

to a conference, which will be convened as soon as possible, of the chief taxation officers of the Commonwealth and the various States. I suggest, therefore, that Mr. Duffell withdraw his motion.

On motion by Hon. J. F. Allen, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 28th November, 1916.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Report of Royal Commission on Collie Coal. 2, Medical and Health Department, report for year ended 30th June, 1916.

By the Minister for Lands: Abattoirs Act, amended regulations.

By the Minister for Works: Building by-laws, Queen's Park Roads Board.

By the Honorary Minister: Aborigines Department, report for year ended 30th June, 1916.

QUESTION—WHEAT MARKETING BILL.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (without notice) asked the Premier: As the wheat harvest is now being gathered and delivered, is it the intention of the Government to have the

Wheat Marketing Bill dealt with before Parliament adjourns at the end of this week?

The PREMIER replied: I hope it will be possible to put the Wheat Marketing Bill through before the House adjourns. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary that we should do so. I expect the Bill in this Chamber tomorrow.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE LANDS.

Royal Commission's Report.

Mr. WALKER (for Mr. Green) asked the Premier: 1, Is it anticipated that the report of the Esperance Lands Commission will be available to members during the present session, as implied by the promise made by him some weeks ago? 2, If so, on what approximate date may the report be expected? 3, If not available this session, when is it expected that the result of the Commission's inquiries will be made public?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Commissioner advises that the report will be ready about the end of January, 1917. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, EASTERN GOLDFIELDS LINE.

Mr. MUNSIE (for Mr. Lambert) asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Whether the heavy traffic caused by the carriage of material for the trans-Australian line has affected the stability of the permanent way between Perth and Kalgoorlie? 2, Whether there have been any complaints by passengers on the Perth-Kalgoorlie express regarding increased rocking motion?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, No. The carriage of material for the Transcontinental line would not affect the line more than any other heavy traffic. 2, No.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson-Sussex) [4.42]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all stages in one day, and Messages from

the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received; also, so far as to admit of the reporting and adopting of the resolutions of Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees.

In submitting this motion, I desire to explain that I have had a further communication from the Prime Minister with regard to the Premiers' conference which is to meet in Melbourne for the purpose of considering national problems. Mr. Hughes advises me that the conference has been definitely fixed for the 8th December. This, as hon. members know, will necessitate my leaving for Melbourne on Saturday next, in order to be present at the opening of the conference. I wish, therefore, if possible, if hon. members will concur, to endeavour to get the Estimates through during this week, and also the Appropriation Bill passed, deferring other matters, notably the taxations Bills, until my return from Melbourne. Parliament might meet again at some date in January, or possibly on a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker—I do not know whether that can be arranged—upon certain notice being given. I hope that during this week we shall be able to pass several measures which are of paramount importance, notably the Wheat Marketing Bill, in connection with which the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) has just asked a question. It appears to me essential that we should put that Bill through this week.

Mr. Bolton: What do you want it for?

Mr. Underwood: The farmers are going on strike.

The PREMIER: The harvest is coming in already, and if the pool is fixed, as we anticipate, in Melbourne, it will be essential that we shall be enabled to commandeer the wheat of Western Australia in connection with the pool. Further, there are two or three small Bills which will come down from another place, special leases in connection with the working of lime deposits and the establishment of cement works, which measures we want to finish. There is also the Stamp Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. Scaddan: And the Roads Act Continuation Bill.

The PREMIER: Yes; it is also necessary to pass the Roads Act Continuation Bill, which is already on the Notice Paper, because the existing law expires on the 31st December. Apart from these almost formal measures, I think the House will be fully occupied with the Estimates, after the passing of which I desire, with the consent of the House, to adjourn to some date in January to be fixed.

Mr. Scaddan: You will not pass the Totalisator Bill.

The PREMIER: I was going to suggest that we might pass that Bill. It does not affect the main question of bookmakers, but is only a matter of collecting certain increased revenue on the totalisator. I would suggest that we put that Bill through with the compromise that I outlined in delivering the Budget, namely, to allow the clubs to retain 50 per cent. of the fractions. If we do not pass the Bill, I am told by the Commissioner of Taxation, we will lose anything up to £20,000 on the Christmas and New Year's meetings. Of course it all depends on how the investments go.

Mr. Foley: On last year's figures you would not get one-eighth of that amount.

The PREMIER: However, if we do not get it it cannot be helped, while if we do get it the revenue will benefit materially. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that we ought to try to put that Bill through. I see no objection to passing it with the amendments I have indicated.

Mr. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [4.47]: I have no objection to the passing of the motion as I recognise that it is merely for the purpose of permitting the passage of essential Bills. If the Premier is to go to the East on Saturday next and if certain Bills must be put through before that date, it will be necessary for the House to deal with Bills on the day on which they are introduced, or alternatively, received from the Council. So long as the intention of the Premier is confined to that, I do not think there will be any objection to the motion. The Premier has already intimated that he does not propose to deal with those Bills upon which there is any serious difference of opinion, with the exception, perhaps, of the Totalisator Bill, now in the

Committee stage. It remains to be seen whether the House is prepared to pass that Bill through its remaining stages. To a large extent that will depend on the attitude of the Premier in regard to some of the provisions of the Bill. Personally I have no objection to the proposed increased taxation on the totalisator.

Mr. Underwood: We have.

Mr. SCADDAN: In this I am speaking solely on my own behalf. I have no objection to the motion so long as it is merely for the purpose of permitting the passage of essential measures before the Premier leaves for the East.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [4.49]: I suppose it is not really the desire of the Premier to suspend the Standing Orders for the remainder of the session as prescribed in the motion. The urgency is for this week only, in order that the Premier may attend the Premiers' conference. There should be no need for the suspension of the Standing Orders when we meet again in January. I hope the Premier will amend the motion to cover this week alone. I am quite ready to give the Premier the facility he requests, for this week only.

Mr. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.50]: I agree with the member who has just spoken. There are many important Bills on the Notice Paper, and we do not know how long the session will last. It is not necessary to suspend the Standing Orders for the remainder of the session. The Premier should amend his motion in the direction of limiting the suspension of the Standing Orders to this week only. We could then resume the Standing Orders when Parliament re-assembles in January.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [4.51]: I desire to move an amendment.

The Premier: I was going to suggest an amendment.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If you move it you will close the debate. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the words "the session" be struck out and "this week" inserted in lieu.

That will meet the circumstances of the case. The Premier desires to adjourn at the end of the week in order that he may go to Mel-

bourne. If it is intended to carry on Parliament after the Premier has left for Melbourne we will want our Standing Orders again.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex—in reply) [4.56]: I have not the slightest objection to the amendment. When first I put the motion on the Notice Paper we had an idea of getting right through by the end of the week. I expect hon. members will be glad to suspend the Standing Orders again when we come back in January, in order that we may get through as quickly as possible.

Amendment put and passed; motion as amended agreed to.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, TEMPORARY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that, owing to the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) having left the State, I have appointed the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) a temporary Chairman.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1916-17.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 23rd November on the Treasurer's financial statement, and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £1,555:

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [4.55]: I desire to congratulate the member for Wagin on his elevation to the office of temporary Chairman. I feel sure he will do credit to the position. I have to confess that there is very little pleasure in speaking on the Estimates at such a juncture. I do not think that either the State or the Empire has ever been in so serious a position as it is to-day. We have heard quite recently that the Allies were sure to win the war, that Australia had done enough and that no more was required of her. The news which has come through from Roumania during the last few days is to me very depressing. It convinces me that every individual in the British Empire must do all that is in him to avert disaster. It is useless to say that we have done enough, when we see the enormous

power that the Germans still exercise. I cannot speak with any pleasure at all to-day on party politics or on the politics of Australia in general, except those politics which contemplate our doing our utmost to win the war. Coming to the Budget, it has been suggested that in a time like this we should, if possible, devote our attention chiefly to winning the war, and not to party politics. If there be given any encouragement whatever from those on the other side to take up that attitude, I am prepared to co-operate with them. It seems to me absolutely absurd that at a time like the present we should go drivelling along in the old way in which we drivelled when we had nothing else to do. However, seeing that we have to deal with the Budget, which was introduced in a rather bitter party spirit, it is, I think, compulsory to speak in defence and justification of the late Ministry. I hold that the criticism usually passed on a financial statement is allowable in normal times, although to me it becomes an awful dreariness. Invariably the Opposition declare that the Government have done certain things in regard to holding over payments or bringing in receipts. That is a statement which has been made to my knowledge in regard to Budget speeches for the last 30 years.

The Premier: No, five years.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Press critics for Treasurer that 10 years ago the Hon. T. H. Bath was on this side of the House, and he was wont to accuse the then Treasurer of manipulating the stores account. He also accused him of keeping away expenditure which should have been paid for that year. This is the eleventh Budget I have heard discussed and I have heard that criticism upon every one of them. I have not the slightest doubt that next year the present leader of the Opposition if on this side of the House will charge the then Treasurer with holding back accounts and not paying them.

The Premier: I cannot do that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Press critics for 30 years have put up that charge against every Treasurer they are opposed to. I am sick and tired of hearing such drivel, and I think it is time we had some original criticism on the Budget speech. It seems to me that if members can go on long enough mak-

ing the statement that the Treasurer has used his stores accounts and not paid accounts rendered, that he has done various things of that nature, and if they have the impudence to keep on saying that without laughing, or not to let the public know they are laughing at them, they can get a reputation of being heaven-born financiers. We were subjected to very considerable criticism by those who were opposed to us. We had the present Treasurer claiming that no extra taxation was necessary, that the country was all right, that the only thing wrong was that the then Treasurer had no business ability, and that there was only extravagance and lack of management. We had the vindictive garrulity of the present Minister for Works on things in general, and we had the mendacity of the present Colonial Secretary. I was speaking just now on party politics. I am prepared to co-operate with anybody or any party that is desirous of running this country to the best advantage with a view to winning the war.

The Premier: Come over here.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It seems hard to go over there after the bitter, unfair, and cowardly criticism which was levelled against us when we were over there.

Mr. Hardwick: We let you down lightly.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier in introducing his Budget speech almost forgot that he was Treasurer.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Instead of being constructive, half of his speech was confined to criticism of those who had gone before.

The Premier: Merely statements of fact.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He put up a special paper showing how the late Treasurer had not estimated correctly.

The Premier: I was obliged to do that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He stated that when he was Treasurer his estimates were more correct than those of the late Treasurer.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The men who made the estimates for the late Treasurer made the estimates for the present Treasurer, and when we come to talk about the estimates of the Treasurer we have to bear in mind that the Treasurer has very little indeed to do with the formation of the estimates, and that they are made up for him by the heads of

the departments. One of the greatest illusions the country suffers under is that the Treasurer personally and individually is responsible for the Estimates or that he is responsible for the financial position at all. This is a political Santa Claus. The Treasurer is a greater myth as an individual financier than Santa Claus used to be to us when we were children. Coming to the Estimates, may I ask what Estimates the Treasurer actually controls? He controls practically none, merely the accountancy clerks' work. The other Estimates are controlled by the other Ministers, and unless the Treasurer can dominate his Cabinet it is absurd to talk about the Treasurer as an individual. The Estimates are the Estimates of the Government, and they are provided for members of the Government by heads of departments. I will give an instance of what I mean. Take the estimates of the medical department. The secretary to the principal medical officer (Mr. Milner) sends round to various departments and gets their estimates for the cost for the year and their revenue. He knows the number of medical officers, the number of subsidised nurses and all that, and he puts them into form and hands it to the principal medical officer, who puts his name upon it and sends it to the Under Secretary. The Under Secretary sends it to the Minister, who brings it into Cabinet as his Estimates, and the Treasurer brings it here as his Estimates.

Mr. Angwin: Do not Minister examine them at all?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Of course they do, but the Treasurer as a member of Cabinet has no control over them. This idea that because a man is a Treasurer he is a great financier is the biggest myth that politics has ever created. I have heard many say "Scaddan is no financier but Wilson is." Neither one nor the other has anything more to do with the financial position than any other member of Cabinet. If he is down in the Treasury only he has less to do, because he has fewer departments to deal with.

Member: What are they paid for?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They are paid to make these Budget speeches. It is another myth that the Treasurer cuts down the Estimates. Cabinet may cut them down but not the Treasurer.

Mr. Angwin: The Treasurer may tell you quickly that he has not got the money.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We know that without telling us. The Under Treasurer or the office boy could tell us that. We hear this criticism of the Treasurer. It is usually said that one man made his Estimates more correctly than another; that the one did not put over some money on paid accounts as the other did, that the one did not bring in estimated revenue as the other did. We have another kind of critic who knows absolutely less than most other people know about Estimates—I refer to the Press. We had an article yesterday in the *West Australian* on the financial position and on the Estimates.

Mr. Collier: Very illuminating.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In one part of the article the *West Australian* says—

We were told when changes were made in the Aborigines and the Immigration Departments that great savings would result. The figures do not support the confident expectations expressed by the late Government. In 1913-14 the expenditure of the Aborigines Department was £32,010, of which £5,837 was disbursed in salaries and wages, the natives getting some £26,000 in clothing, provisions, etcetera. About 18 per cent. went in administration. In 1914-15 the Aborigines expenditure was £20,855, of which the natives got £16,851, or about 81 per cent., and the staff £4,004, or about 19 per cent.

They say there was a reduction of expenditure to the extent of over £11,000, or over 35 per cent., and yet they say there was no saving because the Aborigines did not get it. They think the only saving possible is in the items shown on the Estimates. The *West Australian* is absolutely wrong in its figures. It has overlooked the fact that the Moola Bulla station was shifted in the Estimates from the ordinary Aborigines Estimates on to the trading concerns account. The saving in the Aborigines Department has amounted to something like £5,000, and that has been brought about by the elimination of waste, not by cutting down the head office expenditure—although this has been cut down to an extent—but brought about by better supervision, and when one has that better supervision one must pay for it. They

say again that this year there is an increase in the Estimates of the Aborigines Department of £200 odd. If they had looked through the Estimates they would have found that the increase is more than accounted for by the appointment of two managers of reserves. The system which was introduced was to eliminate that of paying people to provision natives, out of which they made a profit and provide for the Government as far as possible to do it themselves. On the Carrolup reserve to-day the natives are working for their living, tending sheep, growing pigs and vegetables, and the cost of keeping them has been materially reduced, but they must have a manager. That manager is paid £156 a year, and that accounts for the increase in the staff of the Aborigines Department. The Press do not know that, of course. Therefore, they assume that the cost of expenditure shown in the management exceeds that of last year, that there has been extravagance and waste, and that the civil servants are getting the whole lot of it. We have proposals for a considerable amount of extra taxation. We were told for five years by the present Treasurer that extra taxation was not required, and that all that was required to run the State to the best advantage was good business management. He also said that all we wanted was business men at the head of affairs. I would remind hon. members that in 1905 Mr. Rason told exactly the same tale. The Daglish Government proposed extra taxation. The Rason Government said it was not necessary, but they were not long in office before they came to light with a land tax which most of their members had been elected to oppose. We have them again to-day, including the member for Canning (Hon. R. T. Robinson), who was elected on a platform that no taxation was necessary, and who, immediately he arrives here, advocates taxation. It was said that the Treasurer, like the wolf, came over the fold while the sheep went through the gate. This is the second time that he has come into office on the distinct understanding that no more taxation was necessary and as soon as he gets there he introduces it. This is the second time he has come into office under false pretences. I would remind you, Mr. Holman, of some of the promises that were made in regard

to the recent Canning election. We were told in the first place by the Treasurer that our taxation proposals were wrong, and that only business management was needed. We were told that extra taxation was not needed. We were told by the Colonial Secretary that not only was there to be no taxation, but that we were going to have continuation schools spread over the whole country, that all farming districts would have modern schools established and the system generally would run into tens of thousands of pounds. We were also told by the Attorney General that the tram fares to Maylands were excessive and that he was going to reduce them. Further, that he was going to extend the trams to the uttermost limits of his electorate. We were told that the septic tanks stank to high heaven and that he was going to shift them. We were also told that three bridges were necessary across the Swan and that he was going to have them built and that the work would be put in hand at once. I heard the hon. member speaking and he did not advocate the bridges; he promised them. Since then we have heard that he did not promise them, but that he only advocated them. I have heard another member say that he advocated the same thing 10 years before; but he gave the people of Canning to understand recently that the financial position would be all right as soon as there was business management, and that not only would there be no extra taxation, but that he would shift the tanks, extend the tram service, reduce the tram fares, and introduce penny sections, build bridges across the Swan at three places, and build the South Swan railway.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: There were a lot of promises made on both sides.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not taking any notice of the promises of the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin. I think his electors will find out soon all about those.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That was my complaint with your party.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not taking any notice of the hon. member. We heard that the tanks at East Perth were going to be removed.

The Attorney General: I will shift them to your electorate if you like.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If these tactics were justifiable when they were only an amusement, and when we had little else with which to amuse ourselves, the position is entirely different in a time like the present, and it is up to us, as leaders of the country, to take a more serious view of things, and to avoid getting into office by specious promises which we know cannot be fulfilled. Additional taxation is absolutely necessary. I have said that for some years. The services which are being rendered to the people of the State are more than the people of the State are paying for by way of taxation. It is easy to promise to do all sorts of things, but the people have to remember that money has to be provided for all these things. Nothing can be done without payment. In a time like the present I do not think it is necessary that the finances should be made to balance. As a matter of fact, it would be unwise to endeavour to balance the ledger at such a period. If we can live through this time and keep our people in reasonable comfort, future generations can well pay off the deficit that is being incurred to-day. But our finances show that in what were almost normal times taxation was not sufficient, and if we bring our taxation up to what would be sufficient in normal times I think we will leave the abnormal expenditure to be paid for when normal times return. I desire to say a word or two in regard to the taxation proposals of the present Government which are to be introduced by way of separate Bills. One or two of those Bills will find their way into the waste paper basket, and all we know about them will be the cost of the printing of the measures. There is one subject which might be discussed now as it is not a question which will come before us by way of a Bill, and that is the increase in the railway fares. I agree it is necessary to increase our charges on the railways. It seems to me that the extra cost in wages, fuel and other things in running our railways must be made up by additional charges on the people who use the railways, but I must, without hesitation, condemn the haphazard system that has been adopted by the present Government. I am under the impression that the Commissioner of Railways put his office boy on to

this job and the office boy turned it out in this way. He said, "Charge a penny extra on single tickets, 2d. on return tickets, and 10 per cent. on all freights, and there you are." I cannot think for a moment that a man holding the position of Commissioner of Railways gave consideration to such a proposition as we have had put before us. I can only believe that he had the gout and was not able to get to his office and he gave the undertaking to the office boy to carry out.

Mr. Scaddan: I think it was a libel on the office boy.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is certainly not creditable on the office boy. The position of the people of Leederville—no doubt the member for Leederville will agree with what I am going to say because he rides on the trams—is that they are asked to pay 5d. additional on a return ticket, second class, and that is for a ride of three miles. Other people can travel from Midland Junction to Fremantle first class return and the increase is exactly the same. Does it seem reasonable? Is it scientific that the people of Leederville should pay the same increase as the people who live in more distant places? This also refers to the people of Maylands and Mt. Lawley, represented by the Attorney General. That gentleman told the people of his electorate that he was going to reduce the tram fares and that he would introduce penny sections; instead of doing which he increases by about 56 per cent. the fares on the railways. I notice there are no penny sections on the railways. We find the Government cutting out £30,000 on the carriage of super. It costs roughly a shade over a penny to carry a ton of super over a mile on the railways. We were charging a penny for the first hundred miles and after that a farthing. The present Government take $\frac{3}{4}$ d. off that and on every ton of super. they carry for one mile over the railways they lose $\frac{3}{4}$ d. As a resident of Leederville I strongly object to the carriage of super. and any other material at a dead loss. and that we should then be asked to make it up. If we want to give a subsidy to any particular industry we should pay that out of the Treasury and let the people know what we are paying.

Mr. S. Stubbs: In New Zealand they carry superphosphates for nothing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In New Zealand they do many funny things. In regard to the railways I am of opinion that the most cumbersome system of freights should be abolished. Anybody dealing with the railways has almost to employ a railway expert to tell him how much he will pay for the carriage of certain goods on the lines. I see no reason why we should not charge for all commodities what it costs to haul them with a slight profit over and above, and it seems to me that we should not haul fencing wire any cheaper than we haul sugar. We could then abolish many of the clerks employed in the Railway Department. This complicated system which has been adopted must entail enormous labour in the clerical branch of the department. If it costs a penny a ton a mile then charge a penny a ton a mile for all stuff, whether it be sugar, fencing wire, quartz, or anything else. We will then have a very simple system. We should carry so many tons so many miles at so much a ton a mile. The system which has been adopted is wrong. As I have said, if we desire to assist we should provide for that assistance by way of a vote out of the Treasury, and the railways should be worked on proper scientific lines.

