an appeal to recruits, says—

It is the men of Great Britain and from the colonies alike to whom we appeal not to degrade our uniform. I don't altogether blame them; they have not had the chance of discipline we have had. It is a new life to them; it is a time of intense excitement, and foolish civilians, out of mistaken kindness, lead them into temptations.

Mr. Nairn: How do they degrade the uniform?

Mr. THOMSON: I am quoting from the greatest leader of the British Army, Lord Kitchener; and I trust that the soldiers have

profited by his advice. Having adduced Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, I now come to a local authority, Mr. A. W. Jacoby, President of the Liquor Trade Defence Association, who is reported as having stated on the 15th September—

After a very few months' duration, a manufacturing crisis arose in England, and the want of proper equipment was felt. The brains of England were sorely taxed, and those who were chosen to direct quickly recognised what was required. Labour was required, and, moreover, application. It was necessary to supply munitions and equipment, food and surgical and medical requisites for the soldiers, in addition to other necessities which had previously been supplied to a very great extent by countries with whom they were at war. The demand for these quickly became greater than the then labour market could supply. It followed that in order to secure sufficiency of labour, inducements were held out to men and women to give their assistance. The demand was practically unlimited, the work was so stupendous. Men accustomed to receive £2 per week earned £3, £4, and £5 per week. Many of them did not know what to do with this extra money. Some bestowed it on their wives and children, or in other excellent ways; but others—

I want hon. members to take notice of this particularly. It is by the president of the Liquor Traders' Defence Association, and he says—

But others, unfortunately less well balanced, indulged in liquor to excess, thereby impairing their efficiency; and in consequence the drink question becomes one for immediate consideration.

We have there from the gentleman who is president of that association the definite acknowledgment that over-indulgence in liquor does impair a man's efficiency.

Mr. Foley: He did not knock off manufacturing beer though, did he?

Mr. THOMSON: The war is to-day taking a toll of our fit men; and the Women's National Movement and myself, as the member introducing this Bill, believe that by giving the people an opportunity to vote on this question we would be serving a good State purpose, if the referendum be car-

ried. And it seems to me that the opposition to the Referendum Bill is inspired by the fear that, if the people are given an opportunity of expressing their views on the question, six o'clock closing will be carried. Seeing that men like Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, and the president of the local Liquor Traders' Association have stated that liquor does interfere with a man's efficiency I confidently appeal to members of this House to vote for this referendum, and thus give the people an opportunity of saying yea or nay under this Bill. Dealing also with the question of efficiency, I want to touch upon another phase. We, as a nation, will emerge from this war impoverished. The war is a severe strain upon our national resources, something like five millions a day. Two nations in my opinion are calculated to derive the greatest benefit from this war, America and Japan. America is, to a very great extent, "dry." The people of that country are permitted to deal with this question in the way they think proper; there are States "going dry," and the people have an opportunity of voting on the question. Japan is the other nation which is profiting largely by this war, and Japan is a veto nation. The great majority of Japanese are teetotallers. In them and in the Americans we have competitors, and if we are going to do what the Prime Minister urges, that is to become a self-contained country, and remembering that so many of our fit men will be lost through the war, I think it is only a fair thing that we give the people an opportunity of dealing with this question. In regard to reduction of hours, it is believed that that reform would result in a lessening of crime. I know the statement has been made in the Press that the earlier closing of hotels has not had any appreciable difference on the amount of crime. Some members of the deputation went so far as to say that there had even been an increase of crime. I know of at least one district where there has been a decrease of about 50 per cent. in the number of charges heard in the local court for crimes attributable to the drink traffic. Dealing again with authorities, we find that 93 of every 100 females in Fremantle gaol are there through liquor. I will quote statements by men who I consider are most competent to give unbiassed opinions on this

subject. I will first quote Mr. Justice Hodges of Victoria, who makes the following statement—

After close upon 19 years' experience in the criminal and divorce courts, I can repeat what I said publicly some years ago, that drink is either directly or indirectly responsible for more crime, more sin, and more domestic misery than all other causes put together. It is appalling to note the number of crimes traceable to drink, and still more awful to sit in a divorce court and hear detailed the squalor, the poverty, the domestic misery, the utter destruction of home life that result from indulgence to excess in intoxicating drinks. I cannot say, for I do not know, whether Victoria is worse than other places, but, if it is not, there would be very little crime and very little poverty in the world if this cause were removed. As the physical character is formed in early life, so is self-control. It is much easier for young people to keep control of their appetites and passions than it is for them to acquire it after it has been lost. It is easy to form a good habit; it is very hard to resist a habit once formed.

