

Hon. J. Duffell: I thought so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But I object to the shouting system. I have practised what I preach. I do not think I have shouted more than 12 times within the last 12 months. I have sat down in the club with a dozen other men, each paying for his own liquor, and we have the same social chat as we would have had under the shouting system; but with this difference, that no man took more than he wanted. There is not in this any real interference with the liberty of the subject, or not nearly so much as is to be found in other legislation. At present a man cannot drink after certain hours. Give us this Bill and we will not need to trouble about the hours. A certain man with big interests in the liquor traffic at Home said on this question of anti-shouting—

The publican who took £100 under the old system takes only about £10 under the new. Denied the opportunity of extending hospitality, men tire of each other's society pretty quickly.

I do not think it is right in these times for men to be hanging around a hotel at all hours both day and night, shouting for one another and enjoying one another's society by the instrumentality of alcohol. I do not think it needs many more words from me to commend this Bill to the House. If hon. members will read the clauses and consider their good effects, and consider also the economy that is likely to arise by reducing the consumption of enormous quantities of alcohol and directing money that would otherwise be spent upon it into proper channels, they will have no difficulty in supporting the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. Sommers debate adjourned.

House adjourned 9.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 23rd November, 1916.

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

QUESTION—WHEAT AGENTS, 1916-17 HARVEST.

Mr. S. STUBBS asked Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): 1, Is he aware that notice has been given to a prominent firm of wheat shippers and millers that their services will not be required in the handling of the 1916-17 harvest, either in the capacity of shipper or milling agent? 2, Is it not a fact that if the notice has been issued that no charges have been formulated against the said firm as to why they have been dismissed, and the acquisition of wheat which means a serious loss to them and their representatives in the country taken out of their hands. 3, Did not the Prime Minister give a pledge to all the wheat shippers and millers that the operations of the pool would disturb as little as possible the business connections and organisation of the wheat shippers and millers?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Ockerby & Co., Ltd., have been notified that it is not intended to appoint them to be Government agents in the handling of the 1916-17 wheat harvest either as shipper or miller agent. 2, The company is not being dismissed from its present agencies, which are being continued. The non-appointment on further agencies should not mean any other loss than that of commission, and the Government are satisfied, after

receiving the recommendation from the State Wheat Marketing Committee, that there are cogent reasons in the interests of the scheme why the services of the company should not be further utilised. 3. It was understood that at the inauguration of the Commonwealth scheme for marketing the 1915-16 harvest that there would be as little dislocation as possible in the ordinary business of handling the wheat. There was, however, no pledge that if after experience with agents who may have been appointed to assist the Government in the marketing of the wheat it was found that the interests of the scheme would be better served by not appointing them to further agencies, that the Government should be compelled to further employ them.

QUESTION—RABBIT AND DINGO PESTS.

Mr. PIESSE asked the Minister for Works: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce an amendment of "The Roads Act, 1911," this session, giving full powers to the roads boards to deal with the rabbit and dingo pests?

The HONORARY MINISTER, on behalf of the Minister for Works replied: The matter is under consideration. Inquiries are being made, and if it is found that further powers are required, and time permits, the necessary legislation will be introduced.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, WYALCATCHER—MT. MARSHALL.

Mr. PIESSE asked the Minister for Works: When is it anticipated that the construction of the Wyalcatcher-Mt. Marshall Railway will be completed?

The HONORARY MINISTER, on behalf of the Minister for Works replied: It is anticipated that this line, with the exception of the water supply at Beneubbin, will be completed by the end of December.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.

Mr. HARRISON asked Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): 1, Is it the in-

tention of the Government to make use of the evidence collected by the Royal Commission on Agricultural Industries through the wheat areas prior to the presentation of their report? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to reduce the water charges now obtaining in the wheat areas? 3, As the price of wool at present is a record one, is any action being taken by the Industries Assistance Board to prevent the waste of stock feed by farmers working under the direction of the board?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, The Commission is forwarding recommendations from time to time on matters on which the evidence taken qualifies it to form a final opinion, and these will receive consideration. 2, Yes, the Royal Commission on Agricultural Industries has been asked to report on this question. On receipt of this body's report the matter of adjusting the water charges on reticulated agricultural land will receive consideration. 3, The Industries Assistance Board has no power to grant stock loans. The Agricultural Bank, in whose province this lies, is not, at present, in a position to grant sheep to all farmers, owing to the State's financial position and the high price of stock; but the Government's policy is to supply stock as soon as financial considerations will allow.

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Land Act Amendment.
- 2, Agricultural Lands Purchase Act Amendment.
- 3, Permanent Reserves Re-dedication.
- 4, Agricultural Bank Act Amendment.
- 5, Roads Act Continuance.

BILL—NELSON RATES VALIDATION.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Roman Catholic Church Property Acts Amendment.
- 2, Adoption of Children Act Amendment.
- 3, Western Australia Day Funds.