Mr. Heitmann: And we should know what they are earning.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly, and we should abolish a system which must entail an enormous amount of clerical work. I trust that the Commissioner of Railways will go into the matter with the new Commissioner because I am satisfied the present Commissioner has not a comprehensive grasp of the position which will enable him to bring about the reforms that are necessary.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): What reforms are you referring to?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: None. We have been told that all that is required is business acumen. We have been told that and also a lot of other things by the Minister for Works. He told us when in opposition that if his party were on the Treasury benches they could do this and that. As a matter of fact, from the way he talked when on this (Opposition) side, it would seem that his

party could win the war. He told us that if his party got a chance in office and an opportunity to dive into the files and find out all the suspicious things their predecessors had been doing, they could improve matters. They have had time to look into those files, to see all those dishonest actions, to find out all about the dishonest money obtained by the members of the late Government, and all the dishonourable things the late Government did.

The Minister for Works: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member right in stating that I said those things in this House? I never said anything of the kind. I never made any charges of dishonesty.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That statement was made from several platforms. The Minister for Works said, "We want time to go into the files and see what the Government have been doing." That statement has been made.

The Minister for Works: By whom?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: By you and others.

The Minister for Works: I never said anything of the sort.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The statement was made by the Minister for Works particularly. He said, "We want time to go into the files and see what the Government have been doing; we want to search the files." He has searched the files and applied his business acumen, and he now comes to the House with a deficit of half a million.

The Minister for Works: Are you sorry that any charge of dishonesty was made against the late Government?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am sorry that you should suggest anything of the kind. I am sorry at the attitude which has been taken up by three or four members of the Government. We find now that after the Government have had all the time required to apply their business methods, and to root into the files—they had a pressman there for weeks—

The Minister for Works: That is untrue.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister for Works must withdraw the word "untrue."

The Minister for Works: I will withdraw the word "untrue" and will substitute that the statement is inaccurate.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister himself is never accurate. After the Government have had time to do all this, they come back and tell the people that they are unable to do as well as the late Government did. They say the finances are in a pretty bad way and they now want the assistance of the leader of the Country party and the leader of the Labour party to help them out of their difficulty.

The Minister for Works: We never said anything of the sort.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is a strong suggestion that we shall have a select committee to go into the finances. The Government confess that they cannot finance the country nearly so well as the previous Government financed it, and they want the members of the previous Government to help them. That is the net result of their business acumen, business ability and business knowledge—that they find themselves bogged absolutely and want the loan of our leaders to pull them out. With reference to the deficit, I desire to say that, outside the abnormal conditions under which we are at present living, the deficit is due, to a large extent, to the opening up of what have been called the developing areas of the State. That is the history of all the States of the Commonwealth. Wherever railways have been built for the purpose of giving facilities for the development of the country, where a great development policy has been adopted, it is the history of the whole of the Australian States that during the period of that being done there have been deficits. There is no getting out of it. We have built railways all over the southern portion of this State, and development up to date has not been sufficient to supply those railways with sufficient freight to make them pay. At the same time we have had to pay interest and sinking fund on the construction of those railways, and I do not care what country it is which enters into a large developmental policy, that country will have deficits. Part of our deficit is, therefore, quite natural. Of course part of it is also due to abnormal conditions of war. Many have said that some of it is due to drought. It is a fact that during practically the whole period of the Scaddan Government's administration drought conditions obtained in this country.

But droughts in Australia should be considered a normal circumstance. We should always allow for droughts and should provide sufficient in the good seasons to carry us over the bad seasons, which are absolutely certain to come. While a country is being opened up, as has been the case in Western Australia for the last ten years, deficits are bound to occur. Almost every State in Australia has had deficits, and funded them, and we shall have to fund ours. When normal times return and settlement along those lines is sufficient to enable them to pay, we shall be able to pay off that deficit, but we cannot do it at the present time. The Treasurer has not put the whole of the difficulties before the House. He has neglected to point out that the Agricultural Bank, which is responsible for a good few millions of our loan money, is in a most precarious position. The position to-day is, or rather was six months ago, that the bank had well over 600 farms thrown back on their hands. It would be a simple calculation to work out how much money would be lost on those farms. It would be easily a million, possibly well over that figure.

Mr. Thomas: They would not lend £1,000 on each farm, and at that rate it would only be £600,000.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The security the bank is, to a great extent, cleared land and fencing. But those farms are deserted. Suckers are growing up into trees, and the asset of clearing therefore absolutely disappears. And the fences will be rotted or burnt down. The asset of the Agricultural Bank, therefore, is absolutely gone, and it must therefore be taken that the bank must show a very considerable loss before we are through with this war. That is one thing the Treasurer did not tell the House, but it is true all the same. Again, with reference to the Industries Assistance Board, I am convinced that 25 per cent. of those who are at present under the Industries Assistance Board will leave the land as soon as that assistance is withdrawn. They cannot possibly pay back the Board the money they have borrowed. They are too heavily involved with the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board to be ever able to pull through. In my opinion 25 per cent.

of the moneys loaned to people under the Industries Assistance Board will be an absolute dead loss, and those losses will increase the loss by the Agricultural Bank. That is a position which members of this House should be made aware of. There is another proposition in this regard, the wheat pool. Last year we instituted what is known as the wheat pool, and made advances up to 3s. 6d. a bushel on the whole of the wheat in Australia. Up to date we have shipped about one half and the other half remains to rot, or to be eaten by mice and other vermin. I do not know how we are to get the necessary money to make advances again this year. It seems to me we have sufficient wheat at our sidings and on our wharves to fill all the ships coming to Australia for wheat next year, and in my opinion this year's crop must remain on the farms. Mr. McGibbon says that the wheat growers should go on strike, and not send in their wheat. I would strongly suggest that the other taxpayers of Australia go on strike, and decline to make advances. I say that in all seriousness. It costs something like 9d. a bushel—that is to say, 3d. railway charges, 3d. for bags, and 3d. for cartage—to bring the wheat into the siding. That is putting it at a low estimate. It would be better to allow that wheat to rot on the farm, and save that 9d., than to allow it to rot at the siding. That is the way the proposition strikes me. Mr. McGibbon is highly indignant about the position, and he advises the farmers to go on strike. Mr. McGibbon reminds me about the fable of the fox and the cat. The fox and the cat were one day talking about their tricks. The cat said that if the dogs came she had only one trick, to run up a tree. The fox said that he had dozens of tricks, that he could dodge and turn and twist. When the hounds came along, the fox performed all his tricks and got caught; the cat performed simply her one trick and got up a tree, and was safe. Mr. McGibbon and those with him have only one trick—to milk the Government cow. Reverting to my anecdote, the cat philosophised, saying, "One good trick is worth a dozen inferior ones." I know places in the North-West, however, where the cat's trick would be of no avail, because there are no trees to climb. Mr. McGibbon and his

friends have struck a somewhat similar position. Their one trick being to milk the Government cow, the Government cow has gone dry. Another way of putting it would be that there is no tree for Mr. McGibbon and his friends to climb. Next in regard to the trading concerns. The condemnation of these used to be a strong point with the recent Leader of the Opposition and present Premier, and with the present Minister for Works. The weary, weary hours through which I have sat listening to their abuse and condemnation of State enterprises, and especially of the State steamers. We were told that apart from our want of business acumen, there was only one thing needed to condemn us, and that was the State enterprises. Those enterprises, we were told, were the absolute cause of the deficit. However, the present Government come along with their Estimates and show that the State enterprises are making over £100,000 profit this year. If the present Government had not those State enterprises, which for five years they have abused, and which according to their platform they ought to abolish, their deficit would be £600,000 instead of £500,000. I do not know that any Government ever had a more complete justification, or a more conclusive reply to such vilification as we were subjected to when sitting on the Government benches, in regard to the State trading concerns. Evidently, the present Government are convinced that the concerns represent a valuable asset to the State. That being so, Ministers should put forth some effort to keep those concerns going. The best trading concern the State has to-day is the steamship service; and, in my opinion, the duty of the Government is to make that service such as to yield the fullest possible benefit. What is required, and what should be supplied at the earliest possible moment, is two new ships specially built for the North-West coast. The trade is there, and an enormous amount of profit is to be made; and with the proper class of oil-fired Diesel ship it will be possible to reduce the freights to North-West settlers—and they are deserving of it—by almost 50 per cent. and still make a profit. Hon. members opposite, however, have in the past condemned the State Steamship Service in such terms that they

feel now they cannot continue that service. In view of the enormous profits being made by the State enterprises, the Government should give them a fair chance; and as regards the State Steamship Service they should provide the people of the North-West with proper ships at the earliest possible moment.

The Minister for Works: But the steamers are not the only State enterprise.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Next a few words in regard to that extraordinary cattle deal which has been made through Emanuel Brothers. The deal is the most astounding I have ever known. I do not call it into question on account of its being a secret contract. I hold that all such agreements must be kept secret until completed. But the position is that two State steamers are to be put on to carry cattle from Derby and the people of Wyndham—equally deserving people and including many small men—are to be left absolutely without tonnage to carry their stock, while Emanuel Brothers are able to sell 14,000 bullocks at over £10 per head. Let it not be forgotten that Emanuel Brothers have not got 14,000 bullocks. They will buy them from the small men at £4, £5, and £6 per head, and will put the difference in their own pockets. The cattle at Derby to-day are at the command of the Government. It is impossible to dispose of those bullocks except by shipment south. That being so, it was the duty of the Government to acquire these cattle at a reasonable rate. It was the duty of the Government to say, "We are not going to pay you more for your cattle than we are paying to our own cattle station of Moola Boola." The Government's Moola Boola station is credited for its bullocks at £7 per head. The Government have 800 head on that station, and are taking only 500 of them. Thus, 300 Government bullocks will remain on the run while Emanuel Bros. get over £10 per head for what bullocks they own and, practically, for what they can purchase. Whoever made that deal, made an extraordinarily bad deal for the State.

Mr. Butcher: Where do the cattle producers in your electorate come in?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They do not come in at all. They are entirely ignored. Their

bullocks will have to come overland. Indeed, it would pay the cattle growers in my electorate to send their cattle northwards to Derby and sell them to Emanuel Bros. for shipment by the State Steamship Service. That would pay my electors who raise cattle better than to send their bullocks overland to this market. I am bound to say I agree with Mr. Holmes that the deal is one of the most extraordinary ever made by any Government. Whether it is possible to get out of the deal, I do not know; but I do know that Emanuel Bros. have got about £40,000 more than they should have received. They are being paid £40,000 more than the cattle could have been bought for, and they have kept out all the small growers about Hall's Creek, whose cattle will be left absolutely unshipped.

Mr. Collier: The agreement is so beautifully one-sided, too. The Government take all the risk.

The Minister for Works: How does the hon. member make out that £40,000 excess?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The price of 3½d. per pound is equal to about £10 per head at Derby. The Government should have bought the cattle at £6 per head at Derby. Six pounds per head at that port would represent the highest price ever paid except on that occasion, last year, when Elder, Shenton & Co. had the last Government pinched. Five pounds is a good price for a bullock at Derby.

Mr. Munsie: For years many growers have not got more than £2 10s. per head.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The growers around Derby and Wyndham would consider themselves absolutely on velvet if they got £4 10s. per head. Not only the little men, but the big men also, say the same thing—that if they get £5 per head they are doing remarkably well. The Government ought not to have paid more than £6 per head at the very outside. The previous Government paid more because they were absolutely jammed. The present Government, however, had all the year to go; and, besides, they had the Wyndham bullocks to fall back on. Last year the Wyndham cattle were sold at £4 10s. per head and sent east to Queensland. This year the Government had Wyndham and Derby to draw on. They could have got those 14,000 bullocks at Wyndham and

Derby. They could have got them along the coast, possibly some out of my electorate and some out of Roebourne, for £6 per head delivered on the wharves. The saving which could have been effected is nearer £50,000 than £40,000.

The Minister for Works: That is only what you state. There is no proof.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The proof is that, until Elder, Shenton & Co. sold certain bullocks last year, so much as £6 per head had never, I believe, been paid for cattle at Derby. Cattle had been sold there for £3 10s., £4, and £5, but never for £6. Further, Emanuel Bros. were the people who, by manipulation of the tick regulations, cause a tick line to be drawn which obliged the cattle growers around Hall's Creek, notwithstanding the fact that their cattle were clean, to travel their bullocks through the tick infested country to Wyndham, whereby they sometimes lost 50 per cent. of the cattle they started with. That is something Emanuel Bros. did a few years ago, to secure the Derby trade for themselves.

The Minister for Works: They must be a bad lot.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They are a job lot, and a pretty bad job at that. Formerly they never patronised the State steamers, but now they are going to patronise them to the extent of £40,000 or £50,000.

Mr. Munsie: Even their agents would not travel as passengers on the State steamers.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Next I desire to offer a few remarks on the proposed action of the Government in regard to immigration. We have been told, with a flourish of head lines, that the Government are preparing for immigration—that they intend to initiate a huge immigration policy after the war. I say they would do better to apply their minds to winning the war, meantime letting the "afterwards" alone. However, they are proceeding to survey land for settlement. All the unemployed surveyors are to be put on to survey land for immigrants who may be coming here five years hence.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): That is in response to an inquiry from the Imperial Government, through the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as to how

many discharged soldiers we could take after the war.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I think the Government were, in fact, flying a kite.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): No. That was in reply to an inquiry from the Imperial Government.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Government are setting out to survey more lands. In the first place, we are told, the object is to classify lands. But until the Agricultural Bank has got rid of the farms that have fallen into its hands, forfeited farms—of which there must be a thousand or so—it seems an absolute waste of money to send out surveyors to map out more land.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): It is not proposed to survey more land in the wheat districts. The proposal is to classify the South-Western lands.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The good lands in the South-West are all held already. What is needed there is resumption, if we are looking for settlement in the South-West—not further surveys. They are also going to renew the pastoral leases with a view to assisting immigrants. I trust that before the Government think of renewing those leases they will have the land thoroughly classified.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Yes, that is right.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Never mind talking immigration, but put your surveyors on now to classify that land.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): That was part of the announcement.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, the announcement was that surveyors were to be put on for the agricultural land, and that legislation would be introduced to deal with those leases. It would be most unpatriotic to renew those leases without classification, without the State getting a fair return for the land.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): No one has asked for it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The announcement was made that legislation would be introduced to renew those leases.

The Minister for Works: On fair terms. Leave it to us.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Accepting the assurance of the Minister for Works that he is going to see to it, I will leave that subject.

On the question of Royal Commissions, I may remind the House that we have heard of Nero fiddling while Rome burnt. If ever there was fiddling while the country was burning, we have it in these Royal Commissions. We have a Royal Commission on the Esperance railway. All the information they can possibly gather is contained in the files. I understand there was an agreement between the Country party and the Liberals, and it was part of the bond, that there should be a Royal Commission on agriculture. And so we go to the wasteful expenditure of paying the three or four or five Commissioners and a secretary to travel round the country and find out what everybody, certainly our departmental experts, ought to know already. We have at least four commissioners in the Agricultural Department costing each over £1,000 per annum. They are supposed to know all about agriculture. If those four men cannot tell us all about the subject we should sack them forthwith. It is absurd to appoint a Royal Commission to get the evidence of our own experts. Why should not the Minister call in those experts and get the information himself at first hand? As a matter of fact, this is one of the means of throwing dust in the eyes of the people. The commission was appointed merely to bluff and fool the agriculturists, to endeavour to make them believe that the Government had the industry at heart. If, after having employed four costly experts for the last seven years, we require a Royal Commission on agriculture, we ought to sack those experts. I will go farther and say we ought to get rid of the commission and the experts altogether. I do not believe any or all of them will be two-pennyworth of advantage to the State with the information they can get. Our various commissioners have failed miserably to give value for the money they have received in wages and expenses. At a time like this, when we are asked to sink party differences, I think it is up to the Government to drop the tiddly-winking rubbish they have put before us this session. Take the Notice Paper. There is on it scarcely a Bill which we cannot do without, except perhaps the taxation proposals. There are in all about 30 Bills, and they are still coming in. If we have a desire to run the country without

party politics the Government must chuck out that rubbish, close down Parliament, get back to their Ministerial offices, and give their business acumen a run, so that the country may have the benefit of it. There is not one of these Bills we could not do without until the war is over. The rubbish on the Notice Paper is an indication that the present Government are simply the mouthpiece of the civil servants.

Mr. Munsie: They are not going on with those Bills, they are going to drop them. It is only kidstrokes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I object to kidstrokes at a time like this. Wipe these things off the Notice Paper, pass the Estimates and shut down, thus saving the expense of running Parliament. Notwithstanding the position in the country, I am still convinced that as soon as things resume the normal the State will pull through and be again one of the most prosperous in the Commonwealth. I am convinced of the recuperative powers of the State; but it is necessary for the politicians to sink that carping, miserable criticism which is indulged in merely for the sake of getting the billet another fellow has. Let us drop it and endeavour to do the best we can in a time like this. During the present war we should all endeavour to do our best for the State and for the Empire. To continue to haggle on the rubbish we have here and waste money on Royal Commissions seems to me to deny that we have the best interests of the State at heart; alternatively it is a denial of the proposition that we have the intellect to run the State.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [6.10]: I wish to say to-day, as on the occasion of each of the Budgets since the beginning of the war—and also to re-echo to an extent the remarks of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood)—that in such stressful times it is the clear duty of every member to do all he can to assist the Government, and the Treasurer particularly, in regard to financial proposals of expenditure and taxation.

Mr. Anwgin: We have heard that before somewhere.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, and it is a spirit that I wish to see those who use it act up to. I believe the great majority of members have that spirit to-day. At any rate, it

has been evidenced by an ex-Treasurer in the person of the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) ever since the war broke out, irrespective of which Government have been in power, and I give credit to that hon. member for the offers he has made of his time, his experience and his ability to assist first one Treasurer and then the other. If words mean anything, those of us who heard the speech of the leader of the Opposition the other evening must give him credit for being imbued with the same spirit. I would not blame the Premier if, in view of the public spirited offer of the leader of the Opposition to assist in regard to the financial matters, the Premier were willing to consider that hon. member's proposals on their face value.

The Minister for Works: At their face value, yes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I trust the majority of members sitting behind the leader of the Opposition will agree that the hon. member shall act up to the olive branch he held out.

The Minister for Works: Do you consider the last speaker acted up to it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, quite the reverse. Even if mistakes have been made in the past, it has been pointed out that the position in regard to the war has never been more serious than it is to-day. Let us therefore drop this recrimination as far as we are able to.

Mr. Carpenter: You are in the soup.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: And give the Government the assistance every member of the House is paid for and should endeavour to give.

Mr. Taylor: I would assist them to go to the country at once.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, the Press has told us that the proposal for a select committee to go into the financial propositions is under consideration. Personally I hope it will be carried into effect, and I hope this party bickering will be dropped and that the select committee, if appointed, will go a bit further and search the Estimates to see if they cannot stop a lot of unnecessary expenditure on the part of the great spending departments. If it is not the desire of the Labour party that the leader of the Opposition should carry out his fair and public-spirited suggestion in this re-

spect, I am confident that the Ministry are quite capable of going through the departments and carrying out those economies in administration which they have promised us and which I think it is the wish of the country should be carried out. I admit that the present Estimates of expenditure appear to have been framed on the lines of those of the Government of last year.

Mr. Collier: Only more extravagant.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They appear to me to be framed very much on the same lines. It has been a disappointment to me, and the only reason I can suggest for it is that during the past four months, with Parliament sitting the greater part of the time, with a strenuous election campaign in the Canning electorate before that, and with a referendum campaign during the short adjournment of Parliament, Ministers have not had an opportunity of making those radical changes which in some instances are desirable.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Before tea I was discussing the position which the Government would find themselves in if the Labour party decided not to permit the leader of the Opposition to carry out his public-spirited offer to meet and confer with members of the other party in regard to certain financial proposals. There is no doubt that in that event Ministers are quite capable of taking, and I am sure would be prepared to take, the responsibility of their positions and going carefully into their departments with a view to seeing what economies could be effected.

Mr. Underwood: They have had four months to do that in.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They have not had four months. For nearly a month after the election Ministers were engaged in a bitter electioneering fight where they should have been returned unopposed, and the people's money has had to be utilised accordingly. After that the House sat for a few weeks, and Ministers consequently have not had an opportunity of going into departmental matters, which we trust they will get when the recess comes, and again for

three weeks or so they were engaged on the referendum campaign.

Mr. Carpenter: Do not apologise for them.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In my opinion that is probably the reason why these Estimates so nearly follow the lines of those of their predecessors. It is a duty which the Government owe to themselves and their supporters in this House and in the country that as soon as the recess arrives they should carefully scrutinise all expenditure and see if it cannot be, as I believe it can be, very considerably reduced.

Mr. Carpenter: You admit they cannot solve the financial problem.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No. I am of the opinion that when they devote themselves to it they can solve it as it ought to be solved. I should be pleased to see them taking that action.

Mr. Hudson: Do you suggest their having a conference with the author of the Nevanas contract?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I suggest that the Government should economise before they bring down to us any new and unprecedented measures of taxation on these lines, which have not been put before the people of Western Australia at an election for their consideration. There is no need for me to enlarge on the public-spiritedness and patriotism of the people of the State. We have had ample evidence of that on many occasions, and I am satisfied that the people are prepared to bear any fair and further measure of taxation when its necessity in the best interests of the State has been amply demonstrated.