That is the testimony of Mr. Justice Hodges. Sir John Madden, Chief Justice of Victoria, makes the following statement:—

I regret to have to say that the excess of drink beyond all doubt or question is either the cause or the object of a large proportion of the crime of our community. Much of the gravest crime is directly traced to the influence on or to the mental disablement produced by alcoholic liquor in those who commit it. On the other hand, a great deal of less grave crime is committed with the object chiefly of obtaining such liquor. In addition to these evils, every judge has constant evidence before him of the deadening of the moral sensibility of an altogether too large proportion of those who pass as accused persons through the Criminal Court, because in addition to the obvious seal of degradation which many bear as the result of habitual excess in liquor, a great many others, with sad unconsciousness of its unreason, appear to think that the allegation of drunkenness is an all-sufficient and some-

what humorous defence to charges of the gravest kind.

One more extract—

Mr. Taylor: We will take them as read.

Mr. THOMSON: This is Mr. Justice Hodges again—

I am not, and never have been, a member of any total abstinence or even temperance society, and am no faddist, but by virtue of the office I hold it is my duty to watch the causes which contribute to the falling of my fellow citizens; and I say this deliberately, that not only is drink responsible for more crime than any other single cause, but it is responsible for more crime than all other causes put together. The stages of most men's downfall are marked by the one pervading evil—drink. When one quotes authorities such as those, I think the women of this State are justified in asking this House to pass a referendum Bill. I will again quote Mr. Jacoby. On September 15th he stated—

That no vote on Resolution D, that no licences be granted or renewed in the district, should be taken after December 31st, 1920.

I want to say that the Resolution D deals only with abolishing licenses, not the shortening of hours. Therefore the temperance people are not inconsistent in asking that a referendum be taken on the earlier closing of hotels. Another statement made at the deputation was, "If you close hotels earlier you will have excessive home drinking."

Mr. Foley: So you would.

Mr. Angwin: You would do more good by closing up the wine shops.

Mr. THOMSON: I agree; and so far as grocers' licences are concerned I would abolish every one of them.

Mr. Foley: Bring down a Bill for that and everyone will support it.

Mr. THOMSON: At that deputation they made a statement that they were afraid if we closed the hotels it would lead to excessive drinking. I do not mind a man coming straight out into the open and advocating drink, but a statement like that coming from such a quarter somewhat borders on hypocrisy and I consider that we need have no worry. I am prepared to pledge the Womens' National Movement and a great many of the others who believe in earlier

closing, and they are prepared to take the risk of the increased drinking which it is said will take place if the hotels are closed at 6 o'clock. In connection with sly-grog selling, it is also said that there will be a big increase in it. That is a matter for the authorities to deal with. In my opinion, any individual who is found selling liquor without a license should be fined at least £50 for the first offence, £100 for the second offence, and sent to prison for the third offence.

Mr. Foley: Why do you not close the shanties now?

Mr. THOMSON: I have given my reasons for introducing the Bill and the reasons which are animating those ladies who are working in the interests of the movement. They are desirous that a referendum should be taken and I make a strong appeal to hon. members who believe in the principle of the referendum to assist me in carrying the Bill, and so bring Western Australia into line with the other States. Practically all the States now have adopted the 6 o'clock closing, and it is working satisfactorily. I see no reason why we should not follow that example. I hope the member for North-East Fremantle will use his influence with the members of his party.

Mr. Bolton: It is not a party matter.