- 4, Permanent Reserve.
- 5, Execution of Instruments.
- 6, Zoological Gardens Act Amendment.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

BILL — INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Attorney General: Legal Practitioners Act, amended rules.

BILL—FRANCHISE.

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1916-17.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 21st November on the Treasurer's financial statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £1,540:

Mr. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.45]: As one having been called upon to undertake the task of introducing the Budget into this Chamber on no fewer than five occasions, I can assure the present Treasurer that he had my sympathy in his task on Tuesday evening last. 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 discussion from a non-party standpoint perhaps more than anything else requires such discussion—largely from a party point of view, and indeed principally from that point of view. I consider the duty

devolves upon him as Treasurer to so introduce a Budget as, while placing the complete facts and figures before the country, always to bear in mind that the best interests of the State are served by the preservation of its credit. 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. In his very introduction the Premier remarked that there was no time in the history of this State when a Treasurer had been faced with such difficulties at present. He went on to say that he was faced with a huge deficit and with a declining revenue; that we had reached the maximum of expenditure in this State; that we had an abnormal public debt; that he was faced with demands for financial assistance from every direction, and at the same time faced with uncertainty in respect of the raising of future loan moneys, and with the dislocation of trade and commerce caused by the war. I have never heard of such a dismal condition of affairs being outlined by a Treasurer as that outlined by the hon. gentleman opposite in his very introduction.

The Premier: Were not all those statements facts?

Mr. SCADDAN: Granted that they were facts—which I dispute—surely the Treasurer could have as easily drawn attention to these difficulties without giving them such prominence in his Budget speech by making them the very theme upon which he discussed the State's finances—thus giving the State an advertisement which a Treasurer certainly should not give it, though a leader of the Opposition might. However, the hon. gentleman had been sitting so long on this side of the Chamber as leader of the Opposition, he had been so long engaged in seeking to belittle the previous Government, and particularly the Treasurer, that he could not accommodate himself to the sudden change, that he could not forget his old tactics and remember that the credit of the State was his first consideration. The hon. gentleman, however, very speedily followed up the sentences I have quoted by saying that he still had the greatest faith in the wonderful resources and recuperative powers of this

great State. I do not think I have ever heard that expression before; it is quite original. The Treasurer also said that he was confident he could pull through all right given a continuance of the blessings of the Almighty in good seasons and bountiful harvests, together with the hearty support and co-operation of all classes, which were demanded. These last sentences reminded me of a poem about a certain great personage, of which poem the last line was, "Mitt me and Gott." Here we have from the Treasurer the same thing. Subject to the assistance of the Almighty, the leader of the present Government is prepared to do all that is necessary to catch up with prosperity.

Mr. Thomas: He is catching up with the Kaiser.

Mr. SCADDAN: As Treasurer, the hon. gentleman has to face conditions, whether favourable or unfavourable; and it is no use his pleading for assistance from the Almighty, and relying upon that entirely. He must face the difficulties which occasionally arise, notwithstanding all our praises of the Almighty. Let me again point out that the Treasurer said the first duty of the Government was to endeavour to stop the drift to leeward. That sentence, of course, affords evidence that there is a drift to leeward. The hon. gentleman says his first duty is to stop that drift. But is it the duty of a Ministry representing only one section of the House, and thus representing only one section of the community, to stop the drift, and is it the province of the Opposition to do everything possible to cause a continuance of that drift? That is a question I seriously submit to the present Treasurer. Is it the special province of a Ministry, representing only one section of the community, to stop a financial drift, while it is the special province of members sitting on the Opposition side—and, indeed, this might be thought from the actions of members of the present Government when sitting here—to cause a drift and to assist the drift to extend further to leeward? That is the present Treasurer's party attitude, and it has been so ever since the first occasion when a Labour Government took over the reins of office in Western Australia. Has that financial drift only just commenced, or has it been with us for some years?

The Premier: It commenced five years ago.

Mr. SCADDAN: For the commencement of that drift, as the hon. gentleman was fully aware, certain conditions prevailing in this State, over which we had no possible control, were responsible. I will admit that in certain other directions the previous Government were responsible. But what attitude did the hon. gentlemen adopt to the course we proposed to take? Did not the previous occupants of the Treasury bench—even when they had a clear majority, as they had on one occasion, of 16 or 17 members in this Chamber, the Chamber which especially represents the people from the point of view of control of finance—when they endeavoured to stop the drift to leeward, encounter every endeavour on the part of the then Opposition to thwart those efforts to stop the drift? We took all possible measure to stop the drift with the exception of one means which we declined, just as the Treasurer on Tuesday last, on behalf of his Government, declined to follow. Furthermore, did we not as often as we drew attention to the drift and endeavoured to stop it see the united opposition, not merely of members now sitting on the Government benches in this Chamber, but of the representatives of their party in another place? Is it not a fact that the present Colonial Secretary declared in another place, in speaking on a financial proposal of the previous Government intended to help to stop the drift, that so far as he was personally concerned he would not grant the then Government an additional penny for them to squander? But I wish to ask, is it squandering money to provide in times of peace and prosperity a living wage to our employees? Is it squandering money to make better provision for those who are stricken with sickness? Is it squandering money to care for the widow and the orphan, deprived of their bread-winner? Is it squandering money for those who, possibly through circumstances beyond their control, are left destitute?