Mr. Hudson: Do you consider the Government proposals fair?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Some of them I do consider fair, and am supporting, such as the additional stamp duty, increased totalisator tax, and other small and no doubt welcome additions to the taxation of the State, which have been approved of by the House. I think the people of the State are prepared to face the heavy additional taxation for war purposes that will no doubt be imposed by the Federal Government, and when all is said and done it is in the hands of the Federal Government solely that the responsibility for the conduct of the war is

placed. I think there is a feeling throughout the Western Australian community that heavy taxation of a novel nature should not be adopted for State purposes until Ministers have been through their departments, and been satisfied that the whole of the present enormous State revenue is being both wisely and economically spent.

Mr. Hudson: Did you write the article in the *West Australian*?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is the duty which lies before the Government at the present time. No assurance has so far been given to the taxpayers of Western Australia that our revenue is being wisely expended. On the other hand, we have had repeated statements from the present occupants of the Treasury benches that considerable official extravagance was in progress, and as far as I know there has not been any check placed upon that expenditure.

Mr. Carpenter: They have increased the deficit.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That brings me to the question of the new taxation proposals of the Government. As a friend of the Government I regret exceedingly that the proposals for the taxation of certain commodities, some of which are not, strictly speaking, luxuries, should have been brought forward. The Treasurer desires to impose taxation of 15 per cent. on the sale of a large number of commodities. It is estimated that this tax will produce revenue at the rate of £300,000 a year, and it is going to be levied very largely on the masses of the people. Our present direct taxation, according to the *Statistical Abstract*, amounts to only £407,956 per annum, so that practically speaking, in this one measure we are asked to very nearly double the whole of the direct taxation obtaining in the State of Western Australia at the present time. Members of the House are asked to accept these proposals, although they have never been submitted to the people. I am not satisfied as to the way in which its ramifications will act, but I am satisfied that I have no mandate from the people of my electorate to support them, and that neither have the Government any mandate, so far as I know to bring them forward.

Mr. Taylor: The Government have a mandate to the contrary.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I cannot grant taxation on the basis proposed, which I feel impelled to admit is illogical, unscientific, and the taxation itself is hastily-conceived and unjust. It appears to me also that it must react very unfairly on the man outback, particularly when one sees on certain lines that the tax on the goldfields or in the country districts would be more than twice what it would be on the same article in the metropolitan area. Whilst this tax is described as a luxury tax, many of the principal luxuries of life are untouched. This will operate mainly against the simple pleasures of the poor people. We find that a school girl drinking lemon squash is not exempt from the payment of this new tax, while many of the real luxuries of the rich entirely escape. I wish to refer to its incidence so far as some of the traders established in Western Australia are concerned. Let us take the case of jewellers. Some of the businesses are very much depressed already in their operations since the outbreak of war. I have been told on reliable authority that if this tax is brought into operation those jewellery shops which have not already branches in Adelaide, will immediately open branches there. I am also told that all local jewellery would simply be numbered as samples, and that the purchaser who wishes to buy that particular article will be told that if he will buy from the Adelaide shop the firm will send across and give a guarantee of delivery of it in Perth within ten days. They can, if they like, bring the article they receive from Adelaide into the shop and compare it with the article they had seen there, and if there was any difference I am assured they would be permitted to exchange it on the spot.

Mr. Collier: Why worry about it; it is dead.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If it is dead that is all right. I have been assured, however, that this will be the effect of the proposal. I am sure a tax which can be so easily evaded and which would have the effect of driving established businesses away from Western Australia ought not to be

imposed. In regard to pianos, the same state of affairs would exist.

Mr. Underwood: And what about pianolas?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They would come under the same category as pianos. The practice of indenting pianos and pianolas from places outside Western Australia would obtain very general recognition. I am satisfied that pianos are not in every case entirely a luxury. People living in the country, with large families, especially where there are daughters, would be very much more contented on the land if they could get a piano on the farm, while in the City we have people who can go to the pictures and hear music by paying merely 3d. or 4d. Therefore we should not deter the people in the country from enjoying a little luxury in their own homes. The country storekeeper will certainly be put to a big disadvantage compared with the City competitor because the whole of the freight will be added to the selling price of the article, and the tax of fifteen per cent. will be added to the freight charges as well. In this way the country storekeeper will be driven out of business, and that business which will not go to Adelaide will go to Perth. If the proposed tax is carried into effect it will ruin a number of deserving people in my district. If further taxation is necessary, I urge that it should be on the basis of ability to pay. The railway rates have been increased, and I notice that when an increase in the income tax is brought forward we get a flat rate of 2d. in the pound, whilst when the railway freights are increased that increase is on a 10 per cent. basis on Class 1, 2, and 3 goods. I suggest that the position should be reversed. We should increase the income tax according, as I have said, to the ability to pay. The railway freights, if they are to be increased, should be raised on a flat rate per ton instead of the 10 per cent. basis. Economy in administration is the first duty of the Government, and I trust that something will be done in that direction before any further taxation proposals are introduced. In regard to the recent increase of the railway freights I do not propose to say as much as I would otherwise have done, owing to the absence of the

Minister from the State, but on his return I hope to make one of a deputation to wait on him and urge him to reduce these unexpected and undesirable increases. In the meantime I wish to record my disapproval of the action taken. Whilst I have criticised the Government on some points, I still recognise that it has done much good in the last four months under adverse conditions. We have had the welcome abolition of the terminal charges.

Mr. Collier: And you have had 10 per cent. added in exchange.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope the hon. gentleman will assist me in abolishing that increase too, and also the equally unjust increase which the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe was responsible for as soon as the member for Boulder (Mr. Collier) was relieved of the position of Minister for Railways. We have had the superphosphate freights reduced to the old and proper level, and there has been the reorganisation of the Industries Assistance Board, which has been an excellent thing, and has relieved members of Parliament from receiving requests to dance attendance on the board in Perth. I always contended that the board should be controlled locally by officers of the department. The district surveyors who were in the various districts should have been placed in charge of the work of the board. It was a great mistake not to follow that course. I am glad to say that the operations of the board since the decentralisation took place have proved of great advantage to the people whom the board was created to assist. There is certainly more sympathetic land administration at the present time, and I am glad to see through the columns of the Press that the Government have agreed to reduce the price of first-class land in the wheat belt to a maximum of 15s. an acre, and in this way remove an unjust anomaly which has obtained since the passing of the re-pricing Bill.

Mr. Collier: What about the poison leases; have the Government reduced those?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Whether that is done or not, I am satisfied that the Minister for Lands, who is a man of great practical experience, will wipe out any unjust provisions, such as compelling a man to pay up

all his arrears of land rents before he can get any reduction of price granted to him.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: If the Minister for Lands does that he will do something which is absolutely wrong.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: He will be doing what is absolutely right and necessary, and something which I regret I could not persuade the hon. member to do 12 months ago.

Mr. Smith: Absolutely just.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The operation of that particular section of the Act has prevented settlers who needed relief from getting it. I look to sympathetic administration from the Minister for Lands to help people to get absolute justice. In regard to the marketing of wheat, we know the great disabilities under which wheat farmers have been suffering during the past three or four years. To-day we find that with a fair season ahead of us the farmers have the depressing news that they are only to receive an advance of 1s. 6d. a bushel for their wheat at the siding.

Mr. Foley: Why do they not let private enterprise have a go at it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We do not wish to have anything to do with private enterprise at present; we wish the pool to continue. The proposed advance of 1s. 6d. at the siding is utterly inadequate, and when the Premier is in Melbourne, I trust he will refer this question to the Prime Minister, and see whether an advance at least equivalent to that of last year, namely, 3s. 6d. a bushel cannot be granted to our wheat farmers.

Mr. Munsie: That is a vote of censure on the Minister who is there now.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am satisfied that the Minister for Industries has done his very best under great difficulties, just as the member for Guildford did when he represented Western Australia at the Wheat Marketing Board conferences. I have complete confidence in the Minister who is there now, just as I had in the member for Guildford, when he represented the State at those conferences.

Mr. Taylor: I have heard you say that about other Ministers too.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I mention this about the member for Guildford, who I know received special recognition at the hands of the Wheat Marketing Board, and

I am confident that the present Minister for Industries will do his utmost to continue the good work which was so ably carried out by the member for Guildford for a considerable time in regard to the wheat.

Mr. Collier: There is a friendly feeling between the two Johnsons now.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am quite content to say that I believe the special thanks given to the member for Guildford were amply justified. We have heard a great deal about the trade being kept amongst the Allies after the war. If ever there is a time when it will be necessary for trade to be kept amongst the allied nations it is to-day, and whilst I would hesitate to suggest to the Premier that he should ask the Prime Minister to approach the British Government on this point, I do think that since wheat is absolutely necessary to the allied nations and to the Motherland, any suggestion we can make that Australian wheat should be used in preference to that from the Argentine and elsewhere ought to be made. I hope the Premier will bring this matter under the attention of the Prime Minister during his visit to the Eastern States, because it is necessary in the interests of the wheat producers that a larger advance than 1s. 6d. a bushel should be given.

Mr. GARDINER (Irwin) [7.58]: After listening to, I think, 32 Budget speeches, may I be allowed to say in regard to that delivered by the Treasurer the other evening, that, whatever his faults, the Treasurer has a right to receive the congratulations of this House on the clarity of his expressions so far as the various matters that he touched upon were concerned. But I am afraid that is where compliments must end. I listened to Sir George Turner twice when Victoria was right in the slough of despond, and I am inclined to think I would be perfectly justified in characterising the present Budget as drab and depressing. I think that is the effect it had on people, not only in the House, but outside. When one looks at the surroundings, perhaps the Treasurer allowed the present environment to affect him too much in his outlook, too much in his anticipations and too little in his realisation. There are three points abundantly clear: The first that we are going to have a deficit of

£5,6,000, the second that we are to have no reduction, indeed an increase, in the cost of administration, and the third that there are to be several taxation Bills to make up the difference. When listening to the speech of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) I was convinced, as he is, that that is not altogether the gravest difficulty at the present juncture. He instanced two big institutions, namely the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board, which are going to prove very difficult problems, requiring a great deal of wisdom from the combined brains of the House, if we are not to suffer a great loss also under those heads. We must look further afield and say that last year the agriculturists produced three million pounds of capital and that this year it looks—if we are to receive only 1s. 6d. for the wheat—as if there will be a great falling off there. That falling off must affect all the earning powers of every one of the State's enterprises, and consequently we can easily imagine that there is to be a deficit even larger than the Treasurer suggests. Indeed, I have a recollection of the words used by the leader of the Opposition in his last speech as Treasurer, when he said he was up against a serious time. Then we come to the solid fact that in the midst of all these difficulties there has been no reduction in administration, indeed, there has been a pretty substantial increase. I am voicing an outside opinion in this: If the House can show the country that it cuts administration somewhere down to the bone, somewhere near the same reduction that private business enterprises have made, then the people of the State are not going to cavil at legitimate taxation, provided that taxation has something more than have some of the present taxation proposals to recommend it. I believe the spirit of the people says "We are willing to pay if the State's necessity requires it." But before that point is reached they must be satisfied that every possible economy is being practised, that every wisdom is being exercised by the Government in their administrative acts; then the people will cheerfully pay taxation if it is necessary to balance the finances. Standing here, one wonders whether we are ever going to get absolute economy in administration under party Government, one wonders

if it is ever to come about. I realise that every time we go to touch a certain great section, behind that intention is a deep thought as to what attitude that great body will take at the next election. These are times so serious in their surroundings that we have to discard all these influences and say that Parliament owes an obligation to the people higher than party owes to party partisans. When I listened to the speech of the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas), when I listened to the speech of the leader of the Opposition and to that of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), I was satisfied that the same great spirit which actuated those speakers in the last campaign was finding utterance in the House, or some overflow of it at any rate. I saw men there—and I say it with pride—put their political reputations and political futures into the melting pot of their patriotism, doing it in confidence and unashamed; and I say if the same spirit exists here—and I venture to think it does—that sacrifice which members of Parliament are willing to make for the good of the nation, they in the same spirit are willing to make for the good of the State. It behoves every one of us—and I can say this probably with a freer conscience than most men, because it was in that spirit I came into the House, it is a spirit I have given utterance to ever since I have been here, and it is a spirit which has got me into serious trouble—to subscribe to the belief that at the present juncture the country has a right to demand from every member absolutely the best that is in him, irrespective of where he sits in the House. When we realise that, party divisions and party walls are going to fall down, and the best man in the House will be the man who thinks best for the State. If an obligation is thrown upon members individually, a greater obligation is thrown upon those of us who have had political experience, who have had Ministerial experience, who indeed have presided over that most important branch, a Government administrative Treasury. When, the other night, I heard the leader of the Opposition say that under the circumstances he was willing to give the best in him, I realised that I have ever been ready to give the best in me in the same way. I then thought I could see a solution of some of these difficulties,

because if a committee selected from the whole House went into this question and put their individual shoulders under the responsibility, if they were selected from all parties, it would remove whatever was objectionable in any of their proposals from the region of party altogether, and each man would say in the interests of the State, whether or not it was detrimental to the interests of his party, that he was doing the thing the State wanted him to do, nay, what the State expected him to do under the circumstances. There are two millstones. There is the millstone of necessity, which is right at the base, and there is another millstone, namely, a growing citizen's opinion that the country should have the best, not only in her Parliament, but in her citizens. I would utter this word of warning, that apparently that spirit which we have had in two campaigns and which has been supported by the Press from one to the other end of the State, finds expression in the demand that the House should exercise rigid economy before it effects taxation. I believe that spirit is reflected in the citizens, and I venture to say that if we get between the millstone of necessity and that other millstone, and bring with us our littleness of party and of ambition, our littleness of personal desires opposed to the interests of the State, those two millstones will grind us, or the useless among us, into powder, and put us out of public life altogether. Under the circumstances, it behoves every one of us to ask "What can I do?" For goodness' sake let us at the present juncture get rid of this "You did it" and "You did it." If we are tackling a man's job, let us tackle it like men; do not let us keep casting the stone from one side to the other. Any man who has been a Minister of the Crown knows that he has left lots of things undone which he ought to have done, and that the hypercritical man who follows him can easily find fault. Let us try to realise that whatever was done was done in the belief that it was in the best interests of the State. I will make this offer again: Before I left the James Government, I went through every department of administration and I am willing to go there now and until the 30th June next free of all charge to the State and devote the whole of my time going through those de-

partments, with any other members, and seeing if big economies in administration cannot be effected.

Mr. S. Stubbs: It can be.

Mr. GARDINER: The greatest earning department and the most extravagant is the Railways. The railways of Western Australia probably have the smallest capitalisation per mile of any railways in Australia, yet their expenses are higher than those of New South Wales, of Queensland, or of Tasmania.

Mr. Collier: The price of coal and of water is a big factor.

Mr. GARDINER: Take them all as they exist; the big factor that stands out to me is that whenever there is a deficiency the rates are put up to cover the deficiency, but no attempt is ever made to say there are certain services that ought to be curtailed. If we as a committee of the House instead of a party curtail them, we will stand firm and say that the reform must be effected. We will have the right to say to the Commissioner of Railways, "If you cannot show us a reduction in your administration we will get somebody who can."

Mr. Seaddan: He reduced a number of trains to Busselton during the winter, but as soon as the new Government came in those trains were restored.

Mr. GARDINER: If we are going to be sincere, if we can get a committee from the House, we will be in a position to say that whatever decision the committee arrives at must be carried out or else the House will have to take the responsibility, and no shame will sit upon the faces of those men who have tried their best to help the State.

Mr. Seaddan: Why not have a public accounts committee on a permanent basis?

Mr. GARDINER: I have refrained from proposing it, because it is a fad of mine, and so I will not enlarge upon it. I say it is very necessary. We are in this position: If the Government are not going to tackle this question, there is only one thing left for us. I will not agree to saying, "We are referring that subject back to you, or else you must do that work before bringing in taxation." If such a committee were formed, and the taxation could come in immediately, if that committee could bring down pro-

posals to this House, then the day after tomorrow the other side of the House could take office so far as I am concerned, and the difficulty would then be theirs. The committee should be able to bring down its proposals and say, "There are the savings we can effect in administration and there is the taxation we propose shall be introduced." Taxation has ever been a question in which it has been difficult to get an equitable incidence. Let the House say that it realises this. The leader of the Opposition realises it, the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) realises it; we all realise that there is necessity for taxation to make up the deficit. Then let the combined experience and brains of this House try to propound a scheme of taxation which will be fairly equitable, or as nearly equitable as can be got, and which will, at any rate, have behind it the knowledge gained by men of experience.

Mr. Seaddan: But it is no good playing the fool with the people in order to do that. We have been told that all that is required is business acumen.

Mr. Collier: All that was required was to get us out and then there would be no deficit.

Mr. GARDINER: I am not concerned as to that. I want only that taxation shall be fair to all sections of the community. That is the position I am taking up. I am pleading for the bigness of this country, pleading so that men may be able to say with a clear conscience they realise that not only are we at present faced with difficulties right before us, but that we realise we shall have to exercise great wisdom to tackle those difficulties which will appear immediately after the war. We have to be in a position to take full advantage of our opportunities. In the big scheme which has been foreshadowed, under which the products of every one of the Dominions will be developed by national capital. If we can show that we can get our own affairs in the present distressful time into something like reasonable form, and can do that as citizens and members of Parliament pledged to do our best for King and country in this most critical period of the war, then I venture to say we shall be laying the foundation of a bigger and higher prosperity than this State has ever seen. But it must be done by self-sacrifice. Let us

at this juncture say we are going to rise superior to party questions.

Mr. HEITMANN (Geraldton) [8.19]: Let me remind the hon. gentleman who has just sat down that up to the present he has been a party man equally with other members. The hon. member must realise that before his ideal of politics in this State can be fulfilled, it will be necessary to change and reorganise the whole of the political institutions, not only inside this Chamber but also outside. The hon. member has spoken of free agents, but I would remind him that he himself is not a free agent; nor, so far as I can see, is any other member. He must see the difficulties in the way of his proposal that party politics should be dropped, and must recognise that before he can get a member of Parliament according to his ideal he must have one made to order. After five years of continuous criticism, five years of misrepresentation, members occupying the front Opposition benches are not likely to turn the other cheek. Like most members on this (Opposition) side who have addressed themselves to the Budget proposals, like most of the members on the other (Government) side who have not spoken at all, and like the public generally of this State, I was disappointed when listening to the Premier delivering his Budget speech. I was disappointed because there was no suggestion of rectifying the alleged extraordinary and unnecessary expenditure in various departments. I was disappointed, too, at the proposals which he placed before the country for the raising of extra revenue. For five long years the Premier has told the people of this country that it required only a change of Government to bring about a different state of affairs. Nothing done by the Government during these five years was right. Eventually the present occupants of Treasury benches changed over from one side of the House to the other. That change over became possible by reason of what some people might call the immoral tactics followed by a band of exploiters. I refer to those members who, so long as they could get anything out of the Labour Government were prepared to support that Government but when they had bleached the

Government white, and the Treasury also, said "We have got all we can out of the Labour Government and we will now support another Government from which there is some hope of further assistance." They said that by their actions time and time again.

Opposition member: Did Prowse say that?

Mr. HEITMANN: He indicated it. He said in effect they had got all they could out of the Labour Government and would now try another Government, and they did. We now find the actual leader of that party recognising the Treasurer's difficult position, and with a view to saving the Treasurer and his Government, suggesting that this side of the House should drop party politics in order to assist the Government to get over their difficulties of finance. When the present Government took possession of the Treasury benches, we were told by the newspapers of the country that it was a strong team, just the men to place everything in order.

Mr. Collier: They were said to be strong in one special line—business experience.

Mr. HEITMANN: Business experience and financial ability.

Mr. Scaddan: I don't think they said financial ability.

Mr. HEITMANN: They were said to be just the men to put everything right. This was said so persistently for the first day or two that even Ministers themselves, for the time believed it. They were only about a week or two in office when we were told that confidence was once again restored.

Mr. Scaddan: That prosperity was stalking through the land.

Mr. HEITMANN: The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), when contesting his re-election, said the Government had been in office only ten days, but already the country had confidence in the Government. The Attorney General said the same thing, and the Premier himself also made use of the word confidence. To me the only thing missing in those statements was that the reference should have been to confidential tricks. I would ask, what has become of all this confidence which we were told the country had in the present Ministry. Where is

the confidence of Ministers themselves? Their own actions during the last week or two indicate that they recognise their helplessness. It will be remembered, too, that the political "little corporal," the Attorney General, made the statement that although the Ministry had been in power only two days, they had made satisfactory arrangements regarding soldiers' fares, a matter which could not be attended to by the Labour Government in two years.

Mr. Scaddan: They did not do it at all; they knew nothing about it until it was done.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am told that that is the case, but the Attorney General took credit for having arranged the fares of soldiers at a reasonable rate, although the Government had nothing to do with the question.