Mr. THOMSON: That is why I am bringing it forward. I feel sure that those who honestly believe in the principle of the referendum will support the second reading. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [10.48]: I desire to move the following amendment:—

That all the words after "that" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"this House will not proceed upon any Bill which is an evasion of the principle that all proposals which entail the expenditure of public moneys must be introduced by Ministers of the Crown."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Standing Order No. 267 provides that the question shall be put "That the Bill be now read a second time." The next Standing Order reads—"Amendments may be moved to such question by leaving out "now" and adding "this day three months," "six months," or

any other time, or the question may be negatived or the previous question moved. Therefore I do not think the amendment outlined by the hon. member is in order.

[*Point of order.*]

Mr. Taylor: It will be my duty then to bring forward authorities to support my contention that the amendment is in order.

[*The Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. Speaker: The member for Mt. Margaret desires to move an amendment. Will the hon. member state his amendment?

Mr. Taylor: I desire to move—

That all words after "that" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"This House will not proceed upon any Bill which is an evasion of the principle that all proposals which entail the expenditure of public moneys must be introduced by Ministers of the Crown."

Mr. Speaker: I have to rule the amendment out of order, on the grounds that I have already stated that the Bill is in order, and the time is too late now to raise the question. The question should have been raised when the point was taken by the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley).

Mr. Taylor: You gave us no chance, Sir. The Attorney General was going to reply, but you said you had reached a decision.

Mr. Speaker: It was quite competent for any member to move that my ruling be disagreed with.

Mr. Taylor: There was no desire on my part to do that.

Mr. Speaker: I have to rule the amendment out of order.

Mr. Taylor: I have some authorities for moving it.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry the authorities were not brought forward at the proper time. It is now too late.

Mr. Taylor: I have only just now moved my amendment.

Mr. Hudson: The motion is merely to strike out certain words; not to insert others.

Mr. Taylor: I thought I would be permitted to move at this stage. It is the only opportunity I have had.

The Premier: Move it in Committee.

Mr. Taylor: No. This is the stage. I can quote *May* to show that I am perfectly in order.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I have already ruled to the contrary. The time when this amendment should have been submitted was when the point was raised by the member for Leonora. The time has now passed, and I cannot allow discussion on an amendment of this character.

Mr. Underwood: We had no chance of voting until we had heard the hon. member and seen the Bill. We could not move before we had seen the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Unfortunately the hon. member was not in the Chamber. The member for Leonora raised the point that the Bill was out of order on the ground that a Message from the Governor was not presented with it. On that point being taken I ruled that the Bill was in order, because it did not provide for the expenditure of money. That point was taken some time ago. If there were any objection it should have been taken at once. The time has now passed.

Mr. Taylor: But Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: There must be some order in the House. If hon. members are to rise at any time and dispute my word there cannot be any order. The time to disagree with my ruling was when I gave the ruling, which was half an hour ago or more. I cannot allow any objection to be taken now.

Mr. Taylor: But this is the only opportunity I have. The second reading has been moved and seconded and I have taken this opportunity of moving an amendment to that motion. I am not disagreeing with your ruling or questioning your decision.

Mr. Hudson: The other objection was premature.

Mr. Taylor: It was nothing to do with the position I have taken up. I am not disputing your ruling. I am taking the only course open to me, according to our Standing Orders and to *May*.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is not disagreeing with my ruling, but he is asking the House to disagree with it.

Mr. Taylor: No.

Mr. Speaker: The amendment is—

That all the words after "that" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"This House will not proceed upon any Bill which is an evasion of the principle that all proposals which entail an expenditure of public moneys must be introduced by Ministers of the Crown"

I have already ruled that the Bill is not an evasion of that principle.

Mr. Taylor: Would I be in order in moving, that all the words after "that" be struck out with a view to inserting other words?

Mr. Foley: I would just like to ask a question. When I asked for your ruling, Sir, on a previous occasion to-night, in giving your ruling, did you not say words to this effect: "Yes, it certainly is an evasion, but it is a successful evasion of what we consider a principle."

Mr. Speaker: Just so. That is quite correct. I stated that it was an evasion of a principle, but I said that it was a successful evasion. If it be a successful evasion, how can the Bill be out of order?