Mr. Smith: Election tactics.

Mr. SCADDAN: Above all, is it squandering money to improve the educational system so as to ensure to all children at least

the opportunity of becoming good and valuable citizens? Is it squandering money to render in times of drought and war all possible assistance to those engaged in the development of our various industries, and especially our primary industries, so that they may assist in the permanent material advancement of our State and its citizens? All this in time of war and drought was done by the previous Government.

The Premier: By putting up the fertiliser rates.

Mr. SCADDAN: Naturally these things affected our finances. We sought, as I have said, assistance to stop the drift; but party hostility proved stronger than love of country, and the drift was rather encouraged. At the same time, while the then Opposition, backed by their representatives in another place, were opposing our financial proposals, they were continually complaining that we were not spending money fast enough in different directions. For what object were these complaints made? For the one set object of bringing about the downfall of the previous Government, even if it meant the ruin of the credit of Western Australia. Again, if the previous Government squandered money in these directions and by such methods, what can be said of the present Government, who have shown by this very Budget, by these very Estimates, that they are prepared to continue to squander and prepared to make up the cost by imposing dastardly and inequitable forms of taxation? I shall show later how those methods are dastardly and inequitable. But I, and others with me, have been turning over in our minds why the Treasurer has pursued in his present position the tactics he adopted when sitting in Opposition. Several explanations have occurred to us. Firstly, perhaps his attitude may be due to a desire to retaliate on that party who insisted on a bargain at the expense of the Treasury in return for support while the present Government occupy the Treasury bench. I am told by our friends on the cross-benches that it is not so. Possibly it may not be so; but the effect is the same, notwithstanding. Secondly, the reason may be that the Treasurer sees the writing on the wall, and wishes to "take it out of"

the hateful workers while there is yet a little time. Again, the present Treasurer being essentially a copyist, it may be that he has become imbued with the doctrines of the I.W.W. One of those doctrines is to "get in and kick like hell." Or perhaps the real underlying motive is to try to make those very essentials to which I have alluded unpopular by imposing exasperating methods of raising revenue and inequitable taxes upon the community and thus causing the people to say, "We are not prepared to tolerate this taxation; do away with those other essentials." I cannot get it out of my mind that the former opposition right along the line has been on the question of finance, in the belief that such methods of opposition would prevent the previous Government from putting their policy into operation—a policy which meant bringing relief to those who most needed it. The question of the equity, or otherwise, of the proposals outlined in the Budget can be dealt with more fully, perhaps, on the taxation Bills now before the House. But may I, just in passing, ask whether it is equitable to impose a super-tax of 181 per cent., on the man who is admittedly living on the merest margin between existence and starvation, and to put only 25 per cent. on the man who is to-day, notwithstanding the conditions prevailing, able to live in the lap of luxury? Is it equitable to impose taxation on certain commodities in one portion of the State, and in the remainder of the State to impose a tax on those commodities, plus a tax on the railway freights, plus a tax on the handling charges? Is it equitable to impose a tax per medium of increased freights which call upon the consumer near the source of supply to contribute to the revenue 1s., and upon the consumer living under much worse conditions in remote parts of the State to contribute 15s., 16s., and 17s. to the revenue? Is it justifiable to use the necessity of the repatriation of our soldiers to impose a further tax on the community when it is not intended to strictly apply it to the purpose of repatriation? I admit that the Treasurer does require additional revenue. I have asserted for years past that if the Government are to be required to render the services they are rendering it is essential that the

Government should receive additional revenue. I have no hesitation in saying that the House should assist the Treasurer to get the additional revenue; but it must be obtained from those who can well carry the additional burden. There is neither equity nor justice in the financial proposals of the Treasurer. What has become of that much boasted possession of our friends on the Treasury bench, business acumen?

Mr. S. Stubbs: He is dead.

Mr. SCADDAN: I thought they were elected for the purpose of trying to bring about reform. The Attorney General at the recent election boasted that what was essential in view of the condition of our finances was the application of business methods in the Government departments, and he asserted that the present Government consisted of men of known business capacity, and that with the application of the business acumen of the members of the Ministry, prosperity would immediately return and everything in the garden would be lovely. There was not to be any taxation. The hon. member would have scouted the mere suggestion.

The Attorney General: You should have attended some of my meetings, instead of relying on hearsay.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was said by our opponents when sitting here, it has been said in the policy speech of the Premier, and by Ministers when seeking re-election on their appointment to office, that the finances of the State could be adjusted by the mere application of business methods.