The Premier: We had all to do with it.

Mr. Scaddan: You had nothing whatever to do with it.

The Premier: At least you did not do it.

The Scaddan: I admit that we did not do it, but neither did you.

The Premier: We fixed the whole matter up.

Mr. Scaddan: That is not correct.

The Premier: You neglected to do anything for two years and when we came into office we fixed the matter up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HEITMANN: The arrangement was completed before the Premier came into office, the only thing he had to do was to attach his signature.

Mr. Scaddan: He did not even have to do that.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am prepared to allow that he had to attach his signature. In any case, this is not a big question, though an attempt was made to make a lot of capital out of it. I would be interesting if the Government would place the file on the Table, so that the public might be in a position to know the real facts. The burden of the Attorney General's theme was that this Government would square the finances, that they would look behind the scenes and find out some of the dreadful doings of the previous Government, and then the Government would appeal to the country. The Government have now had their opportunity

of looking behind the scenes, and they do not look any more pleasant despite the fact that they have had a staff doing nothing but looking for faults.

Mr. Collier: Yes, and working night shift.

Mr. HEITMANN: That is so, working night and day.

The Premier: You had spies on; we did not pay spies.

Mr. HEITMANN: What about the man who was climbing down a rain pipe when he was discovered? On one occasion the Minister for Works was discovered behind a bundle of files, about six feet high, dealing with the construction of the floating dock at Fremantle.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Are these facts?

Mr. HEITMANN: Why should I make the statements if they are not statements of fact?

The Premier: You must have plenty of spies.

Mr. HEITMANN: This information does not necessarily come from spies. When, on the occasion I refer to, somebody opened the door, the Minister for Works nearly took a fit. It has been suggested that the Minister has been pretty well in a fit ever since.

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister knows that what I say is true.

The Minister for Works: I know that what you state is absolutely incorrect in every particular.

Mr. HEITMANN: Perhaps it is unknown to the Minister for Works that certain pressmen of this City were in his office day in and day out, searching for information.

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. HEITMANN: Yes; trying to discover something to the discredit of the previous Government.

The Minister for Works: Not in my department.

Mr. HEITMANN: After the members of the present Government had got behind the scenes, they were to go to the country. I do not hear any great anxiety now expressed by them to go to the country. It has been discovered that this great team of

business men, controlled by the Press of the State, are positively incapable. They have not been able to deal with any question in anything approaching a businesslike manner.

The Minister for Works: You have given us inaccuracies. Now give us the truth.

Mr. HEITMANN: After getting behind the scenes and making all sorts of dreadful discoveries, the Government were going to appeal to the country. We hear nothing of an appeal now.

The Minister for Works: Give us a chance, and we will appeal to-morrow.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister's courage merits an iron cross. There is nothing in the wide world to prevent the Government from going to the country at once.

The Minister for Works: Do you want to go to the country?

Mr. HEITMANN: I am prepared to go on the present taxation proposals. Rather than allow those extraordinary proposals to be placed on the statute-book, this party would go to the country a hundred times. The idea of the Minister for Works, to challenge us to appeal to the country on taxation proposals which will increase the cost of the working man's alarm clock while allowing the clock on the £400 or £500 motor-car, and also the motor-car itself, to be exempt, is positively ridiculous; and I venture to say the Minister would have a different tale to tell if he were before his electors.

The Minister for Works: We are not afraid.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister for Works has been looking pretty down-hearted of late, and I fear for the Premier's health. I long for the time when the Premier will take a sea trip to London, perhaps in February or March.

The Minister for Works: You have a better chance of going to London than the Premier has.

Mr. HEITMANN: That is an unkind remark for the Minister to make about his chief.

The Premier: It is a compliment.

Mr. HEITMANN: What have the Government discovered so far? What terrible thing existed when they got behind the scenes? They said they would throw cer-

tain responsibilities upon Royal Commissions. And this is responsible government by a strong team of capable business men! Since they have been in office, there has not been an important question before the country which they have not referred, or proposed to refer, to Royal Commissions. As regards the five or six taxation measures introduced last week, if our Constitution will stand them it will stand anything. The Premier complains that he found the deficit greater than it was stated to be. He also complains as to payments having been deferred beyond the financial year. It is stupid of the Premier to take up such an attitude, because he knows that every year certain payments are thus deferred.

The Premier: My complaint has nothing whatever to do with those payments.

Mr. HEITMANN: I will put a case on similar lines.

The Premier: A case on similar lines does not exist.

Mr. HEITMANN: About 1908, if I remember rightly, instructions were issued by the then Treasurer, a colleague of the present Premier, even to comparatively small wholesale traders in the back country not to send in their accounts until after a certain date in June. Why?

The Premier: Such instructions were never issued, and you have never been able to prove that they were issued. Do not repeat a statement of that sort unless you can prove it. Such instructions were never issued by any Treasurer.

Mr. HEITMANN: They were issued, and the gentleman who received them, the manager of a trading concern on the Murchison, informed me of the fact.

The Minister for Works: He may have told you that, and still it might not be true.

Mr. HEITMANN: What reason would he have for telling an untruth on the point? Certainly not the same reason as actuates hon. members opposite in stating—

The Premier: Those instructions were never issued. You were challenged to prove their issue, and you were never able to produce any evidence. You know you are repeating a mis-statement.

Mr. HEITMANN: If it were a mis-statement and if I repeated it for the next six months, I should not be indulging in mis-

statement to the same extent as the hon. gentleman did when on this side of the Chamber. I accepted the word of the gentleman who told me of the issue of those instructions at the time.

The Minister for Works: Who is he, and where is he?

Mr. HEITMANN: Ministers know that it has been done.

The Minister for Works: It may have been done by your party.

The Premier: I know it has never been done.

Mr. HEITMANN: The leader of the Opposition referred to a minute on the files to that effect. Is not that so?

The Premier: No, he did not. You are mixing things up hopelessly.

Mr. HEITMANN: I refer to payments held over beyond the end of the financial year.

The Premier: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Scaddan: The Auditor General reported on it.

The Premier: The Auditor General reported on the last Treasurer every year.

Mr. HEITMANN: The scheme of the present Government for reducing the deficit is original. In execution, I presume, of their contract with the third party in this House, they reduced railway freights immediately on assuming office. They also abolished the terminal charges. In the latter action I entirely concur. I have always held the opinion that the terminal charges were unfair. A settler or miner who happens to live on a railway line deemed to be of a certain class should not, for that reason, be called on to pay additional taxation in the way of higher railway freights. As regards the fertiliser freights, however, the Government have reduced them to considerably below the cost of carriage, and are asking the rest of the community to make up the loss through the imposition of higher freight charges and fares. I agree with the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) that if any industry is to be granted a bounty, it should be done through the Treasury. There is no reason why the Commissioner of Railways should carry goods freight free or at under cost by way of assisting the farming industry.

Mr. SMITH: The Commissioner of Railways is carrying members of Parliament free.

Mr. HEITMANN: That is worthy of the hon. member who interjected. The hon. member might almost as well refer to the fact that members of Parliament use the telephones in this building to ring up their homes without putting twopence in the box. Instead of assisting an industry through the Railway Department, we should set aside for it a specified amount, so that we would know exactly what the Railway Department is earning and exactly what assistance is being granted to any industry. In regard to the farming industry generally, I am not going to refer to that which has been referred to on several occasions to-night, namely, the difficult position, so far as the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board are concerned.

Mr. Collier: They have some particularly elaborate establishments now.

Mr. HEITMANN: Elaborate is not the name for it. We were told they were very extravagant previous to the present Government coming into office, but the expenditure has gone up in the Industries Assistance Board alone by a good many thousands of pounds. I listened with a good deal of impatience the other night to the remarks of the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) in regard to the farming industry. I think he was most unwise in decrying that industry. He made the statement that this was never going to be a farming country, or words to that effect. If this country is not going to be an agricultural country, it is not going to be anything at all. One can see the other industries going down steadily while the secondary industries are not yet ready. It will be a long time yet before the population is sufficiently large in Western Australia to cope with the secondary industries. If the country is going to be anything at all, it must be that through the farming industry. In the early part of their reign members of the Government mentioned that they were in favour of bulk handling, and led some of the farmers to believe that bulk handling would be an accomplished fact. They must have known that they had no finances and were not likely to have any for years to come. If there was a million or two to spare

to-day for bulk handling I would put that money into existing farms in order that the occupants might be able to farm properly on mixed lines. The present system of depending only on wheat is, I think, a bad one and the sooner that farmers recognise that the better it will be for the community.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: They recognise it, but cannot help themselves.

Mr. HEITMANN: They have not recognised it fully. There are many farmers in the country who could have gone in for mixed farming on a small scale.

Mr. Bolton: They are wheat growers.

Mr. HEITMANN: I have not been able to discover the difference between farming and wheat growing. However, let us call them agriculturists. It is almost a waste of time for hundreds of farmers to do nothing else but depend on wheat. If the Government can adopt some scheme for providing farmers with a few head of stock to begin with they would be doing more for the country than to bring in a scheme for the bulk handling of wheat. The proposals of the Government to raise extra revenue seem to be disturbing the public generally. I am of opinion that at all events not every one of measures will be placed on the statute-book. I am prepared to support some of them, although I believe they are not as sound as taxation measures ought to be. With respect to the totalisator tax, this was brought forward simultaneously with the measure to do away with the bookmaker, and, as usual, the Premier seems to jump before he looks closely, and is now apparently going to allow the bookmaker to continue. We have the stamp tax at which no one will cavil very much. That in itself is not very fair, inasmuch as some people are conducting businesses out of which they will be called upon to pay considerably more than others. At the present time these are only making a bare living. It is not altogether sound, but has been adopted in all parts of the world. I am prepared to support an increased dividend tax if the income tax is also increased. I am not prepared to say that because a company is in a position of declaring dividends it should be singled out for special taxation. I am prepared to support the land and income tax, but it appears to be based on a basis different from the present one.

The idea which has come from the Government that they should increase the tax on the man with £200 a year 2d. in the pound, whilst they put the same tax on the man with £1,000 a year, is in my opinion not palatable to the majority of members; neither is it palatable to the country. This is a time when we may all expect that those people who are receiving large incomes should not object to paying a large amount in order to make up the leeway in our finances. It has been suggested that there should be a select committee or a finance committee to deal with the finances. It is not a new proposal, although new as applied to finances alone. The difficulty of the Premier appears to me to be that he cannot get members on his own side to accept the proposals he has laid before the House.

Mr. Munsie: That is the fly in the ointment.

Mr. HEITMANN: Nor will he be able to get the members of the Opposition to support all the measures he is bringing forward. The Opposition 12 months ago, when introducing fresh taxation measures, said that they realised that fresh taxation was necessary. They had realised that all along. They say to-day that fresh taxation is necessary, but the trouble is that we cannot arrive at what is equitable in the way of taxation. The suggestion is made, therefore in order to get over the difficulties surrounding party politics that a committee should be formed to go into these questions.

Mr. Harrison: A very wise thing, too.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am not prepared to hand over to it—

Mr. Smith: Your leader offered to.

Mr. Munsie: He did nothing of the kind. Word twisting again.

Mr. Smith: What did that offer mean?

Mr. Scaddan: Read *Hansard*.

Mr. HEITMANN: Financial questions, so far as the State is concerned, should be placed above party and party seems to be the only difficulty in the way. I suggest that the Government should place the whole of their taxation proposals on the Table of the House and give members of their party a free hand. Let the whole House discuss them from a non-party standpoint. If that was done it would be found that on some of the

proposals members would be crossing over from one side or the other.

Mr. Smith: Will you guarantee that your party has a free hand.

Mr. HEITMANN: This party has an absolutely free hand. The Premier has a very simple solution to the problem surrounding party politics. Let him bring in his financial proposals, and let the House deal with them, each member free, and we must of necessity have the best measures according to the desires and abilities of the different members of the Chamber.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: That would settle the taxation proposals.

Mr. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.55]: I would not have spoken to-night if it had not been for the actions of the Treasurer in introducing his Estimates. It is all very well that at this time we should endeavour to get rid of our financial obligations, and endeavour to place them on the shoulders of other people. For five years it has been driven in upon the public of Western Australia that this party, when on the Treasury benches, was continually endeavouring to conduct the finances of the State, but doing so in a wrong manner. The Premier in introducing his Budget could not get away from that statement, and he again desired to lead the people to believe that the position in which he was placed that evening was due to something which he had done. So it goes on continually. The result of this was that the leader of the Opposition took the Treasurer to task for introducing extreme party methods in delivering his Budget.

The Premier: Have you read it? It is a most mild utterance.

Mr. ANGWIN: Yes, there is nothing in it. Some one formed the conclusion that the leader of the Opposition had offered to put the Premier on the right path.

Mr. Scaddan: I am prepared to do that at any time.

Mr. ANGWIN: The suggestion came from the leader of the Country party. The position was that the Premier, realising that he and his crew were incapable of putting the country right, immediately invited other members to put the finances in order. Just fancy the ex-Treasurer, a man who was said

to be incapable, who was bringing Western Australia to ruin, who was responsible for a column and a half in the *Sunday Times* every week in connection with the "Gone a Million Club," being asked to pull the country round, to put the present Ministry into the right path, and to help them in their financial proposals. They are unable to help themselves in spite of the wonderful business acumen about which they have preached to the country for so many years. It is worth while repeating, after what we have read in the Press, and after what has been said by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), what the leader of the Opposition said when speaking to the Budget speech. He sympathised with the Treasurer over the position in which he was placed, and said—

At the same time I must express regret that he made the undertaking a hard one for himself by finding a difficulty in not removing himself as Treasurer of the State from the position of leader of the party, and thus discussing the finances of the State—which in my opinion at all events require discussing from a non-party standpoint perhaps more than anything else requires such discussion.

Then again he said—

The very first paragraph of the hon. gentleman's speech was more concerned with belittling his political opponents and decrying them than it was concerned with handling the finances of the State from the point of view of the best advantage of the State The Treasurer has my sympathy, and I only wish to heaven that the hon. gentleman may learn the lesson that the finances of the State are a matter which affect him, not only when he is on the Treasury benches, but also when he is in Opposition.

That is the statement of the leader of the Opposition in regard to finances. He disagrees with the action of the Treasurer in belittling those who have lately gone out of office in decrying them in the manner he had done, and in putting before the country and the House a statement which did not bear any close scrutiny, particularly in dealing with the amount of £93,000, which he said should have been paid last year and in-

cluded in the expenditure for the year. There is a possibility of that having been left out, at the same time the Treasurer did not, to counteract the effect of that, point out the large sums which are due to the Treasurer against any amounts outstanding. They looked through the whole of the accounts from A to Z and appointed a Committee and tried to set aside the decision of Parliament in regard to the expenditure of £15,000. The Committee, of course, refused to do that. What is the position of the trading concerns? We find that moneys are owing to the sawmills to the extent of £9,519, the brickworks £599, the quarries £304, and the implement works £67,666. These were moneys outstanding on the 30th June. The amount owing to State steamers was £15,000, making a total amount of debts owing to the State from these five concerns of £92,088. That is after allowing for all amounts owing to creditors and for bad and doubtful debts. The net amount which it is anticipated the Treasurer will get from these concerns will help to balance the amounts which he says were left out of the expenditure last year. In addition to these amounts we find we have stores and stocks of the value of £156,635 at the sawmills, £2,055 at the quarries, £2,139 at the brickworks, £72,631 at the implement works, a total of £233,460, so that we have this considerable sum of money representing an asset, and all that the Government can find as having been left out is £93,000. Of course the Premier this year will find that a large portion of this money will be of some benefit to him in helping him to square his finances.

The Minister for Works: All that money had to be found to provide the stores.

Mr. ANGWIN: That money was found out of revenue and it was paid before the close of the financial year. The Treasurer did not give the off-set. This is only dealing with the trading concerns. If we take all accounts it is probable that we will find another £100,000 or £200,000. For instance if the farmers paid their debts, the deficit would be considerably reduced, and things would not look so black.

The Minister for Works: Do you say that all that money is there in stores?

Mr. ANGWIN: I do. The estimate in regard to the timber concerns is a very conservative one and in connection with the implement works the stores are all comparatively new.

Mr. Scaddan: It is in the balance sheet.

Mr. ANGWIN: Yes, less allowance for bad and doubtful debts.

The Minister for Works: My mouth is tied because I want to sell these works.

Mr. ANGWIN: The hon. member would not be allowed to sell them.

The Minister for Works: That is your opinion.

Mr. Thomson: Move a motion of no-confidence.

Mr. ANGWIN: It might come quicker than the hon. member thinks.

The Minister for Works: You cannot stop me selling them; you try, anyhow.

Mr. ANGWIN: A good deal has been said about the proposed taxation which has been placed before hon. members almost simultaneously with the Budget. We cannot help going back to consider the statement of the Premier when leader of the Opposition in regard to the question of taxation. In 1915, in dealing with taxation measures then before the House the present Premier said—

So far as I am concerned, I am not in favour of imposing increased taxation until such time as the Government has shown some strong determination to exercise that due economy which the country is entitled to expect at their hands.

How has that economy been shown by the present Government? He went on to say—

Economy must be exercised. That has been laid down as a fundamental policy, not only of the Liberal party, but also of my friends opposite.

Yet if we analyse the Estimates at the present time we will find that there is an increase of over £15,000 for clerical work alone.

The Minister for Works: What department is that in?

Mr. ANGWIN: Right through the Estimates. I notice that a new system has been introduced in regard to the preparation of the Estimates. Hon. members are aware that a number of our permanent officers have enlisted, and others have been appointed to take their places temporarily. If we look at the Estimates, we will see that there have

been reductions; but if we follow the pages down, we find that temporary officials have been appointed and a decrease of £200 may be shown on a particular vote, while an increase of £500 is shown on another for similar work. If we were wasting money previously, what are the present Government doing to-day? There are many votes that require a close scrutiny. Why should the University vote be increased? This increase has been brought about in an indirect way and instead of the vote being £13,500, we find that there is a separate vote for the payment of the professors. Nothing whatever has been done by the present Government in the way of bringing about economies.

Mr. Scaddan: Was it economy to shift the Education department?

Mr. ANGWIN: The Public Works vote has been increased to pay additional rents. In fact, everything that the present Government have done since they came into office has brought about an increased expenditure. So far as the Industries Assistance Board are concerned, we were told that owing to the change which had been made, there would be an economy in administration. Yet, looking at the Estimates we find there is an increase in the expenditure of £5,000. The farmers will have to pay that. There is a possibility of the Legislative Council making provision for this money to be taken out of the pool. Can this be called economy? In regard to the tramway system, the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) has been the chief advocate in this Chamber for a reduction in the fares and the introduction of penny sections. If hon. members refer to the Railway report dealing with the Perth tramways, they will find that no allowance has been made for depreciation or sinking fund. I am of the opinion that it might be a good thing for the country if the City Council took over the trams, but if they knew the exact position they would not be quite so inclined to take them over. We find that there was a profit last year after paying interest, but if they paid fair interest and depreciation and sinking fund, there would have been a loss of something over £20,000. If the Perth trams had to pay as the Fremantle trams do depreciation and sinking fund, they

would certainly have shown a loss to that extent.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: How do the Perth maintenance charges compare with those of Fremantle?

Mr. ANGWIN: Those of Fremantle are considerably lower.

Mr. Smith: The company made a bigger profit and gave a better service.

Mr. ANGWIN: The working expenses per car mile in Perth amount to 12.14d., and those of Fremantle 11.772d. The working expenses plus interest per car mile in Perth were 15.71d. and Fremantle 13.425d. While the working expenses were much higher in Perth, their takings were also much higher. The average passenger fare per car mile in Perth was 2.52d., while at Fremantle it was 1.699d. It appears to me that the costs in connection with the Perth tramways are too high. There is no less a sum than £7,345 paid for superintendence, and I am inclined to think that a good portion of that goes to the Railway Department, and there is a possibility of the Railway Department taking some credit for what the tramways should have. Take the Loco. Department, and it will be found there that superintendence is fairly considerable. And so it goes, right through the whole of the tramway returns. There is no doubt, if the Perth trams had to pay the same as any other company they would have shown a loss this year of close on £25,000. During the debate I have been twitted with being a pessimist in regard to immigration. I think the anticipation placed before the country by the Colonial Secretary is one of those statements which have been made by him without any consideration whatever. The Colonial Secretary is given to making statements which rarely bear any fruit. It is estimated that at the close of the war we are to bring in some 25,000 immigrants per annum. In 1912-13, when we had the maximum number of immigrants coming to the State, the New South Wales and Victorian Governments joined forces for the purpose of putting into effect a large immigration policy. Immediately following on this the shipping companies raised their fares £2 per head. The Governments referred to booked in London several thousand berths for immigrants. Unfortunately they could not get

the immigrants and, except for those which we in Western Australia took from them, they had to pay for the empty berths. At that time there was a movement in England against emigration, and it was held that England could not afford to lose her population to Australia. In 1914 the then Liberal Government in the Commonwealth Parliament provided assistance for the States to the extent of £250,000 to enable them to increase the number of their immigrants, the assistance to be granted on the increase of the past three years. Soon realising the difficulty of getting immigrants from the British Isles, Mr. Cook sent an officer to Europe, to the end that he might advise the State Governments on the policy of getting the increased immigration from the Continent. When the report was received it was found that the officer favoured bringing immigrants from Germany. Fortunately the Agent General in London turned down the proposition, and it was not carried into effect. Having regard to the large number of men lost in the war, if England could not afford to lose her population prior to the war, how will it now be possible for her to build up her industries again, recover her trade throughout the world, and at the same time assist the Commonwealth in regard to immigration?