Mr. Taylor: I want to treat the subject as if no ruling had been given. A motion for the adoption of the second reading of this Bill is before the House. Am I in order in moving that all the words after "that" be struck out, with a view to inserting other words?

Mr. Speaker: I am prepared to hear the hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: In support of the amendment I have moved, I desire to quote *May* on Parliamentary Practice, page 472, 11th edition, as follows:—

It is also competent to a member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a Bill, to move, as an amendment to the question, a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the Bill.

This is a Bill the principles of which I object to, because it is an evasion of the laid-down principles which have controlled and governed this Parliament since its inception, that is, that a private member brings down a Bill which entails expenditure, or pledges Parliament to entail the expenditure, which can only be done by message from His Ex-

cellency, and the only member of Parliament who can do that is a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Carpenter: And he dodges it.

Mr. Taylor: I desire this amendment to be fully discussed, and I hope, carried, so that the responsibility of the measure will rest upon the proper shoulders. This Bill should have been brought down by a Minister of the Crown. The Government should father the Bill. If it had not been a Bill, but a resolution that in the opinion of this House the Government should make necessary arrangements for curtailing the hours of licensed hotels and other places mentioned in the Bill, and the resolution were carried, it would then have been for the Government to consider the wisdom of putting it into effect, and at what stage in their career they would do so. But this is a Bill specifying to the Government that they shall do something, and that something entails expenditure, and I submit an Appropriation Bill must be brought down before the measure can be put into action. This Bill must lie dormant merely as a pious opinion on the part of this House, which is not a proper opinion to hold in regard to an Act of Parliament, expressed by an Act of Parliament which should be put into force and become law. It cannot become law, however, until an Appropriation Bill comes down. This is a very cunning evasion, and a very clever evasion, of the laid-down principles of this House, that is, that this Parliament controls the purse strings and that those purse strings can be loosened only by a Minister of the Crown. This attempt is so clever that you, Mr. Speaker, have ruled that it is in order. I realise that the attempt has been made with extreme cleverness. It had been my intention to take the point, but I was anticipated by the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley). I discussed the matter with the leader of the Opposition (Mr. W. D. Johnson), and he had intended to move in this direction, but, unfortunately, he has been compelled to absent himself. He has asked me to do so in his absence. I entertain decided objections to the establishment, by clever evasions such as this, of precedents which may be quoted in future to the detriment of the powers of this Chamber. It must be realised that, when

popular feeling has been aroused in favour of some proposal or other, action similar to that represented by the introduction of this Bill may be taken, involving the State in heavy unauthorised expenditure. Therefore I contend it would be unwise for this House to allow such action to pass without condemnation—without expressing, once for all, the opinion that where public expenditure is needed the Minister who controls the department which is to make the expenditure, or else the Treasurer, or perhaps the Premier, should bring down the Bill with a Message from His Excellency. That is the only safeguard the people have for their control of the purse. That is the only factor which makes this Chamber of greater value to the people of Western Australia than another Chamber represents to them—the property Chamber. The other Chamber has not the control of the purse strings; that control is vested in this Assembly, as in the Mother of Parliaments it is vested in the House of Commons. That position has not been attained without bloodshed. Our forefathers had to fight hard for that privilege. And now we, with full enlightenment as to the value of that very restriction, are allowing it to be whittled away. We are allowing the legal mind to devise astute means by which the Constitution may be evaded. We, who call ourselves democratic, are about to allow that very democratic principle to be whittled away; and for what reason? In order that the Government may escape their responsibility through the introduction of this measure by a private member. What is the value of the whole proceeding? Simply to put the country to an expense of £20,000 or more—

The Premier: Oh, rubbish!

Mr. Taylor: To take a referendum.

Mr. Hudson: It will cost £6,000.

Mr. Taylor: That will be the cost if the referendum is taken in conjunction with a general election. If the referendum is taken separately, it will cost a considerably higher sum. And the result, if the referendum is carried, will be merely to reduce trading hours by three.