The Attorney General: And, of course, taxation.

Mr. SCADDAN: I said that all along. I told the people of Canning that with all the business acumen of our friends opposite they could not adjust the finances except by one of three methods—two of which, by the way, have been applied by the Premier. I told the electors that in the condition of affairs in this State, if they were going to maintain our industries on a reasonable footing, if they were not to bring about chaos, if they were not to impose intolerable conditions on the great majority of the community, the Government must call upon those best able to endure to contribute further by way of taxation, and I said the pre-

sent Government would be called upon to introduce additional taxation immediately on assuming office. Of course, I had not the slightest idea that they would introduce taxation in the form in which it is now proposed. I have looked in vain in the Budget for the application of business methods. At last we have the candid admission of the Treasurer that what I have repeatedly declared regarding the finances is correct, namely, that additional revenue must be found or wholesale retrenchment introduced in the public service. It is not so long since he asserted that there should be wholesale retrenchment in the public service. On this occasion he has adopted the former and, I think, the wiser course of resorting to increased taxation. But in the manner in which he has gone about it he discloses his want of knowledge, added to which he reveals his inconsistency. On the 24th February, 1915, speaking on the second reading of the Public Entertainments Taxation Bill, the present Treasurer said—

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

Then Mr. Bolton interjected "Reduction of wages and salaries!" and the present Treasurer continued—

Be it what it may. Economy must be exercised. Economy has been laid down as the fundamental policy, not only of the Liberal Government but of my friends opposite.

That was only two years ago, when the hon. member must have appreciated the fact that there was a drift in our finances.

The Premier: I appreciated that five years ago.

Mr. SCADDAN: But as I say, he did everything possible to cause that drift to continue, until he now tells the House that he is not responsible for the condition of affairs he as Treasurer finds himself in.

The Attorney General: You do not suggest that he is, do you?

Mr. Munsie: His party is.

The Attorney General: What has our side to do with the drift of the last five years?

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member does not appreciate the fact that for the last five years the control of affairs in this State has centred in the second Chamber which has invariably taken the cue from the leader of the Opposition in this Chamber. We know from the attitude of the leader of the Opposition here what result would follow the introduction of a measure in the other place. His party have ever been prepared to down their political opponents, even if it meant downing the interests of the State. The drift commenced five years ago with the first year of drought in this State.

The Premier: It commenced before the drought.

Mr. SCADDAN: Only the other evening, the Treasurer said he was not responsible even for this year's finances up to the end of June next. He said "I must take the position as I find it, and the position of the finances as shown in the Estimates is not of my making, I have no control over it." Yet in the next breath he said that the Government who came in in 1911 were responsible from the first day of taking office— notwithstanding that he had built up a £78,000 deficit before he left. Under those conditions and the conditions that have ruled since, nothing but a drift in the finances could have happened. But where is the consistency of the hon. gentleman, who persistently opposed every form of taxation to stop the drift, and yet who to-day has taken every taxation measure on the statute-book and carefully raked it with a fine tooth-comb to see if there were no means of increasing the returns from it? No Government that depend largely for political support on St. George's-terrace are going to introduce taxation that will hit St. George's-terrace. The Treasurer is inconsistent in this matter. He could not, until last July, appreciate the fact that there was a drift and that it was his duty as leader of the Opposition in war time and time of drought to assist the Government to stop that drift, and not simply because he found himself in the position of leader of the Opposition, try to keep the ship of State in difficulties. Our friends on the cross-benches removed us from office and undertook to give their support to the present Ministers, to a party of only 17 in a

House of 50, because our friends on the cross-benches said "The Liberals who are to occupy the Treasury bench possess business acumen which will save our supporters from additional taxation to square the finances." What have they got? They have the very taxes they feared, and everyone of them, without exception, hits the men in the agricultural and mining districts hard, and hard, and still hard; and the men in the metropolitan area, the rag merchants, who are to-day making bigger profits than ever before, are practically escaping scot free. Let me further examine this statement, this introduction, this basis upon which the whole of the Budget rests. Our friend asserts he has a declining revenue. But it is not shown to any appreciable extent in the estimates including the trading concerns. A declining revenue, forsooth, compels him to introduce taxation to the tune of over a quarter of a million per annum. Return 9, submitted by the Treasurer, shows the revenue in 1915-1916 to have been £5,356,978 and the estimated revenue for 1916-1917 to be £4,680,490. This latter amount only includes the net result of our trading concerns, namely, £156,000. But if we turn to the trading concerns estimates, we will find that the Treasurer expects to receive from them £787,200. So, deducting the amount he has already paid into account, namely, the £156,000, we have left an estimated revenue for the year of £5,311,358, or only £45,620 less than last year. Where is the decline in revenue? In one column the Treasurer sets out the revenue actually received last year, after bulking the gross revenue received from trading concerns. The other column sets out the revenue only taking the net profits to account, namely, £156,332. There is one object in view, and that is to make it appear to members and to the public that the Treasurer has less money in the Treasury than his predecessors, and that he has to make it up by these forms of taxation to the tune of a quarter of a million. The estimated expenditure on the same basis, including the whole of our trading concerns, that we previously included in our total, comes to £5,879,561, which leaves a deficit of exactly the same basis of £568,203. Where is evidence of the application of business methods? The estimated deficit, financing on