Mr. Scaddan: It is proposed to assist merely to the extent that if people desire to leave England, they should be advised to go to one or another of the outposts of Empire.

Mr. ANGWIN: Yes, but every effort will be used to keep her population at home, rather than assist any of the States of the Commonwealth. I do not see any possibility of getting British immigration here after the close of the war, although there is, I am informed, a possibility of our securing a large number of women and children. Of course, in the long run, the children will be to us of even greater value than adults, but this policy of immigration will require a large amount of money, because it will be necessary to finance those women and children until the children shall have attained an age at which they can maintain themselves. It is all very well to say, "We are going to provide for 25,000 immigrants a year," but

I am confident there is no possibility whatever of our getting one-third of that number.

Mr. Scaddan: The authorities at Home will not tolerate our trying to attract British immigrants here.

Mr. ANGWIN: There is one other subject, namely, the Fremantle Harbour Trust. If any Government have ever placed an insult on any body of men, the present Government have mortified the members of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. For the past five years the Engineer-in-Chief has occupied the post of chairman of the Trust. His duties called him to Fremantle once or twice a week. He has been the engineer for the Harbour Trust almost since its inception, and, in consequence, he knows the requirements of the harbour perfectly. No better man could have been found for the post of chairman than the present Engineer-in-Chief. Mr. Thompson's one aim has been the best interests of the State, the best means of securing necessary harbour improvements at the lowest possible cost. He has carried out his duties faithfully and well. Yet immediately the Government came into power they found that, in accordance with their principles, it was necessary to appoint some of their friends to positions on the Trust. They have virtually dismissed two Government officers from the Trust. It is all very well to say that they asked for their resignations, but it is known that at the same time the Government held pistols to the heads of those officers. The second official was the Chief Harbour Master, who probably would have resigned on the score of ill-health. However, the Engineer-in-Chief was literally compelled to resign.

Mr. Scaddan: Spoils to the victors.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Government did not stop at that. They appointed to the Trust two men whose interests clash with those of the Trust, because both are representatives of shipping companies, and therefore are of the very class which the Trust was appointed to watch. And of these two men the Government have appointed one chairman over the heads of three members of the board of four or five years' standing. It is the greatest insult any body of men could offer to another and I am surprised to think

that even the present Government should have been guilty of such an action. The main object of the Fremantle Harbour Trust has always been the best welfare of the harbour. With them individuals had no consideration whatever, at least not as individuals. Everything was dealt with fairly. Yet for their good services these men have been insulted. Of course, after all the insult was directed, not so much at them as at us, who put them there. The officials were doing good work, but the late Government appointed them, and so they had to be removed. In this respect the action of the Government has been a discredit to Western Australia, and at the first opportunity I will serve the Government the same trick, by using my vote to put them out of office.

General debate concluded; Votes and items discussed as follow:—

Vote — *His Excellency the Governor* £1,555:

Mr. COLLIER: The time has arrived to raise the question of the appointment of Governors from the Old Country. The present Governor is due for retirement in March or April, so any remarks I may make will not apply to him. A considerable section of the people hold that there should be a change in the method of the appointment of our Governors, and that the Government ought to make representations to the Home authorities that an Australian should be appointed to the position. Apart altogether from the economical aspect, I think Australians should no longer be debarred from filling this post. Surely if Australians are capable of holding the highest positions in this and other countries, and having regard to the reputation Australians have made throughout the world, it can no longer be contended that Australians are not fit to occupy the post of Governor of an Australian State. It is an absolute insult to the people of Australia. I do not say that Australians alone should be appointed, but I do say that the embargo now placed on Australians should be removed.

The Premier: Is there any embargo on Australians?

Mr. COLLIER: There is an embargo somewhere and somehow. I do not say that the appointment should be confined abso-

lutely to Australians, but that Australians should have an equal opportunity of filling the post with men from the Old Country.

Mr. Scaddan: How many Australians have been appointed Governors in any of the British possessions?

The Premier: None that I know of.

Mr. COLLIER: I say the time has arrived when a change should be made. I do not wish to specifically mention any names, but names will readily suggest themselves to one's mind. There are in Australia a number of men who would fill this post with honour to the State and credit to themselves. I do not know whether it is contemplated by the Home authorities to make an appointment immediately the present Governor leaves the State, or whether the position will be filled for a time by the Lieutenant-Governor. The time is opportune for the Government to renew the request made by the late Government for the appointment of an Australian. That request was refused on grounds which I believe are known to hon. members. It was contended by the Home authorities that until such time as the whole of the States asked for the change and it could be shown to be a request backed up by a general desire of the people of Australia, the Imperial authorities were not prepared to make any alteration in the method of appointment. It is only by hammering at the door now locked to us that we may eventually succeed in having this change effected. No harm will come from the request being renewed. There is also another aspect of this question, namely, the cost. Last year several members of this House expressed a strong desire that economy should be effected so far as this division is concerned. Regarding the salary of the Governor, this House is not in a position to take any action, the salary being fixed by a special Act at £4,000 a year. But the total cost of the upkeep of Government house, including the salary of the Governor, amounts to £5,905 a year. That is an amount which could well be reduced. I do not say that if the appointment were given to some Australian he should be asked to accept a less salary than is now paid to the present occupant of the office, and has been paid to past Governors; but I do be-

lieve that men could be secured to fill this position at a much lower salary than £4,000 a year. If there was ever a time when we should endeavour to effect economies it is now. We could get this service performed, I believe, for a less sum than it is costing us at present. I am not one of those who would support cutting down the item for the upkeep of the grounds, because those grounds are a beauty spot, and it would be unwise policy and against reason to take away the small sum provided for upkeep and allow the grounds to go to ruin. At the same time economies can be effected there. I go so far as to say there are a number of men in the Old Country, and I believe men in Australia as well, of independent means who would fill the position without salary and regard it as an honour—though I am not advocating that course. I believe it is a practice that most of those persons receiving honours in the Old Country have to pay for them in accordance with the degree or importance of their elevation, and they pay a big price for it. I have no doubt our old friend, Mr. D. Doofette, paid a handsome sum to obtain the title which was recently bestowed on him. There are Australian officers of high standing who have distinguished themselves on the battle-fields of Europe, distinguished themselves, as I said before, in the eyes of the world, who might well receive this appointment, rather than that it should go to officers of military rank who have not so distinguished themselves, probably because of lack of opportunity to do so. If these appointments are in the future to be given to military men I trust it will be to men who have proved themselves and not to what might be termed the feather-bed class of soldier. Having in mind that no appointment will be made for some time at least, that the position will be occupied by the Lieutenant-Governor for probably six months, there should be an opportunity for the Government of consulting with the Imperial authorities and securing the appointment of one of our own people who has distinguished himself and has returned from the battle-fields of Europe.

The PREMIER: I am in accord with the principle advocated by the hon. member. The present Governor's time will not expire

until March next, and so far as the Government is concerned we are quite satisfied to carry on with the Lieut.-Governor, at any rate for the period of the war.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*Executive Council*, £45; *Legislative Council*, £969; *Legislative Assembly*, £1,775; *Joint House Committee*, £3,923; *Joint Printing Committee*, £4,856; *Joint Library Committee*, £400—agreed to.

Vote—*Premier's Office*, £1,331:

Item 1, Secretary to Premier, £550.

Mr. TAYLOR: This item has been increased by £50, and the Committee is informed that this amount was previously paid by the Railway Department. Presumably that payment was made in respect of work done for the Railway Department.

The PREMIER: The secretary to the Premier has always received £550, but £50 of the amount has previously been debited to the Railway vote.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was not shown on the Estimates last year.

The PREMIER: It was shown on the Railway vote. The leader of the Opposition when Premier decided to transfer the item to the Premier's vote. I do not know why it was previously on the Railway vote; it should always have been debited to the Premier's Office vote. It would be an injustice to make any reduction.

Mr. SCADDAN: This officer received this payment first when Mr. Gregory was Minister for Railways, and he received it also when Mr. Collier was Minister.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Treasury*, £12,126:

Item, Temporary Clerical and other Assistance, £1,770.

Mr. ANGWIN: Why does this item show an increase of £736?

The PREMIER: Although this item is increased, there is on the vote a gross decrease of £931. The increase in this item is necessitated by the engagement of temporary clerks to fill the places of officers who have gone to the Front. Most of the net increase is due to the abolition of the 7.89 per cent. reduction. This was abolished before the present Government took office.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: Unless great care is exercised, the fact of officers enlisting will

be used as an argument for largely increasing the temporary assistance item. The only method by which economy can be secured is to insist that the positions of officers who enlist shall be either not filled at all, or else filled by officers not fully employed in other departments. Instructions to this effect were issued by the previous Government. From this item it appears that to supply the places of enlisted officials whose salaries totalled £600, temporary labour is to be employed at a cost of £736. We all hope that such an opportunity for economising as the present opportunity will never occur again, but nevertheless let us seize the opportunity. Under the Public Service Act a Minister cannot economise as he would desire. The Minister has his view of economising, the permanent head has another view, and the Public Service Commissioner has still another. One may point out to the Public Service Commissioner that an officer is not required, that the work he does is unnecessary, that he is an indifferent officer; and yet the Public Service Commissioner will reply that unless a charge of incompetency can be established against the officer one cannot shift him. In my term of office I succeeded in removing various officers whom I considered unsatisfactory or mere drones; but it was like playing a game of chess to get their services dispensed with.

The PREMIER: Instructions similar to those mentioned by the member for Guildford have been issued by the present Government, who, however, have held office for only four or five months—not a long time in which to show an improvement.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: But the Treasury ought to set a good example.

The PREMIER: The Treasury is a very much under-manned department.

Mr. SCADDAN: Economy is not likely to be effected in the Treasury until that department has up-to-date offices instead of the present rabbit warren. The building of the new offices which have been so long proposed will represent a heavy capital charge, but, by doing away with rented offices and providing better conveniences for work, will result in substantial economies. Under present conditions of working, the Treasury officials do not get a chance.

The Minister for Works: We cannot do much until we get the post office site.

Mr. SCADDAN: That is true. Many of the temporary clerks, however, are needed, owing to the manner in which the work is now scattered about. Private companies, even in these times, are building offices which will permit of all the employees being under the manager's eye. The one department which should not be under-manned is the Treasury, so that it may maintain control over the other departments.

Mr. ANGWIN: My objection is not to having the Treasury fully manned, but to an increase being shown on this year's Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Audit*, £8,986:

Item, Chief Inspector £456.

Mr. SCADDAN: The chief inspector assists in compiling the Auditor General's report to Parliament. Why has not that report been presented to Parliament as expeditiously on this occasion as in the past? Previously the report has been supplied in two sections, in order to give members the advantage of the Auditor General's views during the discussion of the Estimates. That is a desirable practice which ought not to be dropped. I am nervous that the Auditor General may next year not bring down his report in time for members to discuss the Estimates, and say by way of excuse that he did not do it the year before. Why has he not done as he did on previous occasions?

The Minister for Works: Did you not have the Auditor General's report a fortnight ago?

Mr. Taylor: That was last year's.

Mr. SCADDAN: The report which has been handed round is for the year 1914-15. The report of the Auditor General which was distributed to members a fortnight ago was presented in sections to the Committee when members were considering the Estimates last year. Why has not the Auditor General presented his report in sections on this occasion?

The PREMIER: I am not in a position to reply to the questions of the leader of the Opposition. I think the report ought to be available. The final portion of the previous year's report was only laid on the Table a fortnight ago. I want the Auditor

General's report down at the earliest possible moment, and agree with the leader of the Opposition that he ought to be shaken up in regard to it. I will have inquiries made and will report to the House when it is available.

Item, Clerks, £4,411:

Mr. ANGWIN: There appears to be an increase of £365 for temporary clerical and other assistance. Surely no more assistance is required that was required last year. For officers temporarily brought to the department in lieu of those absent with the Expeditionary Forces there is an increase allowed of £504.

The PREMIER: Statutory increases are provided for under these items. There are the increases under the regulations which the previous Government insisted on passing. The item, temporary clerical and other assistance shows an increase of £365, and these are persons employed in lieu of officers on leave.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: It is hard to follow the Treasurer. We do not find any advantage taken of the opportunity to economise. The Treasurer said that part of the increase was due to statutory increases, but the statutory increases are part and parcel of the payment of this year, and consequently are added to the officers' salary. There are no statutory increases for officers temporarily attached. The increased expenditure amounts to £200 even allowing for the statutory increases. The permanent heads are not assisting this Government any more than they assisted the previous Government in bringing about economy. It is impossible to get the permanent heads of departments and the Public Service Commissioner to realise that this is a glorious opportunity for economy and reorganisation in the departments. We cannot overcome the difficulties when we are hampered by the Public Service Act. It is not a question of amending the Act but of repealing it altogether in order to give Ministers an opportunity of economising.

Item, Incidental, including postage, stationery, printing, travelling, etc., £707.

Mr. ANGWIN: Will the Treasurer inform me why there is an increase of £242 here?

The PREMIER: The sum of £888 was provided in last year's Estimates, but the expenditure was only £465. The item £707 is to cover certain expenditure which was incurred last year and that had not been paid, and to cover certain overtime which has to be paid now owing to the repeal of the suspension of the overtime payment made by the previous Administration.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: Will you promise to keep the same tight rein that your predecessor kept?

The PREMIER: We will keep a tighter rein.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: You are increasing the civil service.

The PREMIER: There has been a reduction of nine officers in this branch and, of course, temporary officers will be appointed to fill the places.

Mr. SCADDAN: The statement of the Treasurer shows a condition of affairs in the Auditor General's office that should not be tolerated by Parliament. Here we have a statement by the Auditor General that he did not pay accounts that were due, and for which money was available, and then he comes to Parliament and asks us to consider seriously recommendations he makes in regard to dealing with departments not complying strictly with the law. The Premier knows that once an amount under "Incidental" is voted, the Minister has not any control over it at all, and the officials will deliberately spend every penny of it, for fear that in the following year it might be cut down. The Auditor General has certainly set a bad example by not paying accounts. He should certainly set an example in the direction of effecting economy. If he only required £465 last year, why should he ask for £707 this year?

The Premier: He has to pay travelling expenses and some accounts that were unpaid last year.

Mr. SCADDAN: If the Auditor General is going to practice such methods, how can he complain about other departments?

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Compassionate Allowances*, £4,110:

Mr. HEITMANN: I would like to ask the Premier to explain why two such large items appear in the cases of Mrs. Johnston and Mrs. Montgomery.

The PREMIER: In each case the amount is the cash equivalent of a fortnight's pay in every year that the officers in question were in the service. This is in accordance with the Public Service regulations.

Mr. HUDSON: It is really not a compassionate allowance?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. A. A. WILSON: Then it should not appear under "Compassionate Allowances."

The PREMIER: It is the only vote under which such amounts can appear.

Mr. HEITMANN: I had in my mind another case which might have received the consideration of the Government. I refer to the widow of the late Warden Troy. Of course I am not saying that the late warden was unjustly dealt with. He served the State for a period of 40 years and there was not so much as a blemish on his record of service.

Mr. SCADDAN: He was given a pension; he could not get both.

Mr. HEITMANN: I admit that he had the opportunity of accepting a lump sum, but he had an idea of what was his duty and, as he was alive at the time, he felt that he had no right to accept a large sum of money. I would suggest that, as he left his widow poorly off, the Government might show some consideration to her. If we make a practice of recognising long service we should make that practice general.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Government Motor Car Service, £2,125:*

Item, Wages and Overtime, £600.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: From what hon. members opposite said last year I expected this division would have been struck out. We were told the garage should be shut up and the cars disposed of. The members of the present Government are using the cars just as much as did their predecessors. The Attorney General boasted that he travelled in his own car.

The Attorney General: Did you ever travel anywhere in your own car?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We heard a lot of criticism about these cars, yet they are still provided for on the Estimates.

Mr. COLLIER: The sum set apart for this vote surprises me exceedingly, because I have a lively recollection of the attitude of

hon. members opposite when dealing with it last year. An attack in a body was made on this vote, and it was alleged that the then Government had been guilty of gross extravagance in respect of motor cars.

The Attorney General: So you were.

Mr. COLLIER: Then we have this Government of reform proposing to spend the same sum.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): No, the vote has been reduced.

Mr. COLLIER: Yes, on paper. The only real reduction is one of £88 shown in the first item. We were advised last year to dispose of the cars.

The Premier: No.

Mr. COLLIER: The allegations made included the charge that Ministers were expensively rushing about the country in Government cars.

The Premier: Having joy rides.

Mr. COLLIER: Even if we indulged in joy rides we showed better financial results than the Government are anticipating this year. I propose to recall some of the views expressed by hon. members opposite last year when dealing with this vote. Here is an extract from *Hansard*, page 1417—

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The vote is altogether too big. It would be better instead of agreeing to the vote in its present form to discharge it from the Estimates, and depend entirely on hired cars.

The Minister for Mines: It is an expensive thing to hire cars.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is very much cheaper than the present system. I suggest that the member for Irwin should withdraw his amendment, and I will then move for a further reduction. It would be much better to have fewer cars on hand than are actually needed for the other officers, and the Government would find themselves better off at the end of the year if they did reduce the number. Fully 90 per cent. of the vote is in connection with cars that are being run about the City.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then it must be fully 50 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: It is not even that.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: I would suggest that we reduce item 2 (general expenses, etc., including hire of cars), leaving £1,000 for running expenses and £500 for wages. If we kept one car and hired others as they were required it would be much cheaper.

The hon. member has not raised a protest against the fact that none of the cars have been disposed of. Then the member for West Perth (Mr. Allen) had this to say—

I consider that the Government motor car service is excessive, and that if there is one item on which economy should be practised it is this one.

Yet, for the last quarter of an hour the hon. member has been trying to prevent me from urging on the Committee the necessity for reducing the item. And they urged upon the Committee the necessity for reducing the Vote. Then came the leader of the Country party, who said—

The Government motor car service is being run in an extravagant manner. A big saving could be easily effected. When there is a central garage for these cars, I fail to understand how it is this huge expenditure is incurred. I shall vote for a reduction of the item.

And so on. I hope he will be prepared to vote for a reduction of the item this year. The Attorney General enlarged on the matter and went into figures very minutely in order to show the cost of running these cars by the late Government was extremely excessive. The only difference between the Estimates this year and last is that this year they show an increase in every division. After going into figures to show the excessive cost the Attorney General said—

I cannot help thinking without any wish of levelling undue criticism at the Government that if the services of a man who knew the motor business were secured to go thoroughly into this matter, it would save the Government at least £1,000 a year.

If the hon. member could make a proportionate saving throughout the rest of the Estimates, it would wipe out the whole of the deficit without any taxation—

I cannot help saying that it is absolutely ridiculous that three cars should cost £2,700 per annum. There can be no

car belonging to a private person in Australia which can be costing so much for maintenance as the three Government cars.

They are still costing the same under the present Ministry—

And I think nothing will be lost of the use of these cars if the Vote be cut down as suggested.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): And it was cut down.

Mr. COLLIER: I claim the votes of all those hon. members I have mentioned in favour of a reduction of this vote. It must be remembered, too, that now some Ministers own their own motor cars, which will be a justification for a still further reduction of this item as against what was possible last year.

The Attorney General: We cut it down £5 per week, you know.

Mr. COLLIER: Then the member for North Perth joined in the chorus.

Mr. Smith: You are wasting time.

Mr. COLLIER: Do not suppose I am doing this for fun. I think in view of the repeated statements by Ministers in this House, and by the newspapers and citizens outside the House—

The Minister for Works: You do not take any notice of newspapers, do you?

Mr. COLLIER: As to the necessity for economy I think it is pertinent to the question that I show where economy can be effected, particularly in regard to what is a luxury. If I can show on the authority of present Ministers that we can make a saving of £1,000 a year and follow that up with a like saving in other departments, then the Treasurer will be freed from his troubles and the public will be free from his irritating and annoying taxation proposals. Then the Honorary Minister (Mr. Connolly) said—

Surely the Minister does not expect members to take his specious arguments seriously—

I had made an explanation of the Vote to the Committee and it was in reply to that that Mr. Connolly made the above remark—

He says Ministers and their officers will not go out into the country if the vote is reduced. What happened before we had this central garage?

The Honorary Minister was the most emphatic of the lot.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): I was speaking about the system.