The Attorney General: Is the member for Mt. Margaret in order in making such remarks? I understood that he was moving an amendment, or giving you, Mr. Speaker,

reasons in support of the amendment, whereas he is actually indulging in a tirade on all subjects from early times downwards.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Mt. Margaret is in order in discussing the principle of the Bill. The Attorney General is not in order in rising to a point of order and making a statement. Here I may say that when the point of the member for Mt. Margaret was first raised I gave my views under some misunderstanding. It is far better for me to make a correction now. I thought the member for Mt. Margaret was objecting to my ruling that the Bill was in order.

Mr. Taylor: Not at all, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: On looking up further authorities, I find that the hon. member does not object to my ruling, but is objecting to the evasion, as he states, of a principle. I must allow that, and I must admit the mistake I made in the first instance.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Sir. I am indeed sorry that I did not, perhaps, make myself sufficiently clear when I gave notice of my amendment. I am pleased, however, Sir, to know that you have accepted my word that it was not my intention to disagree with your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may now move his amendment. I understand that it is an amendment to the motion for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. Taylor: That is so, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must confine himself to the discussion of the principle. His object must be, non-evasion of the principle.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. TAYLOR: I move an amendment—

That all words after "that" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu: "This House will not proceed upon any Bill which is an evasion of the principle that all proposals which entail the expenditure of public moneys must be introduced by Ministers of the Crown."

I have endeavoured to point out that this Bill constitutes an evasion of a principle which has been long laid down, and which has not been departed from save in very exceptional circumstances, in the House of Commons, and also in the Parliaments of the other States. It is a principle to which

we should closely adhere in this State. It is a principle that the people's House has the control of the public funds; that the people cannot be taxed without a Message from His Excellency; that the Government, even having money in the Treasury, cannot spend that money without first obtaining a Message from His Excellency. Ministers being His Excellency's advisers, the Governor without demur gives them Messages which make their taxation Bills valid, and enables Ministers to obtain appropriations of public moneys. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the Bill now before the House does entail expenditure, does initiate expenditure; or else the measure is of no value whatever. If this Bill is carried, and if an Appropriation Bill is not brought down, this Bill will be a dead letter. Can we pass an Act of Parliament which is to be a dead letter, without specifying in the measure that it shall be a dead letter and so making ourselves ridiculous? That is the position, which is perfectly clear. It is essential that the Government should be responsible to the people for the expenditure of the people's money. That is in accordance with the Constitution under which we are legislating. No one else can be responsible. To shift the responsibility to a private member is unfair. It is unfair on the part of the Government to shirk their responsibility in that particular. The people have placed the party opposite on those benches with every confidence that the party could select Ministers competent to handle the public funds, competent to tax the people, so long as the necessary Messages are obtained from His Excellency. I have no desire to speak at length, but I wish to make it clear that at this stage I am not opposing either the measure or its principle, but am seeking jealously to conserve one of the main privileges of the people's Chamber. I do not desire to be a party to a procedure which may have I know not what far-reaching effects in years to come. My amendment is not moved with the object of expressing objection to the measure. I shall express my views on the Bill at a later stage. I believe the House will affirm my principle. If the amendment is carried, the financial principle, to which I have referred, will be preserved. Then, if it is the wish of Parliament, the Government

can bring down this Bill themselves. If that is not done, it will be competent for a private member to introduce a motion affirming the principle of this Bill, and to test the feeling of the House on that. The motion might be in some such terms as, "That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that certain provisions should be made by which the people can decide on either shortening or lengthening the hours for the sale of liquor." The carrying of such a motion would be a direction to the Government what they were to do. That is the proper course for the Government to insist upon, and it is the proper course for this Parliament to insist upon, instead of allowing a measure of this kind, the justifiableness of which I question—

The Minister for Works: If your amendment is carried, this Bill cannot be re-introduced during this session even by the Government.

Mr. Carpenter: The Bill need not be withdrawn. The Government can bring down their Message.

Mr. Bolton: You can have the same Bill.

Mr. Carpenter: It is only a matter of adjourning it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not opposed to the Bill; I am sticking to principles and I will content myself by submitting the amendment.

On motion by Mr. Bolton, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.