the same basis, is already £568,203 as against £350,000. Even taking the figures which the Premier asserted should be included it is just over £400,000—I will be fair enough to give that in—or a net estimated deficit, deducting surplus from trading concerns of £724,535 as against something like £400,000 last year. So much for the statement that he had to meet a declining revenue, and for the application of business methods as shown by the increased expenditure for last year, and the increased shortage on our revenue account financed on the same basis. That is not of his own making. The present Government reduced the revenue by £56,000 in abolishing the obnoxious terminal charges on district railways and by reducing the fertiliser freights to a price which means running it at a loss, they brought about a loss of £56,000 under these two heads alone.

The Attorney General: You used to say it was £100,000.

Mr. SCADDAN: I did not. I said that the Government have, since they have been in office, done a good deal in the way of giving away revenue which will amount to £100,000 in the aggregate. Next the Treasurer asserts that we have reached the maximum expenditure on our revenue account. We have not done so because he has exceeded that, and one cannot exceed the maximum. If we have reached the maximum expenditure on our revenue account, why does the Treasurer not apply his business methods and why do not his Ministers assist him by applying themselves to the departments as business men and reducing the expenditure to a minimum?

Mr. Munsie: They will appoint another Royal Commission to inquire.

Mr. Bolton: No, they will not.

Mr. SCADDAN: He says we have an abnormal public debt. If the public debt is abnormal and the Treasurer appreciates the fact that it is abnormal, he ought to so arrange his methods in his departments as to bring about normal conditions so far as our loan expenditure is concerned.

The Attorney General: It will take years.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am satisfied that it will, and yet, in the next breath the Treasurer complains because he is faced with an uncertainty in respect to raising loan moneys to increase our abnormal loan expenditure.

He complains in effect that he cannot make things more abnormal. There again he should apply his business methods and bring about normal conditions in our loan expenditure. I venture to remark that the Treasurer and his Ministers are capable of spending every penny they can raise on any market which is available in any part of the world.

Mr. Collier: And more.

Mr. Hardwick: You have got it all.

Mr. SCADDAN: There is still a little floating around.

Mr. Angwin: He only left a notice to say that he could not get it.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Treasurer has his hand on it. What is the real position in regard to our public debt? Would it not have been more to the credit of the Treasurer when he had drawn the attention, not merely of the public in Western Australia, but the lending public in the old country—the people to whom he has to go to borrow money—would it not have been to his credit and to the advantage of the State, I say, if he had immediately explained the difference between our public debt and that of the other States, or other parts of the British Empire? Could he not have said that, while the public debt per head of the population is high in comparison with the public debt of the other States of the Commonwealth, a great percentage of our public debt is not only provided for by sinking fund but is expended in reproductive works almost entirely, and that year after year we have been spending more and more and a greater percentage in reproductive works and less on unproductive works? As a matter of fact he could have said that we are financing our harbour boards, our water supplies, our tramways, our Agricultural Bank, and financing works in numerous other directions. In other parts of the Commonwealth, however, these are no part of the national debt but are borne by boards, notwithstanding the fact they are, to my way of thinking, a part of their national debt and should be added to it for the purpose of proper comparison.

Mr. Collier: They would transfer water supply and trams to local bodies and say that they had reduced the public debt.

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes. The Treasurer talks about not being responsible for the condition of affairs as he found it, but he

now wants to make it worse. He can give away £56,000 in railway freights, and put on increases in other directions in order to make that up. He has now undertaken to hand over the water supply of the metropolitan area, which showed a profit of £8,000 last year. He is handing over the trams, which showed a profit, after paying £10,000 towards belated repairs which is not taken out of revenue—of £30,000 to the local authorities. He loses all that revenue merely for the purpose of saying at the end of the year "I have not increased the public debt." The public, however, has to pay that debt just as much through the local authorities as through any other channel. It should be made a part of the public debt all the same. If all of our public debt were charged against the whole of the community it might be considered serious, but we must remember that a great bulk of our loan indebtedness is in revenue-earning developmental works, such as railways, water supply, harbour works, Agricultural Bank capital, tramways, goldfields and agricultural development, and in a lesser degree in the provision of workers' homes, trading concerns to a smaller extent, and to an even smaller extent public buildings. The Treasurer made much of our loan expenditure during the past five years. The latest figures I have show an increase per head of the population of £32 6s. 3d. I know the Attorney General used always to lead off at his public meetings about the amount of money we had spent and what we had not done for the Canning. He claimed that we had 34 million pounds received by way of revenue and loan moneys, and asked what we had done for Canning.