Mr. COLLIER: The same system obtains to-day. The only alteration made is in regard to the uniform of the driver. The present Government have given them new uniforms. I want to know whether those hon. members, some of whom were playing to the gallery—

The Minister for Works: You are doing that now, are you not?

Mr. COLLIER: I am not. I am justified in comparing the Liberals' attitude of last year. It is one of those subjects which appeal to the public when it is given a fair amount of space in the newspapers, that Labour Ministers who hitherto knew nothing about the comforts of motor cars, when placed in a position of enjoying a ride at the Government's expense were flying all over the country in the Government cars.

Mr. Allen: So you were.

Mr. COLLIER: The hon. member should be ashamed to say that seeing that he sits silent this year when precisely the same expenditure is proposed.

Mr. Allen: Do not worry; I shall have a go at it directly.

Mr. COLLIER: The hon. member's "go" will consist of explanations, excuses, and justification. The fact remains that the amount set down this year for Government motor cars is equal to that expended last year.

Mr. Allen: Then why not cut it down?

Mr. COLLIER: I shall cut it down with the hon. member's help, and if the hon. member is consistent that help will be forthcoming. The apparent decrease of £286 is made up by transfers from other departments. If the amount paid in wages and salaries is to be reduced, it follows that the mileage run this year is not to be increased. Presumably, the charge to other departments is to be increased, thus showing a mere bookkeeping reduction. How otherwise is the extra £212 to be collected from the departments? I observe that the Government in their desire for economy, have proceeded on the principle of reducing the pay of the men who actually do the

work. The only fair and legitimate criticism offered last year from the Liberal side was that of the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith). I propose to attempt to effect a substantial reduction in the item "General Expenses."

The PREMIER: The hon. member (Mr. Collier) has outrageously misstated the position. The late Premier said he put the motor cars under the control of Mr. Shapecott. I do not know a man keener for economy than Mr. Shapecott, or one keener to see that the departments are charged when they utilise the cars. The present Ministry have three cars, just as our predecessors had.

Mr. Scaddan: You work the motor cars until 2 o'clock in the morning.

The PREMIER: Not except in connection with public functions, or when the House sits beyond the time of the last train. The motor cars are now being run under exactly the same conditions as laid down by the late Premier. Last year the Government asked for £2,755, which amount, after a lot of discussion, was reduced to £2,300. That sum the late Ministry found insufficient and they exceeded it to the extent of £181. I propose a reduction of £56, reducing the expenditure to £2,425. But I propose to utilise the cars in earning revenue by doing work for the departments; and I propose to decrease Ministerial trips. In that way I arrive at a total decrease of £286. In 1912-13 nearly £400 was spent on motor cars, though of course there was no recoup from departments.

Mr. Scaddan: There was a new car in that amount.

The PREMIER: The next year the expenditure was £3,800, without recoup. In 1914-15 the expenditure was £3,370, with a recoup of £1,121. In 1915-16 the expenditure was £2,481, with a recoup of £1,713. This year I propose to expend £2,425, or £56 less than last year, and propose to get a recoup of £1,925; thus bringing about a reduction of a little over £200. As leader of the Opposition I never had the use of the motor cars, but now they have come under my control there is all this outcry. Outside of the departmental running of the cars, for which departments would have to pay far more if they hired the cars, there is only an expenditure of £500 all told

for Ministerial use of the cars for distinguished visitors coming to the State, and other purposes. There have never been such careful Estimates, so far as motor cars are concerned, put before the Committee as these. Every line of the Estimates shows a desire to decrease the expenditure.

Mr. SCADDAN: I appreciate the remarks of the Treasurer with regard to Government motor cars. I still hold the view that a person occupying the responsible position of Premier of the State, which entails the management of a bigger business than any other in the State, ought, if he is to work that business fairly, to be provided with a motor car for all purposes. But our friends opposite did not appreciate that fact when the previous Government were in office.

Mr. Allen: We do not appreciate it now.

Mr. SCADDAN: The member for West Perth is a poor old thing if he cannot appreciate the task devolving upon his leader in controlling the State under existing conditions.

Mr. Allen: What about the trip to Augusta?

Mr. SCADDAN: The member for West Perth ought to decline to indulge in the three per cents. in the municipal council chamber if he would follow his arguments to a logical conclusion.

Mr. Allen: We do our work for nothing.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member is well paid for the work he performs then. He gave his services to the municipal council for the purposes of getting a cheap advertisement in order to get into Parliament, and he remains in Parliament still for the purpose of getting that cheap advertisement.

Mr. Allen: I was always awake; I never went to sleep.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member would be rendering good service if he did go to sleep. It is evident that no change has been made and none is proposed so far as the Government motor cars are concerned. I do not see where a change could be made in fairness to the Treasurer, or his colleagues. If the business of the State cannot afford a motor car for the private and official use of the Premier and Treasurer it is a poor old State. It is frequently necessary for the Premier of the State to be able to get out and enjoy a little fresh air for a few hours,

and any hon. member who objects to that has a poor sort of spirit.

Mr. Allen: I will not support it.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member is small enough not to support anything. The State's business is not an auctioneer's business that can be knocked down to anyone and for any person to get 2½ per cent. on the turnover. The attitude adopted by the member for West Perth, and others, is too mean and paltry altogether. It galled him and other hon. members to see Labour men, who had a few years previously walked to their work, being able to ride in a motor car to their offices.

The Attorney General: No one thinks that.

Mr. SCADDAN: Then what was the object of the Opposition last year?

Mr. Collier: Playing to the Press.

Mr. Allen: We wanted to economise then and we want to economise now.

Mr. SCADDAN: There is no room for economy in this particular department, if we are going to consider the time occupied by departmental officers and Ministers in getting about the country. On more than one occasion when we have sent our expert officials in to the country, a request has been made for one of the State cars.

Mr. Allen: And they have not been able to get one.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. Does the hon. member think that by reducing this vote he can get the Treasurer out of his difficulties? There is no doubt about it that the present is the period of motor cars, but our service is nothing in comparison with that of the other States.

Mr. Smith: Is the Government responsible for the supply of petrol? There was a big rise in the price of petrol lately.

The Premier: We have a big stock of it.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Boulder has pointed out that in the Estimates we are reducing wages and overtime by £88, but I take it that while the Government are not reducing the wages of the employees they are reducing the running of the cars, but while they are reducing the car mileage they are increasing the expenditure.

Mr. Smith: Reducing overtime is not reducing the car mileage. We may be paying

a man's overtime and the car may be standing still.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: That does not apply. A fair assumption is that if you are not working a man overtime the cars are not being taken out. While they are reducing the running of the cars, they are increasing the general expenses.

Item, General expenses, etc. (including hire of cars), £1,800.

Mr. COLLIER: I move—

That the item be reduced by £300.

Last year the Committee voted only £1,500, and I think that should be sufficient for this year.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	12
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	10
				—

Ayes.

Mr. Allen	Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munle
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Gardner	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Harrison	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hellmann	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Hickmott	(Teller.)
Mr. Hudson	

Noes.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Thomson
Mr. George	Mr. Veryard
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Iefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Nairn	(Teller.)
Mr. Robinson	

Amendment thus passed.

Vote (as reduced to £2,125) put and passed.

Vote — *Government Savings Bank, £23,139:*

Item, Manager £73.

Mr. SMITH: Has a manager been permanently appointed, and if so, is the salary the same as heretofore?

The PREMIER: Mr. Leach has been appointed acting manager. Mr. Leschen, the manager, is on leave without pay, under

the Public Servants Act. He has not been dismissed. The £73 is a proportion of the salary he was being paid when we compelled him to take leave without pay. The acting manager, I believe, receives, in addition to his ordinary salary, half the difference between his salary and that of the manager.

Mr. SMITH: It is undesirable to have an acting manager in the case of an important institution like the Government Savings Bank.

Item, Temporary Clerical and other assistance, £2,800.

Mr. ANGWIN: I move—

That the item be reduced by £700.

In fixing the proposed reduction at £700, I am allowing for the amount represented by the salaries of absent officers. In this item there is an increase of £1,460. The bank ought to be conducted this year with the same amount of temporary clerical assistance as sufficed last year.

The PREMIER: The hon. member (Mr. Angwin) is taking a wrong view. The carrying of his amendment would destroy a useful and profitable institution. The increase of £1,899 is made up of £880 allowance to the manager on retirement, £380 extra remuneration under the Public Service regulations, £219 representing the 7.89 per cent. reduction, £115 provided for leave to officials who have gone to the front, and £84 for management of a branch recently opened at Collie. As regards the item for temporary clerical assistance, allowance must be made for the compensating decrease in salaries. There is also a branch at the Blackboy Hill Military Camp provided for. Hon. members should view the vote as a whole, and not form their opinions on isolated items. Ever since we got rid of the late manager, the business of the bank has gone on increasing month by month. Undoubtedly the late manager, rightly or wrongly, as the case may be, exercised a bad influence on the business of the bank; the public had an impression that he ought not to be there. As soon as my predecessor gave him six months' leave of absence, the business improved greatly. The bank has about 80,000 to 100,000 accounts.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Has the late manager still the running of the bank?

The PREMIER: No. He has gone from the bank and is not going back to the bank. The item referring to the manager appears on the Estimates in order to allow Parliament to decide whether the man is entitled to consideration for his 20 years service.

Mr. ANGWIN: I have no desire to do anything that will impair the efficiency of the bank, but every penny of the amount for clerical assistance will be spent before the Treasurer knows anything about it. Surely there is no increase in work commensurate with the increase in the item for clerical assistance? If the Treasurer allows his departments to have full swing in regard to temporary officers he will find that all the money provided will be spent, and that officers will be appointed without his knowledge. I see there is a reduction at Fremantle, but I do not know why, because this branch has paid better than any other. I am of opinion that the amount should be reduced.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is quite possible that owing to enlistments nearly the whole of the staff at the central office of the bank consists of temporary hands. I know that 17 young girls have been taken on there in place of men who have gone to the Front. I understand there is not one eligible man left there on the permanent staff.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Boulder Branch, manager, £302.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I would like to hear from the Treasurer why no branch of the bank has been opened at Wagin. I am certain that it would pay its way from the start.

The PREMIER: I will have inquiries made into the matter. It is impossible to answer the hon. member's question off hand.

[Mr. S. Stubbs took the Chair.]

Mr. FOLEY: I desire to congratulate the member for Wagin upon taking the Chair for the first time. An arrangement was entered into between the Savings Bank and the Railway Department for the latter to manage some of the branches of the former in outlying districts, and under this arrangement the Commissioner was to get the whole of the credit placed at the disposal of his

department, while the Savings Bank had the debit. At Gwalia the turnover from the branch is as great as in many other portions of the State, and the work in connection with it is all done by the station-master on a salary of £165 a year. That is no salary to pay to a man occupying such a position in an out-back district. I contend that the Commissioner for Railways ought to be made to disgorge some of the earnings from the branch of the bank and others of the kind, and that this money should go into the pockets of the men who are doing the work. At the Gwalia station there is a greater turnover than there is at West Perth and one man has to do all the work. This particular individual also has to work overtime but does not get any pay for it, although civil servants in the City are paid for their overtime work. It is due to the Railway Department to see that the men who do this work out-back are paid for it. The Savings Bank in the place in question is making good headway and that is just because this officer works during hours when he should not be on duty.

Item, Allowance to Manager on retirement, £880.

Mr. SMITH: I presume this amount is for the late manager Mr. Leschen. I would like to know whether the Government have made any arrangement with Mr. Leschen whereby he will accept this sum, and also how the amount is arrived at. If Mr. Leschen has been dismissed because of any doubt as to his loyalty he should not be given anything at all; he had been well paid by having been given six months leave on full pay. If this sum is allowed we shall have to consider other claims from civil servants who may have been dismissed from the service for similar reasons.

The PREMIER: This item has been placed on the Estimates in order that the Committee may decide as to whether Mr. Leschen is to receive a retiring allowance or not.

Mr. Seaddan: You put it on the Estimates and you are therefore responsible for it.

The PREMIER: I am not going to take any responsibility for it. The position has arisen owing to the leader of the Opposi-

tion's action in retiring Mr. Leschen or granting him leave of absence for six months on full pay. We could not allow that to continue and we took action under the Act which was passed last year.

Mr. Scaddan: We gave him the leave he was entitled to.

[12 o'clock midnight.]

The PREMIER: He was entitled to three months leave and the hon. member gave him six months. The reason given was that Mr. Leschen's presence in the bank was affecting the bank's business. We quite agree that Mr. Leschen must not go back, and after he left, the bank's business recovered, thus showing the justification for the action of the late Government and the further action we took. Mr. Leschen claims that he is not a German born and that only his mother was a German, having been born in Hamburg, and having come to Australia when she was 14 years of age. He states that his grandfather was a Russian Pole and I believe that that is so. Nevertheless Mr. Leschen is of German origin and therefore he came within the four corners of the Act which was passed last year. He has put up a very strong case in a letter which I shall read to the Committee. Mr. Leschen wrote to the Public Service Commissioner as follows:—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th inst. and note with consternation that the Governor in Council has seen fit to require me to take leave of absence for 12 months without pay. That I should be treated in this way after more than 20 years of faithful and loyal service as a civil servant, in addition to my unswerving loyalty to our King and country is beyond my understanding. I fully realise the necessity for the Public Servants Act of 1915 in order that public servants who have shown their want of loyalty might be dealt with: but why apply it to me without just cause or reason? I know that all sorts of sayings and actions attributed to me and my family are given out possibly daily by many malicious, envious, or jealous people. I have never been able to trace a single one to its author which has been repeated to me by friends, further than that it was said by someone in the train

or elsewhere. I indignantly deny every one of these numberless fabrications (they are nothing else). I am also the victim of certain newspapers, one of which (the *Sunday Times*) has systematically misrepresented me directly and indirectly ever since my appointment in 1903 as manager of the bank. The other, the *All British* paper, has made me the chief target for its piles of deliberate malicious lies. As I have been exceptionally unfortunate owing to sickness and deaths in my family (my wife should undergo another operation now), it has been quite impossible for me to save money to carry me over the 12 months of enforced leave. I am therefore, compelled to beg that the Governor-in-Council will make provision to enable my family and myself to live by retiring me under the provisions of the Pensions and Superannuation Act. The departmental files in both the G.P.O. and the Bank will disclose that my record of service has been an excellent one throughout the period of my service. I only ask for that justice which is my birthright as a loyal and natural born British subject.

I have looked through this file and although I can find evidence that certain people thought Mr. Leschen on occasion had been guilty of making unwise remarks in connection with the war, there is no direct evidence to show that he was absolutely disloyal; on the contrary, there is a record of excellent service during the whole of the 20 years he has been connected with the public service of the State. The Public Service Commissioner in his minutes also takes the view that there is no evidence of disloyalty. The claim that Mr. Leschen should have a pension is, I think in the circumstances, one that ought not to be considered. If we were to grant this claim, we would, to some extent, establish the right of other persons of enemy origin to claim pension privileges, which are the gift of the Crown. In this case the pension would amount to £176 per annum, the capital value of which would represent £2,100.

Mr. Scaddan: He is not entitled to a pension.

The PREMIER: He would be if forced to retire. As it is I do not think he has any right to a pension, but I do think we would be justified in giving him the usual retiring allowance, namely, one month's salary for every year of service. We have put this £880 on the Estimates in order that Parliament may decide whether Mr. Leschen is to have it. I have pointed out to him that his best course would be to accept the position and strike out afresh; the proposed retiring allowance would enable him to do that.

Mr. Underwood: He will start out afresh if Germany wins the war.

The PREMIER: He declared he was quite unfit to start afresh, that his health was undermined. No doubt there are in the State scores of persons of partly enemy origin and who are perfectly loyal to Australia, yet suffering merely by reason of their origin. On the other hand, there are scores who are not loyal to Australia, and therefore, they are justly treated. I wish to see the whole public service purged of that class of citizen. We require to keep our country for native born Australian or British subjects.

Mr. Thomas: Would a railway man on 9s. a day get a retiring allowance if dismissed?

The PREMIER: Yes, if he were getting it as salary. I want Parliament to advise in regard to this £880. Personally, I will vote for it. I have made Mr. Leschen clearly understand that the State has no farther need for his services. I did that under the Public Servants Act. If he does not accept this allowance he may have an action against the Government after the close of the war. I have given him to understand that, whatever happens, we cannot, in the interests of the State, entertain any idea of putting him back in his position as manager of the bank, or of finding him employment elsewhere. We can offer him a fair thing by—

Mr. Underwood: One cannot do a fair thing by a traitor.

The PREMIER: I do not know that he is a traitor.

Mr. Underwood: The members of the Workers' Homes Board thought so.

The PREMIER: There was not much in that. The other members of the board would not sit with him because of what he had said in the course of argument.

Mr. Collier: The cause was reflections cast upon his mother, he said, which any man would resent.

The PREMIER: I think, in all the circumstances, the Committee would be wise to pass the item.

Mr. FOLEY: I consider that the item should be struck out. Mr. Leschen's services were dispensed with, not because of any proved disloyalty on his part, but in order to conserve the interests of the bank. The critics of Mr. Leschen would be hard to convince that the payment of this amount was a wise proceeding. The Treasurer has said that Mr. Leschen will have an opportunity, later, before Cabinet.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: If he does not receive this amount.

Mr. FOLEY: After the war, Mr. Leschen's case can be viewed with regard to his loyalty or disloyalty just the same as now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with the member for Leonora that this item should not be passed. Disloyalty has not been proved against Mr. Leschen, but an instinct tells me that he is disloyal to Australia, that he has not acted fairly and squarely by the country of his birth. This feeling on my part is not due to prejudice against Germans. I know numbers of men born in Germany who are first class men. Many a better Australian than Leschen has worked as a navvy, and has suffered injustice. I take no notice whatever of the *All British* or of the *Sunday Times*; but in regard to this particular man my instinct tells me that he is not right. Therefore I oppose the payment of any compensation to him.

Mr. THOMSON: I support the amendment as a matter of principle. A man who has been in receipt of a fair salary from the State for 22 years should not be entitled to compensation upon leaving the service. We have the statement that this man could bring an action against the Government for his dismissal. If that is so then the Public Service Act should be altered. The Government should have the right to dispense with

the services of any man who does not suit them.

Mr. SCADDAN: I know of no case which came under my notice which gave me so much thought, and to which I gave so much consideration as this particular one. It is true that a number of statements were made from time to time concerning Mr. Leschen, particularly from the All British Association, and I had inquiries made concerning them. All I could get was that one person had said something to another, that the rumours had spread about the country, and finally culminated in a letter from the All British Association. As one holding responsibility as a Minister of the Crown I could not accept such statements without proof, and upon such statements do an injustice to a British subject, no matter to what nationality his parents may have belonged. Without further evidence we were unable to act. It is true that a certain complaint was made by a member of the Workers' Elomes Board, of which Mr. Leschen was a member, regarding his attitude, and a pretty definite statement was made concerning his loyalty. Indeed, a member of the board expressed the opinion that he was disloyal. One statement made, which was not denied by Mr. Leschen, was that in an argument which arose on one occasion a member of the board said that every German ought to be shot. Mr. Leschen took exception to that on the ground that his mother was a German and that she could not help it, and that there was no reason why his mother should be shot because she happened to be born in Germany and had come out here. The member of the board who had made the statement said he did not care, and repeated it. That was naturally the cause of a row. Other than this it was merely a matter of suspicion regarding Mr. Leschen. No other statement was made of a matter that was worth while. In the circumstances it was not possible for the board to continue as it then existed, and I asked each member to send in his resignation. One of the old members was appointed chairman of the board, and Mr. Leschen was not reappointed. We later decided that notwithstanding the fact that we could not get any reliable evidence against Mr. Les-

chen, in the interests of the Savings Bank and the State we could no longer tolerate him, with the result that we asked him to take the leave that had accrued to him and so relieved the position for the time being. We then decided that as a new Government were coming into office they would deal with the matter and retire Mr. Leschen permanently. I think some arrangement should be made to retire him permanently and not to leave the matter over until the end of the war. The prejudice against him will continue even after the war is over and he might just as well be told that his services will not be required any longer. Unfortunately for him he happens to be under the suspicions of the public, although a certain section of the Press pursued him long before the outbreak of war. I take exception to the attitude of the Treasurer in placing the item on the Estimates.

The Premier: We could not do otherwise.

Mr. SCADDAN: When the Estimates are framed and submitted to Parliament they should be the result of the matured judgment of members of Cabinet and have been approved by Cabinet, and the Government should take the responsibility of saying, "This is what the Government desire." For the Treasurer to say that the Committee may do as they like with the item is shirking responsibility. I do object to the Treasurer now coming along and saying, "I am not going to take the responsibility." We could not have responsible government on those lines. The Ministry must carry the responsibility of all their actions. Like the member for Pilbara I have an instinct that tells me that there is a division in the Cabinet on this question and that that division has caused the Treasurer to adopt this course.

The Premier: Your instinct is wrong.

Mr. SCADDAN: I accept the hon. member's assurance, but I have the instinct.

The Premier: Do you think it is wise to pay the £880?

Mr. SCADDAN: What is the basis of the payment?

The Premier: A month for each year of service.

Mr. SCADDAN: However we may feel on this matter it cannot be denied that the

statement made by the Treasurer is correct, and that Mr. Leschen whilst in the service rendered his best to the State. If therefore the Premier can make some arrangement whereby Mr. Leschen can be retired permanently such a course would be better than having the matter raised again.

Mr. COLLIER: There is not one of us who would not shrink from doing an injustice knowingly, and the fear that I have in my mind is that in this case we may be doing an act of injustice. I happened to be in the Premier's office when the matter cropped up and I went fully into the papers. I took a keen interest in the case, and whilst it cannot be denied that Mr. Leschen was living in an atmosphere of suspicion, it is nevertheless a fact that so far as any tangible proof or evidence against his loyalty was concerned, none was forthcoming. It is rather a remarkable thing that where a man is under the suspicion of everyone in the State, none of those very numerous opponents was able to seize hold of anything which could be regarded as being evidence against him. The aid of the Criminal Investigation Department was invoked and notwithstanding that nothing was proved against Mr. Leschen's loyalty. The cause of the falling-off in deposits at the Savings Bank was primarily due, I believe, to the attacks made by the All British Association. I would not poison a cat with one of the assertions made by that impostor body calling themselves the All British Association, headed by a man who, whilst trading Britain first and the rest of the world nowhere, and who, on the Esplanade was wrapped up in the Union Jack, would proceed straight away to buy his commodities from Chinese in the City. I have seen this Mussulman impostor coming out of a Chinaman's shop in Barrack-street almost next door to the shop of the widow of "Pinktop." A good deal of the hostility towards Mr. Leschen was engendered by this gentleman and his All British crowd. The suspicion against Mr. Leschen is quite general, yet no evidence can be found to support it. The Premier is somewhat inconsistent in his attitude. The late Government suspended Mr. Leschen, not on the ground of disloyalty, but simply as a business proposition, in the interests of the

bank, the deposits in which had materially shrunk in consequence of the general suspicion against the manager. The present Government have gone much further and dismissed Mr. Leschen from the public service. Why? Clearly because they regard him as disloyal. How inconsistent, then, to propose to make him a monetary recompense!

The Premier: You are not arguing fairly. I said there was no evidence of his disloyalty.

Mr. COLLIER: Well, why dismiss him?

The Premier: Because of the effect on the bank. You suspended him, but paid his salary.

Mr. COLLIER: You need not dismiss him; there are other positions in the service. Except the Government are convinced of Mr. Leschen's disloyalty they are not justified in dismissing him; if they believe him to be disloyal they should not recompense him to the extent of £880, or indeed at all. If Mr. Leschen was rightfully dismissed I cannot vote him a sum of money.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Personally I believe that Mr. Leschen is disloyal, a pro-German, and an enemy of Great Britain and the Allies. Holding that belief I deem it my duty to vote for the striking out of the item.

Mr. WALKER: The extraordinary speech just delivered scarcely befits a deliberative assembly. Are the Committee to go on mere belief, mere rumour, or mere instinct? At times when calumny, lying, slander, abuse, and a species of madness are rampant—

Mr. E. B. Johnston: My belief is well founded.

Mr. Collier: Then why do you not furnish the Government with your evidence?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I think the ex-Attorney General, at any rate, knows the reasons for my belief.

Mr. WALKER: I am complaining that I do not know. If there be foundation, it is the hon. member's duty now to assist the Committee to come to some conclusion. None of us would support the granting of funds or favours or privileges of any kind to an enemy of Great Britain, to one who wishes the destruction of the cause for which those of our flesh and blood are suffering at the Front. But where is the consistency of the

Government in this matter? They have dismissed the man on suspicion, and then they come here saying, "We have put this amount on the Estimates, not because we approve of it"—for that was the inference—

The Premier: What were you going to do with the man?

Mr. WALKER: The man was suspended, as I suspended teachers whose loyalty I had no occasion to doubt.

The Premier: On full pay? Would you keep this man on full pay?

Mr. WALKER: Until something could be proved against him.

The Premier: You shirked your duty. Why did not you get rid of the man?

Mr. WALKER: If it could be proved that he was guilty, he would have had no mercy shown him at all. It was because we had only rumours as to his loyalty—

The Premier: Were you going to keep him there for ever?

Mr. WALKER: Until it was safe in the interests of the bank, or until we could place him in some other position.

The Premier: Your leader does not say that.

Mr. WALKER: My leader does say so. I know the facts of the whole case. The reason for getting rid of Mr. Leschen was that the business of the bank was falling off considerably.

The Premier: That is the reason why we got rid of him permanently.

Mr. WALKER: An absolute injustice is being done by the Government in dismissing the man without proof.

The Premier: Do you want the man kept on, and on full salary?

Mr. Collier: Is he disloyal?

The Premier: You have heard what I said, and you have put a wrong interpretation on it; and you have put words into my mouth, and I have stood it.

Mr. WALKER: The man has been dismissed without proof of any guilt. The rumours as to disloyalty against the man are interpreted by the Government as evidence against him, and yet the Government bring down this item for him. I suppose the purpose of the item is to divide the Committee on anti-German and pro-German lines. Do the Government want the item carried, or do they want it turned down?

The Minister for Works: The Government have left it for members to say.

Mr. WALKER: I take it that the Government mean the item to be carried; and thus the Government are saying "We were wrong in dismissing Mr. Leschen." The Premier has practically told us that we can accept or reject this as we like, and that we on this side of the House sacked the man without proof.

[1 o'clock a.m.]

The Minister for Works: The Premier did not say that.

Mr. WALKER: I do not feel inclined to pronounce an opinion on the matter unless we can get some evidence. No case has yet been presented to us.

Mr. CARPENTER: The responsibility is upon the Government to deal with the matter according to the laws of the land. I intend to support the amendment leaving it to the Government to discharge any obligations resting upon them, and leaving it to Mr. Leschen to take any action he may think fit against the Government for anything that he may consider is due to him.

Mr. HEITMANN: It says a good deal for the fairmindedness of members that they show so much hesitation as to how they shall vote in this matter. I should be sorry indeed to see my vote cause any injustice to be done to any individual, but I am forced to the conclusion that when a country is at war with another the people themselves are abnormal and are worked up to a state when perhaps it is necessary that innocent persons will have to suffer. It would have been better had either Government taken definite action, particularly in view of the fact that they possessed more knowledge than members of this Chamber in the matter. If Mr. Leschen is guilty no consideration should be shown to him. If he is not guilty he will happen to be one of the unfortunates who are suffering through the war and the actions of the country with which his people happen to be connected. I am informed that it is said that this man stated that he prayed that the nation which was in the right would win. I would like to know if any statement of this nature appears on the files.

Mr. Scaddan: I have no recollection of such a statement.

Mr. Collier: I heard of that statement, but nothing I have seen on the file would substantiate it. It was one of the rumours.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am going to cast my vote in the direction of placing this man in precisely the same position as the Government of the day are placing a number of those about whose loyalty there can be no question. Men are being dismissed from the service because they were born in enemy countries, and possibly some of these have been placed in positions in which they could not make a living.

Mr. Collier: Some of these are cases of gross injustice.

Mr. HEITMANN: There can be no question about a man who gives four of his sons in the service of the British Empire. There is a man at Geraldton who came to New South Wales when 16 years of age, and who was naturalised 25 years ago. He married an Australian woman and had eight or 10 children. Two of his boys even had to ask his consent to enlist because of their age. There cannot be any disloyalty left in the heart of such a man. I mention this case to show that there should be only one rule to deal with all such matters. I want to place Mr. Leschen in precisely the same position as those who are outside the pale of Parliament.

Mr. MULLANY: I intend to support the amendment, not because I have any prejudice against Mr. Leschen, but because I feel that the Committee would not be justified in passing a sum of money such as this which would go to someone who might be disloyal to Australia and to the Empire. Mr. Leschen will have his legal rights, and if he thinks a wrong has been done him, he can take steps to have that wrong righted.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am going to vote for the amendment because of the actions of the Government. I take it that the Government would not have dismissed Mr. Leschen unless they believed that he was disloyal.

Mr. FOLEY: When I moved the amendment I had no idea that there was a member in this Chamber who could rise in his place and say he believed Mr. Leschen to

be a pro-German, disloyal, and an enemy of the British nation. No member in this Chamber has spoken in that strain—

Mr. Munsie: One member did.

Mr. FOLEY: If a man who knows all this and does not disclose that information, he is not worthy of the name of Britisher.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Chairman of the Workers' Homes Board can throw some light on it.

Mr. FOLEY: I am sorry such a statement was made. Had I known, as the hon. member said he knew, that this man was a pro-German, I would not have waited until to-night to disclose the fact; I would have availed myself of the Act which was passed last session and made known what had come to my knowledge. I hope the amendment will be passed. Mr. Leschen will then have the opportunity of seeking redress in the way that we as Britishers will allow anyone to take.

Amendment put and passed.

Vote (as reduced to £22,259) put and passed.

Vote—*Government Stores*, £9,892:

Mr. ANGWIN: There is an increase in this vote instead of a decrease as is shown on the Estimates. There has been a reduction of officers from 38 to 28 and in that alone there has been a reduction of £985. But the clerks who previously appeared in these Estimates have been transferred to the Implement Works vote in the Trading Concerns Estimates. The matter is explained on those Estimates by means of a footnote, and instead of there being a decrease of £194 as the General Estimates show, there has been an increase of £777.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Premier will see on the Trading Concerns Estimates the items 12 to 16 refer to five clerks, £971, and a footnote explains that this was previously shown on the Treasury Estimates under Government Stores. It was shown on the 1915-16 Estimates. Why is it not shown on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure before us? As the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) has said, there should be an increase shown, and not a decrease at all.

The PREMIER: I have no information in regard to the item. These Estimates, I am advised, are drawn up exclusive of the

amounts taken out for the trading concerns. Last year they were all in together, but this year these amounts have been taken out of last year's general expenditure.

Mr. Scaddan: And as a result you managed to show a decrease in the Government Stores.

The PREMIER: The adjustment is not hidden in any way. The total expenditure is charged up.

Mr. ANGWIN: The same work is provided in the Government Stores as obtained last year. On all stores brought into the State Implement Works 10 per cent. is added to pay for those clerks. While the clerks are still employed on the same work as last year, their payment is transferred to the State Implement Works and the Government Stores are relieved to that extent. In the item, "Storeman and Packers" a decrease is shown, and again in the item "Wages and Incidentals." Allowing for these items, the Government Stores estimates show an increase instead of a decrease.

Mr. MUNSIE: The items are all given, but as a matter of fact instead of there being a saving as shown in the Government Stores estimates there has been a loss; in other words, there is an increase of £771.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Literary and Scientific Grants*, £10,300:

Item, Grant to W.A. University to cover salary to professor of agriculture, £700.

Mr. FOLEY: Will the Premier explain this?

The PREMIER: The purpose of the item is to cover the salary of the present professor of agriculture. I have had an application from the Senate of the University for assistance by providing that professor's salary. It will be remembered that the late Sir Winthrop Hackett endowed a chair of agriculture. As it was not convenient to make payment of the full amount needed for a permanent endowment, he provided £900 per annum, being presumably the interest on £18,000, for the purposes of a chair of agriculture.

Mr. Scaddan: That was not the purpose.

The PREMIER: When Sir Winthrop was Chancellor, he selected the professor. For a start, the professor was paid £600 a

year, but the salary has since been raised to £700. The balance of the £900 per annum furnished by Sir Winthrop Hackett was utilised in providing scholarships. Sir Winthrop's will made provision for the full amount to endow a chair. At his death, however, the trustees took up the attitude that they are not entitled to pay the endowment sum, and they have refused to pay the £900 per annum which was provided by way of interest pending payment of the full amount. That is the position as I understand it. Litigation, I believe, is now threatened.

Mr. Scaddan: Are the trustees repudiating the whole thing?

The PREMIER: Yes, in my view. Therefore the Senate, who are hard pressed, came to see whether the Government could find the £700 which the University had agreed to pay the professor.

Mr. Scaddan: What about the professors who have gone away and stayed away? Are they being paid?

The PREMIER: I do not know the details of the institution. Some of the professors are away assisting in war work. I presume they are drawing salaries, but I do not know under what conditions they have been permitted to go away. I would have to apply to the Senate for that information. We should see the University through the present year, and if the question is not settled before the end of the financial year they will have to dispense with the chair of agriculture.

Mr. SCADDAN: It is unfortunate that the professor affected should be Professor Patterson, because, while not wishing in any way to disparage the other gentlemen associated with the institution, I regard him as one of the brightest intellects attached to the University. I am not satisfied with the control of the University exercised by the Senate. While the intention of Parliament, in abolishing fees, was to establish a University on democratic lines, open to every member of the community, the Senate, owing to the unfortunate method of election by Convocation, have got the institution into the groove of Universities in the Old World. They think a University should be tonier than the ordinary class of the community. The consequence is a lot of frills and furbelows

which are useless but very expensive. The Senate could save this salary on those things. While I was Treasurer the Senate came to me every week for assistance, which I refused. I agree with the Premier that the sooner the University is housed in its own buildings at Crawley, the better. But surely it cannot be argued that the present time is suitable for undertaking that work. The University agreed, in the event of the then Government removing the Labour Bureau—which we did—that they would pay the rent for premises required for the Children's Protection Society, into whose quarters the bureau was moved. That agreement, however, was repudiated. I do not know whether the University have paid at all.

The Premier: They are paying up to the end of the present year.

Mr. SCADDAN: If the money was available I would have no objection to their getting it. I cannot, however, see how we can ask the community to suffer additional taxation and at the same time allow this institution to expand largely by the expenditure of money over which no man seems to have control.

The Premier: This is not for expansion: it is due to unfortunate circumstances.

Mr. SCADDAN: They are not of our making. I think the Senate ought to be called upon to find ways and means of making both ends meet with the £13,500 which is given to them each year for the conduct of the University. If they cannot meet their obligations with this amount they should send in their resignations, and a new body of men should be appointed. The Senate is very largely elected by Convocation which is an irresponsible body. Senate was originally appointed by the Government so that all sections of the community should be represented upon it, but it has dwindled down until it has become little else than a clique. Mr. Geo. Roberts, who was appointed to the Senate to represent the mining industry, was not re-elected by Convocation because he did not reside in St. George's-terrace or some other part of Perth. The Treasurer should tell the Senate that the University being a State institution and operated by State funds must be controlled by a Senate represent-

ing all the different industries of the State. The late Sir Winthrop Hackett informed me on one occasion that it would not be long before that it became essential to amend the conditions under which the Senate was elected if we were to retain reasonable control, seeing that we were providing the whole of the funds. I regret, however, that we are obliged to restrict our expenditure upon the University.

Mr. Underwood: I do not.

[*Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. SCADDAN: I do. At the present time the University must get along with the money that is provided, and in the existing circumstances I would not favour another single penny being given towards it.

Mr. FOLEY: I move—

That the item be struck out.

I have no desire to see the services of Professor Patterson done away with, but I cannot help thinking that out of their £13,500 the University people ought to be able to make both ends meet. I contend there are many in this State who are making sufficient to enable them to take up the cudgels on behalf of the chair of agriculture and keep the amount good. If that cannot be done there should be a rearrangement of the finances and if £13,500 is not sufficient let them ask for an amount sufficient to cover the lot. With a number of the professors away it is not right that the State should be put to the expenditure, especially when education is not being imparted in the way that the people of the State have the right to expect.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I have much pleasure in seconding the amendment. I am of the opinion that this professor who has been receiving £700 from a grateful public should go to the war.

Mr. Smith: Is that instinct?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, it is common sense. If he cannot go to the war we should employ him as our agricultural expert and send Connor to the war. I am prepared to say that Connor is fit to go to the war. If the professor is too old to go to the war he can take Connor's place. We cannot afford to pay for academic gentlemen. If the professor's services are so valuable to

the agricultural industry in this State, we should put him on as one of the experts and send Connor to the war. As a matter of fact I would like to see Connor go to the war. I notice that if a lot of these people who give advice and charge high prices for it were asked to do the work themselves, they would fail to such an extent that a "cocky" would not employ them. When the University was established I opposed it, and I am prepared to say if the people of Western Australia had been given time to get over the glamour of it, it would not have been established for at least another 20 years. When I spoke against the establishment of the University there were very few who agreed with me. To-day we cannot afford to maintain it. Sir Newton Moore got some kudos in the *West Australian* for establishing it, and he went to London soon afterwards and has been drawing double pay ever since. The late Sir Winthrop Hackett told us he was going to establish a chair of agriculture.

Mr. Heitmann: Which he did.

[2 o'clock a.m.]

Mr. UNDERWOOD: For a year or two, and he having failed to carry it on it is unfair to expect the people of Western Australia to carry it on. We have four or five professors here now and each is costing over £1,000 a year and the University want to put on another one to cost another thousand a year. If Professor Patterson cannot go to the war, we will send one of our agricultural experts and let the professor take his place. I will vote for the striking out of the item on the grounds that we have already agreed to pay the University a certain amount, and that the late Sir Winthrop Hackett promised to pay for this chair. In these circumstances it is not fair to the people that we should continue to pay this £700 per annum on a misunderstanding. The State is paying thousands of pounds per annum too much for agricultural experts, and I strongly object to adding another to the roll. It has been said that if we do not pass the item we will be restricting the extension of facilities for agricultural lectures. But we are paying our four agricultural ex-

perts to give lectures, and I think the item should be struck out.

Mr. COLLIER: Can the Premier tell us whether the professors who are out of the State, some engaged in war work, are receiving their salaries whilst away? If so, the professors are being treated in a most generous manner—much more generously than the large number of public servants who have enlisted. The professor of engineering would presumably draw a large salary in connection with munition work. Professor Patterson's salary might be paid out of the salaries of the professors who are not doing their work.

The PREMIER: I am not acquainted with the terms on which the professor of engineering went Home, but I understand that he had some leave accrued to him and that he originally went Home on that. What the arrangement now is, I do not know. As regards Professor Whitfeld—who was, unfortunately, killed, and who was a very fine officer—the arrangement with him was that he was to be recouped the difference between his salary at the University and his pay as an officer. However, in this particular case, the Senate, through no fault of their own, are placed in a very unfortunate position, since the trustees of Sir Winthrop Hackett's will either have not the money to pay, or will not pay, a certain legacy or the interest on it either. Accordingly the Senate can do nothing but apply to the State for assistance; and they ask only the amount actually required, namely, £700; not the £900. I agree that, having regard to the conveniences available, the University has too many high class and highly paid men. With adequate buildings and proper equipment they would show to advantage, which they cannot do under existing conditions. I deprecate the constant jumping on the Senate—an honorary body giving their time and doing the best that is possible under the circumstances. For my part I gave my time during four years as chairman of the Senate's finance committee, and cut down every possible sixpence. I would grant the Senate the £700 this year, at the same time giving them clearly to understand that if by next year they cannot arrange the matter they must dispense with the chair of agriculture. If they get judgment and are paid

out of the estate, this amount of money will be refunded; otherwise it will have to be regarded as a special grant. To my mind, it is a pity that there should be any dispute regarding a matter of this kind. I hope that in the circumstances the Committee will pass the item.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I hope the Committee will not pass the item. The position put before us is that a University professor was paid his University salary when he went to the Front. Thus he had a big pull over hundreds of thousands who went to the Front.

The Premier: I have not said anything of the sort. The hon. member is misrepresenting me.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The University had no right to do such a thing. A body working on State money are utterly wrong in paying a professor who goes to the Front £700 a year, or in making up his military pay to that amount. He is getting the advantage of hundreds of thousands of Australians who have gone to the Front and who have fought just as well as, if not better than, these University professors have fought. I object to the University giving these people their £700 a year on going to the Front when the rank and file have gone on 6s. a day. We are told by the Treasurer that the trustees of the estate of the late Sir Winthrop Hackett cannot fulfil the undertaking given by the deceased gentleman. That is their responsibility and not that of the State. The Government pander to the man who gets £700 a year and sack the navy who gets 7s. a day. I have no doubt that this professor is a friend of the Premier. If there has been a mistake in connection with the estate and the professor has to go, then let him get work. Work is good for professors. If the man was engaged by the University it was a mistake on their part, and there is no reason why the people should pay.

Amendment put and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	18
				—
Majority against	..			7
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Seaddan
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Collier	Mr. Walker
Mr. Foley	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunnlugham	Mr. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Verryard
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Griffiths
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Item, Zoological Gardens, special grant for Botanical Gardens, £250.

Mr. ANGWIN: I move—

That the item be struck out.

Last year the amount on the Estimates for the Zoological Gardens was reduced by £250, but this year I see it has been put back again. The reduction was agreed to by several of those hon. members who are at present occupying the Treasury bench. The item which was agreed to last year, namely, £3,250, appears again on the Estimates.

The PREMIER: Because the vote was cut down last year is the very reason why we should endeavour to give this amount this year. There are no botanical gardens in this State except those at the Zoo and it is desired to keep them in good order. It means that if this money is not voted the labours of the past few years will have gone for nought.