The Premier: What did you do?

Mr. SCADDAN: We gave the hon. member's colleague a bit of a run for his money, that is all. As a matter of fact, however, we did a lot in the Canning. When are the Government going to do something to keep faith with their promises?

Mr. Bolton: They cannot keep one-tenth of their promises.

The Attorney General: You gave the Canning the filter beds.

Mr. SCADDAN: We did not. I am glad the hon. member has mentioned that. He made much of the obnoxious filter beds, and

led the public to believe that the Labour Government were responsible.

The Attorney General: You built them.

Mr. SCADDAN: As a matter of fact the Treasurer, when Minister for Works, was responsible for establishing the filter beds in East Perth.

The Premier: No.

Mr. SCADDAN: If anyone should shift these filter beds it should be the hon. members opposite. Let me deal with the question of the increased public debt during the period that the Labour Government were in office. I am taking the five years from June 1911 to June 1916. I find that the increase amounted to £32 6s. 3d. per head of the population. Of that amount £10 19s. 3d. was absorbed in railway construction and improvements to existing lines; £6 12s. 3d. was absorbed in providing additional capital for the Agricultural Bank; £3 8s. 3d. was absorbed in agriculture generally, including assistance to settlers; water supply sewerage and drainage, and a fair percentage of the agricultural districts, absorbed £3 10s. 8d., and workers' homes £1 5s. 11d.

Mr. Harrison: Are they not paying it back; are they liable for interest?

Mr. SCADDAN: I am prepared to admit that the hon. member is making a correct statement. It is absurd that it should be so stated, and what I complain about is that the Treasurer has not done this. This money has been loaned to assist individuals in the maintenance of an industry, and it is charged against them and therefore cannot be considered in the ordinary sense as part of the public debt. We have expended loan moneys in the last five years in directions which were not considered for a moment in normal times. It all has to come back, and ought to be added to our national debt, but in the sale of Government property our friends opposite will spend it as revenue.

Mr. Piesse: Is not fully 50 per cent repaid?

Mr. SCADDAN: Certainly not. Take the agricultural railways. The expenditure on our railway construction has been made practically all in the agricultural districts and all our district railways are showing us a loss to-day of over £60,000 per annum.

Mr. Willmott: Some of them are showing a profit.

Mr. SCADDAN: None in the agricultural areas.

Mr. Willmott: There are three in the South-West.

Mr. SCADDAN: Only as the result of the carriage of timber.

Mr. Harrison: Is not the increased trunk line revenue resulting from these new agricultural railways put against the expenditure on the agricultural railways?

Mr. SCADDAN: The business methods of the departments are to allow a percentage of the profit earned by the carriage of goods over the trunk lines towards the spur lines. The hon. member does not appreciate the fact that every mile that we carry a ton of fertiliser over our trunk lines represents a loss. Construction of railways, £10 19s. 3d.; Agricultural Bank, £6 12s.; agriculture generally, including assistance to settlers, £3 6s. 8d.; water supply and sewerage, £3 10s. 8d.; purchase of trams and provision of the power house, £2 8s. 6d.; new trading concerns—which caused all the chaos according to the Treasurer—19s. 5d.; goldfields development, State batteries, etc., 13s.; public buildings, roads, etc., 16s. 1d. Of the total amount of loan moneys raised in the five years, five millions went into railway construction. It may be claimed that we were not justified in building those railways.

Mr. Angwin: They were authorised by Parliament.

Mr. SCADDAN: That is so, every one of them was authorised. I wish to draw attention to the fact that none of us could foresee the war. They could not foresee it a week ahead in London; the men who are supposed to have their fingers on the pulse of trade, commerce and finance in London could not foresee the war three days ahead. How then could we be supposed to foresee it here? We continued the policy of railway construction, and our friends opposite never complained, with a view to providing for assistance and development to agriculture and our other primary industries. The whole of those railways undertaken were not completed when we left office, but we did build the lines authorised so far as we were able to get capital and material to do it. Unfortunately the war broke out and instead of the population of the State increasing, as it must be expected to

increase before our railways can be made to pay, the population fell away. And unfortunately again the policy of our friends on the treasury benches is calculated to bring about a still further depletion of the population in the interior, with the result that the metropolis will be crowded. If a man goes to the war, whether from Kalgoorlie or the Murchison, from Merredin or from Bridgetown even, are his dependants likely to remain in the country? They are not, they will flock to Perth. And this will be accentuated if the financial proposals of the Premier are given effect to. When the imposts he now proposes are in operation it will be impossible for the people to live anywhere else in the State than in Perth. When I put that position to the Treasurer he urged the present abnormal condition of affairs; but I think he might have explained the reason for it, and he might have made a comparison for the purpose of at least showing the reasons. I have always held we should consider country before party, and this applies more particularly in matters connected with the finances of the State. It is essential that every Treasurer should be careful to state the full facts when delivering his Budget Speech. The Premier tells us that he is faced with demands for financial assistance in every direction. Of course he is, and he says also that he expects those demands will continue. I tell him now that if he proposes to maintain our industries he must expect those demands to continue and he must meet them. Unfortunately we have been compelled to encourage people holding money to invest in war bonds, even our banks. I repeat that the Treasurer will have to render assistance to industries; he will have to help them as we helped them. He will have to help industries which are almost on the verge of bankruptcy.