Mr. FOLEY: If this extra expenditure is justified this year, it must have been justified last year. The Attorney General knows that the Government are using this vote as an election dodge. If this money had been intended to improve the mineral baths in the Zoo grounds, the expenditure would have been in a useful direction and no exception would have been taken to the voting of the amount.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When I was on the other side of the House last year I criticised many items on the Estimates very effectively and the Minister who was in charge of this branch did not know how

to defend the items. The Premier was away and the Minister in charge had not the faintest idea of the answers to give to questions. Since then I have had the opportunity of discussing matters with men who do know something about the Zoological Gardens, and I have been informed that the amount on the Estimates this year is the lowest that can reasonably be expended to keep the grounds in proper order. When discussing items of this description members should forget that they have been turned from office and that they want the sweets again. Let them discuss the items on their merits and address their common sense to the debate. I object to the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) saying that he will vote against every item merely for the sake of opposing the Government.

Mr. SCADDAN: "The words uttered by the hon. member are cheeky, insolent, and unworthy of any member of the House. His colossal ignorance on matters concerning his electorate is only equalled by his impudence on this occasion." I am merely quoting the present Attorney General from *Hansard* of last year. Those are the terms in which he referred to the member for Yilgarn. He continued—

Although the Zoo is in my constituency I agree with the leader of the Opposition. While we have a huge deficit staring us in the face it is our bounden duty to practise economy wherever we can.

Those were wise words uttered by the present Attorney General after 5 o'clock a.m. The hon. member says the Minister was unable to explain the position. Surely the member for Yilgarn was entitled to ask the hon. member to tell the Committee what his views were. I am not the member for Canning, but I am a director of the Zoo Gardens and I have no hesitation in saying that the reduction of last year had a serious effect on the grounds. Those gardens were established at the expenditure of a large sum of money, and the directors have applied themselves to reducing costs until to-day the overdraft is lower than it has been for six or seven years. But the gardens are getting into such a condition that unless something is done immediately

an absolute loss will result. The gardens are something more than mere gardens. At considerable expense the acclimatisation committee have introduced a great number of choice plants. If we refuse to grant the additional money required for essential attention to what we already have, it will mean a substantial loss. The money is merely to maintain the gardens, and not to extend or elaborate them. During recent years we have introduced new methods in respect of the gardens by encouraging school children from outback centres to come there and make it their temporary home once a year. The honorary director, Mr. Kingsmill, M.L.C., who for some time past has been personally supervising the work in the gardens is obtaining very gratifying results. Mr. Kingsmill has been instrumental in obtaining a good deal of gratuitous help towards the maintenance of the gardens.

[Mr. S. Stubbs took the Chair.]

Mr. CARPENTER: Those who control the Zoological Gardens evidently know how to manage, not only animals, but men. They have roped in the leader of the Opposition. The Premier tells us that he has seen those responsible for the management of the gardens and that they assure him they cannot do with less than the sum proposed. If that kind of argument is to prevail, we shall never have any economy. The silence of the Country party on the item this year is very remarkable, when contrasted with their protests of last year. I shall vote for the reduction of the item, as I do not believe that a reduction will cause the gardens to suffer to any appreciable extent.

Mr. ANGWIN: When, last session, I pointed out that a reduction of the corresponding item would be detrimental to the gardens, my view was combated by the members for Canning and Sussex. The reduction was carried by a majority of one, the members voting for the reduction being Mr. Allen, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Gardiner, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Heitmann, Mr. E. B. Johnston, Mr. Lefroy, Mr. Mullany, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Smith, Mr. B. J. Stubbs, Mr. Willmott, Mr. Frank Wilson, and Mr. Bolton.

[3 o'clock a.m.]

Mr. ANGWIN: One of the directors of the gardens said to-night that the gardens have suffered so much of late that it will take them years to get back into their old condition. This was brought about by the member for the district, the Attorney General. In my opinion the item should be left as it was for last year.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Fremantle stated that I voted against this item last year.

Mr. Carpenter: I said some of you did.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I voted in favour of the item last year, and I am going to do so again this year.

Mr. MUNSIE: Whilst I voted to maintain this item last year I am not going to vote for an increase this year, because I believe that the directors of the gardens ought to be able to carry on this year with the same amount that they had to carry on with last year. If they cannot do so then let us get other men on the directorate who will. One cannot help noticing that in the majority of instances the increases that appear on these Estimates are for works within the metropolitan area. I am going to vote for the striking out of the item.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	17

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullaney
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Collier	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Hickmott	(Teller.)
Mr. E. B. Johnston	

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Foley	Mr. Veryard
Mr. George	Mr. Walker
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Harrison	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Robinson	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*London Agency*, £7,407—agreed to.

Vote—*Public Service Commissioner*, £1,642:

Mr. COLLIER: I desire to refer to the method of filling the position of Superintendent of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. The vacancy was advertised in the *Government Gazette* only.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): If you tell me the nature of the information you require I will get it for you and supply it when we reach the Colonial Secretary's Estimates.

Mr. COLLIER: I have no desire to question the fitness of Dr. Anderson, who was chosen to fill the position; I only want to refer to the manner in which the appointment was made by the Public Service Commissioner. I think I am justified in saying that the appointment was made in an underhand fashion which reflected no credit at all on the Commissioner. Why should he surreptitiously fill a position of this importance, carrying a large salary? Apparently he declined to advertise the position in any publication but the *Government Gazette*. The appointment ought not to have been made at a time like this, when many of our leading medical practitioners are absent on war duty. The Public Service Commissioner had already been prevented by the Minister from making the appointment; yet immediately after the Government went out of office the Commissioner made that appointment in a hole and corner manner. The post should have been open to all applicants. As it was, the selection was strictly confined to the one man. Only a few years ago that officer was in a junior capacity in the department, receiving about £200 per annum. It is not that I am questioning his qualifications; my complaint is that the Public Service Commissioner made a hole and corner appointment. It was just one of Mr. Jull's questionable methods. If I had an opportunity of moving to reduce the Public Service Commissioner's salary I would do it gladly. I do not know what the Public Service Commissioner's justification can have been. The very fact that he rushed the appointment on to the new Minister before the new Minister had time to find himself, is an additional reason why the appointment

should be regarded as discreditable to the Commissioner. Had Mr. Jull this position cut and dried for a certain officer? It certainly looks like it. It would have been far more satisfactory to all concerned if the appointment had been made in a public manner. It looks as if there were some motive behind the action of the Public Service Commissioner. By what other theory can we explain the Commissioner's attitude in confining his advertisement to the *Government Gazette*? I most emphatically protest against the appointment, and I hope the Minister controlling the Public Service Commissioner will see that such a course of action is not repeated.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Taxation, £21,598:*

Item, Chief Land Tax Assessor, £312.

Mr. SCADDAN: This item does not represent exactly a new appointment, but the Public Service Commissioner after several attempts succeeded in getting an officer appointed to a position which had been vacant for some time. I now wish to ask does the Premier consider that an officer holding so responsible a position is adequately remunerated with £312 per annum? I am aware that this may be regarded as only a commencing salary; but, nevertheless, the Public Service Commissioner in recommending it made what is, in my opinion, a scandalous recommendation. The Chief Land Tax Assessor has, I believe, the full confidence of the agriculturists; and I understand there have been practically no complaints this year against his assessments. The Chief Income Tax Assessor, holding a far less responsible position, is paid £365 per annum. His work is, really, little more than a matter of calculations on the basis of rates fixed by Act of Parliament. I wish to add that I know nothing personally of the Chief Land Tax Assessor.

The Premier: How would you get over the classification?

Mr. SCADDAN: The Public Service Commissioner, of course, made the classification, and I protested against it when he made it. The Chief Land Tax Assessor has done his work methodically and well, and can give good reasons for his assessments. Further, he is easily approachable. To pay him £312 a year is simply to encourage him to seek

employment where his services would be appreciated. The Commonwealth would pay him about £500 a year; though I do not suggest that rate for him. I think the Under Treasurer, who gave the appointment some consideration, agreed that the salary was absurd. I hope the Premier will consider whether he cannot pay the officer something like his maximum.

The PREMIER: I agree with what the leader of the Opposition has said regarding this officer's position. I know nothing of Mr. McDonald personally, but I believe him to be a very able officer. I think he had been doing the work for some time previously to obtaining this appointment—a year, or possibly two years. I must point out that he had been receiving a salary considerably below £312. I do not know what power the Minister has to interfere with the classification. As a rule we do not lift a junior suddenly into a senior position.

Mr. Scaddan: This man has been sweated.

The PREMIER: I agree. He has been doing the work but has not had the position. On the other hand if I had refused to make the appointment this officer might still have been doing the work but not even drawing £312. I will look into the matter.

Mr. SCADDAN: Very frequently for departmental reasons an alteration is made in the class of work done by an officer. In such cases, instead of calling upon the Public Service Commissioner to reclassify the position, it was agreed that the Minister should give such an officer a rise to something between his minimum and maximum. The classification of this man's position goes up to £408 and the Minister can fix his salary at anything between the minimum of £312 and that amount.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Workers' Homes Board, £99,077:*
Item, Secretary, £264.

Mr. SCADDAN: This officer (Mr. Thomas) has done his work exceedingly well. In fact, he has made a hobby of it. He has undoubtedly been sweated, and the board recently recommended that he should receive an increase in his salary. Mr. Thomas has been a good servant to the State, he has done an immense amount of work in this important sub-department, and is entitled to recognition. If our public officials are

not given some encouragement for the good work that they do they cannot be blamed for seeking positions elsewhere, although in these times the State can ill afford to lose the services of such men. In the case of this officer, however, I know he is not anxious to leave the board.

Mr. CARPENTER: If an exception could be made in the direction suggested, even in these abnormal times, this is an instance where it would be justifiable. I have come into contact with Mr. Thomas in connection with the Workers' Homes business and he has impressed me as being a capable man. The work of the board and that of the secretary has been so successful that notwithstanding the leaving of many of the homes on account of the occupants going to the war, the board is still doing a profitable business.

Mr. Scaddan: The secretary is still on his minimum.

Mr. CARPENTER: So I understand. In regard to the work of the board I understand that when the houses are vacated they are let. The policy of the board is that if a man vacates a house which he has been paying off at the rate of 15s., it is let for 19s. for a period of 12 months. The board refuses to sell but it gives the tenant the prior right of purchase at some future date.

The PREMIER: I should imagine that the board would be only too glad to sell if a purchaser came along. I can quite understand that in the case of a soldier who was killed they would refuse to take action in the way of putting the widow out of the house.

Mr. Carpenter: In such a case a purchaser would recoup the widow.

The PREMIER: I shall make inquiries into what the hon. member has stated, and in regard to the secretary's position I have made a note of what the leader of the Opposition has drawn attention to.

Mr. Scaddan: You have already turned him down, or the Minister who was acting for you did so.

The PREMIER: I know nothing about it. At any rate I will inquire.

Mr. Scaddan: He has been 18½ years in the service.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Miscellaneous Services*, £99,077:

Items, Royal Life Saving Society £50; Kindergarten Union £50.

Mr. SCADDAN: Why has it been found necessary to make provision for the payment of these items which were struck out of the Estimates last year? These are times when such organisations should be able to carry on without getting any of the taxpayers' money.

The PREMIER: The life saving is a very deserving society.

Mr. Scaddan: The money is not expended here.

The PREMIER: It is spent here in extending the work of the society.

Mr. Smith: Is it doing as good work as the S.P.C.A.?

Mr. Scaddan: That society is absolutely spoon-fed by the Government.

The PREMIER: With regard to the Kindergarten, that too is a most deserving institution. Our Education Department does not provide for children until they reach the age of six years, but the Kindergarten starts with children who are below that age. In all the other States they are subsidised. This £50 comes back by way of rent for the cottage they occupy in Pier-street, so really we simply give them the cottage free. They are doing splendid work, and I thought it only reasonable to put a small item on the Estimates for them.

[1 o'clock a.m.]

Item, Members of Parliament, free passes over Midland railway line, £530.

Mr. SCADDAN: You are merely providing the same sum as last year, but you are paying for the actual journeys over the line?

The Premier: Yes.

Item, Parks, Recreation grounds, etcetera, £3,100.

Mr. COLLIER: We provided £2,700 last year, and expended only £1,933. Last year King's Park received £1,553 plus a special grant of £10, as against this year £2,000, or an increase of £340.

The Premier: They are working on an overdraft.

Mr. COLLIER: This item was cut down last year.

The Premier: And they had to borrow from the bank and carry an overdraft.

Mr. COLLIER: Yet they spent only £1,900.

The Premier: They could not get any more from the Treasurer.

Mr. COLLIER: Well, there is the increase of over £300 for King's Park, and substantial increases for the coastal grounds and the goldfields grounds. A little while ago it was the practice to pay grants to towns which had natural parks. Surely there is not the same need for grants in the coastal districts as there is in the goldfields districts where expenditure is necessary on each and every ground.

Mr. SCADDAN: All these grants require careful consideration on the part of the Treasurer. Controllers of recreation grounds apply for their allocation and then care very little about how the money is spent. The Treasurer ought to insist upon learning from persons making application for a grant exactly what those persons have done for themselves. The same applies to the remarks of the member for Boulder. Here on the coast people have means of enjoyment which are not available in the mining and agricultural and timber districts. I suggest to the Treasurer, however, the precaution of requiring people who submit applications for aid, to submit balance sheets and also evidence of what they themselves have done.

Item, Alien Labour in Mines, Royal Commission, £1,000

Mr. COLLIER: I presume the item "Alien Labour in Mines £1,000," refers to the Royal Commission that sat recently. How is the amount made up? It seems extraordinarily high for a Commission that lasted only a week or two.

The PREMIER: I cannot say that it was all expended, but that was the amount which had to be provided to cover the expenditure.

Mr. Collier: I should have thought £200 or £300 would have sufficed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The chairman of the Commission was paid £3 3s. per day, and each member £2 2s. Counsel had to be provided on behalf of the Government.

Mr. Collier: I thought Dr. Stow appeared on behalf of the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Dr. Stow had to be withdrawn very early in the proceedings in order to appear at the criminal sessions. Two sets of interpreters were required, and two sets of stenographers.

Mr. COLLIER: The Royal Commission on Agriculture will probably go on for two years, travelling all round the country and receiving fees; and all that expense is to be covered by £2,000. Yet we are asked to pass £1,000 for a Royal Commission that lasted about three weeks. The five members of this Commission would receive about £180. Surely lawyers' fees did not absorb about £800?

The Attorney General: The lawyer employed, I recollect, was paid £5 5s. per day.

Mr. COLLIER: If the Attorney General could supply something like a detailed statement of how the amount is made up, I think it would be found that there is something extraordinary in this matter.

Item, Esperance Lands Royal Commission, £1,000.

Mr. WALKER: I understand the Royal Commission have returned from their investigations in the Esperance district to Perth. What are they doing now? Why cannot we have their report?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): They have not yet finished their inquiries.

Mr. WALKER: What are they inquiring into now? They have been on the spot, and have heard Mr. Paterson, the land expert, and have examined various people in Perth. A voluminous body of evidence has been collected already.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): The chairman had to stand off in order to attend to shearing for a week or two.

Mr. WALKER: That, surely, is no reason for hanging up the work of the country.

The Premier: The Commission have promised to furnish their report in January.

Mr. WALKER: If the Royal Commission are going to disperse hither and thither at the call of the private business of their

members, we shall never get the report at all.

The Premier: We did not influence them in any way.

Mr. WALKER: What is going to be done for Esperance?

The Premier: You will get this report.

Mr. WALKER: After delaying it all this time.

The Premier: It has not been delayed.

Mr. WALKER: This is a specimen of the extreme attention paid to the business of the country by the Government while the people of the district are held in suspense. The Government are callous and indifferent as to when the report is presented. Will the Premier undertake to communicate with the Commission immediately?

The Premier: We will ask them again.

Item, Loss on operations of the Royal Commission for Control of Trade, £46,000.

Mr. SCADDAN: This amount of £46,000 is provided as expenditure during the year and the Treasurer tried to make the Committee believe that it was an increased expenditure. That £46,000, together with further amounts which are provided in different parts of the Estimates, amounting to £93,000, has nothing to do with this year's deficit. That is transferred to Treasury bonds deficiency, and still the Treasurer is talking about this amount not having been paid at all.

The Premier: It is there.

Mr. SCADDAN: He has adopted the only possible course to put the matter on a proper footing. This is a transaction which took place two or three years ago. While the sum of £46,000 is shown as expenditure he has not spent a penny of it, but has transferred it out of the Estimates after putting it there. It has been transferred to Treasury bonds deficiency.

The Premier: Exactly.

Mr. SCADDAN: Then there is no room for argument.

The Premier: I explained that in my Budget.

Mr. SCADDAN: Every penny of the amount he mentioned as cash was actually found.

The Premier: Nonsense.

Mr. SCADDAN: Does the hon. member imagine that the people who provided the wheat were never paid? Not a single penny of cash has to be found to meet the accounts.

The Premier: You did not charge it up.

Mr. SCADDAN: We charged it up.

The Premier: You did not. You paid away £93,000 and did not charge it up. If that is not faking accounts Heaven knows what is.

Mr. SCADDAN: I repeat that every penny of that £93,000 was found in pounds, shillings, and pence and paid over by the previous Government.

The Premier: Out of what?

Mr. SCADDAN: I am taking it on the cash basis. It was paid out of public accounts.

The Premier: It was paid illegally out of trust funds.

Mr. SCADDAN: No. It could not be charged to any account until the matter was finalised and then it has to be charged up to the proper account. I question whether it was a fair charge against revenue. I think it is a fair charge against loan. We were faced not only with the starvation of stock but the starvation of people unless we had looked after their food requirements. The loss instead of being £46,000 might then easily have been £460,000. The hon. member attempted to make some capital out of this loss, but he knows that every possible precaution was taken to prevent any loss while at the same time we had to make certain that the food supplies were properly attended to.

The Premier: I said you did not charge it up.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member's colleague in another place and the Minister for Industries talked about the unbusinesslike methods of the previous Government in regard to the introduction of these food supplies, but does not the hon. member know that we were not entitled as the Government who had to carry the responsibility, to provide any advance for the food requirements of the people, and also for the stock of the State? We were not able to foretell that early rains would fall and that there would be an abundance of feed. If we had not taken the action we did, and the rains had not fallen, we would have been condemned for the loss

of stock which undoubtedly would have followed. The loss of £46,000, which was incurred, is not a fair charge to make in any one year. It was a loss for the benefit of not merely that year but future years as well. Of course political capital could be made out of it and was made out of it. When the accounts were finally closed the loss was found to be £46,000, and that had to be charged for the purpose of clearing up the account. Does the Treasurer deny that? All that the Treasurer is doing is, by putting the amount on the Estimates, he is wiping out the account. The Treasurer has been attempting to make the public believe that he has had to find the sum of £46,000 from revenue account to meet a loss which had accrued prior to taking office and which ought to have been charged in the last financial year. He ought not to try and make the country believe that he has to find £46,000 from revenue to meet the deficiency created by us. He does not have to find a penny. He gives the Under Treasurer authority to make a proper adjustment to pass the Auditor General by book entries. The Treasurer is going to do the very thing that I suggested but instead of permitting it to remain against loan it is brought into revenue, it is taken out of revenue again and put into loan again. The Treasurer has so adjusted this matter that all he said at Busselton about having to find £46,000 was so much talk which was calculated to create a wrong impression in the minds of the public who do not know anything about the details of public finance. If the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) concluded that, what about the public outside? It is a deliberate attempt on the part of the Premier to make it appear that he has to find £46,000 cash to meet the loss.

The Premier: I have to find the whole of your deficit, including this £46,000.

Mr. SCADDAN: In order to recoup the public account, so as to adjust the Loan Account he has to charge up revenue, but he has not to find a single penny. It is merely an adjustment in bookkeeping. The Under Treasurer suggested that this amount should be placed on this year's Estimates.

The Premier: And you approved of it in July.

Mr. SCADDAN: I do not recollect the approval.

The Premier: After the books had been closed. You were to have placed it on last year's Estimates?

Mr. SCADDAN: No, on this year's Estimates. How could I have gone back from June? How could the Under Treasurer recommend that I put the amount on last year's Estimates.

The Premier: Why not? Your excess is all done the same way.

Mr. SCADDAN: Excess is an entirely different proposition. The file will disclose that the Under Treasurer recommended that an item be put on this year's Estimates, merely to adjust the matter. That is all the Premier is doing now. I do not object to that, but I object to the Premier's attempt to mislead members and the public in connection with this matter. The Premier knows what is being done, but he knows also that the public do not know. The money is found, and all that the Treasurer is doing is to add the amount to the deficit and retransfer it. What was a loss to us was a profit to the State. The Premier ought not to try to make political capital out of a mere adjustment.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer's department.

Progress reported.

BILL—TREASURY BILLS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson-Sussex) [4.50 a.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 3 o'clock this afternoon.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.51 a.m. (Wednesday).