Mr. Thomson: And he will do it.

Mr. SCADDAN: The member for Katanning says he will do it, then why complain about it? Finally the Treasurer said he was faced with the dislocation of trade and commerce caused by the war. Not satisfied with the dislocation caused by the war he proposes to make that dislocation greater by the introduction of methods of

taxation calculated to cripple trade in many parts of the State. He proposes to make that dislocation felt particularly outside the metropolitan area by his absurd and foolish methods and foolish proposals for taxation. It is not merely a matter of the amount of money the Treasurer is raising or proposing to raise, but the methods of raising it will have an undoubted effect on trade. If the Treasurer desires to tax a certain commodity why not tax it in such a way that every person in the State will pay the same amount of tax. Under the Treasurer's taxation proposals that is not the position. Every small storekeeper in the State will be compelled to make out a monthly return showing his turnover for the month and pay a tax on commodities sold over his counter at a price which represents the metropolitan price plus cost of railage.

Mr. Angwin: It will drive the country trade to Perth.

Mr. SCADDAN: Undoubtedly it will have the effect the hon. member says. People in the country instead of buying portion only of their requirements in Perth will then buy the whole of them here. It will drive the people from such places as Bridgetown to Perth as they will be unable to live in the country.

The Attorney General: That is positively stupid.

Mr. SCADDAN: Those are the methods being employed by the Treasurer for the purpose of arresting the financial drift. If those taxes become law, which I do not think is very likely, luxuries in such places as Bridgetown will be prohibitive.

The Attorney General: Which one of the taxes?

Mr. SCADDAN: Any one of them; but as I have said the Treasurer is not likely to get any of them passed. Is there any reason why luxuries should be available to the public in Perth but unavailable to the man living in the interior engaged in the development of the industries of the State and enhancing the value of the property of the man living in the metropolis? Referring to the last financial year's operations the Treasurer asserted that the amount of the deficit was not correctly stated, due to expenditure not having been properly charged up to the

financial year. That is, that I deliberately refused or avoided to charge up all expenditure properly chargeable to the financial year 1915-16, and thereby produced a statement which was not correct. The latter may or may not be so. But I have a knowledge that the only instructions issued by me as Treasurer were that all expenditure should be brought to account as far as practicable and all revenue also, within the financial year. A matter of fact, I want to say I know there is on record directions issued while a Liberal Government was in office that small country storekeepers were not to submit accounts until after the close of the financial year. The only instruction I ever issued was that so far as practicable every year should stand by itself and that all expenditure, as well as all revenue, for the year should be brought to account. If the Treasurer wanted to get the true position as at 30th June last, he should not have appointed a committee for the purpose of advising him as to what accounts should have been paid at 30th June, but should have asked that committee to show him the true position by also bringing to account all revenue, that is moneys earned but not received until after the financial year had closed. Let me take one case alone. In connection with the State motorship "Kangaroo," all charges paid to the time of her leaving Fremantle were debited against the accounts for the financial year 1915-16. The vessel arrived at Brisbane before the end of that financial year, yet every penny of the receipts from the voyage have been credited to the current financial year.

The Attorney General: On the contrary, you had the money cabled out from London.

Mr. SCADDAN: That is not correct.

The Attorney General: It is, I have here the Treasurer's statement to that effect.

Mr. SCADDAN: The bulk of the money came to hand in the month of July.

The Attorney General: No; it came in in June; you are bowled out over the "Kangaroo."

Mr. SCADDAN: I am not. I repeat that the position regarding the State Steamship Service is that revenue has come to account this financial year which was earned in the last financial year.

The Attorney General: You do not know anything about it; I have here the Treasurer's statement.

Mr. SCADDAN: At any rate I would not go to the hon. member to learn. He says he has the Treasurer's statement—

The Attorney General: I am answering for him; he makes the statement.

Mr. SCADDAN: And I also have a statement to make, that revenue taken credit for this year was earned before the last financial year closed. At the close of every financial year there are certain amounts outstanding both on revenue and expenditure accounts, and every year the Auditor General has introduced a return showing the revenue received after the close of the financial year which should have been received previously and also the expenditure charged against the succeeding financial year. I ask hon. members to turn up the Auditor General's report now before the House and they will find there a return showing figures such as I have indicated. There is nothing strange about it. It is always done.

Mr. Gardiner: It is an ordinary business practice.

Mr. SCADDAN: That is so; it is followed in every business. If the Treasurer desired to get the true position at the 30th June last, he should fairly have taken into account outstandings of revenue due to departments payment of which was deferred owing to the inability of the debtors of the State to find the money. Let him submit to the Board a request for a report on the revenue outstanding at the 30th June last which was due and earned in the previous year particularly under the following heads:—land rents due and overdue, interest due by departments on money advanced for different purposes, water rates, particularly in agricultural areas, rates which have been deferred, money earned by the State steamers in the previous year and not included as received, and then add to these the value of services rendered to the Federal Government and paid for out of revenue, services rendered on account of the war for which no payment has been received in the financial year, including services rendered by the

Railway Department and by the harbour authorities to transports. If we bring all these things to account, instead of the amount being £90,000 the Treasurer will find that something like a quarter of a million will have to be deducted. We cannot get an exact adjustment on the closing of the financial year. I do not complain of the Treasurer including all the expenditure he can for the purpose of funding it, but what I do object to is making the House believe that he is providing on the estimates of expenditure this year the £94,000. He is providing it, it is true, but he is deducting it too, so that it is not affecting his position for this financial year one penny because he is transferring it to another measure. Why did he not tell the public that? The Treasurer is deducting it and including it in a Bill which is before the House now, so that it is not affecting his finances this year a single penny. The Treasurer made some reference to what he considered was the outstanding feature in regard to this method of financing. He said that the Treasurer had taken into account the result of sales of North-West cattle but did not charge up the cost of them. I do not know why it was done; I do not keep the books of the department. The Treasurer has to rely upon his officials and I have not the slightest idea why it was not charged up. I believe, however, that there was a reason for it. I have not heard the Treasurer laying a charge against any official in the department, but even there, again, that has not affected the position of the Treasurer a single penny because while £26,000 is charged this year which should have been charged last year against revenue, he has received a net profit after paying all charges, of £28,000. That statement was made by the Colonial Secretary in another place the other evening. The Treasurer also made a comparison between the revenue and expenditure for the financial year 1915-16 and the revenue and expenditure for the year 1910-11 when the last Liberal Government were in office. Just what he set out to show I cannot understand, for surely he was not justified in making the following statement in 1911 if he attempted to show the other evening that the increase in revenue and ex-

penditure was not justified. This is what he said in 1911—

His Government during the past six years of its career had had to face the requirements of increased population, increased educational facilities, more police protection, and greater hospital facilities, as well as an increased demand for interest and sinking fund on the large expenditure in connection with the public works policy.

If that was correct in 1911, does it not apply more so to-day? It is a natural expectation that we should have to provide for such things as these, and in addition we in Western Australia have been faced with two droughts of unexampled severity and the greatest war in history, and if we are going to refuse to receive any more money and expend any more money the position will become serious. If in 10 years' time this State cannot show an increase in its turnover in all directions, revenue and expenditure alike, I will be sorry for the progress of the State. We shall be standing still. What does the Treasurer intend to imply by his statement?

The Attorney General: We will have a million people by then.

[*Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.*]

Mr. SCADDAN: I recognise that the Treasurer tried to draw comparisons by taking the population statistics in 1911 and in 1916, and by that means showing that we increased our revenue per head of the population, and that we increased the expenditure likewise. But there again he was not fair in his comparison. I know that our population has fallen during the last couple of years. That was to be expected, and I want to ask the Treasurer if he meant anything at all, did he mean by his statement that the people in Western Australia have been suffering as individuals because we inflicted hardships upon them in the direction of increased taxation or increased charges, which were not in operation when his Government were in office, and that we expended money and frittered it away? As a matter of fact, our trade and commerce is proof positive that when we left office we

were making tremendous strides and developing our primary industries side by side, and that our cities and towns were advancing. All that was due largely to the immigration policy of the Labour Government, and yet our friends have announced their intention of pursuing a vigorous immigration policy after the war. I have not considered the details of that proposal but a suggestion which was made by Sir Walter James at a dinner held at the Palace Hotel the other evening, may be followed in this connection. The question of bringing immigrants to this State is not a party one. I am satisfied that everyone on this side, as well as on the other side of the House, is desirous of seeing the population increased and peopling our vast spaces and developing the industries.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: By all means.

Mr. SCADDAN: Therefore, it is essentially one of those questions that might be presented outside the fixed policy of the Government. It should be put upon the Table of the House, rather than that it should be forced through the Chamber, or carried out by an administrative act, known to no one except the Ministers themselves. A question like this should be submitted to members so that their ideas might be expressed in the direction of materially assisting a policy which would certainly be for the advantage of the State. I recognise that the question is not going to be a light and easy one; there will be tremendous difficulties in the way of bringing people to this State.

Mr. Angwin: We shall be able to get plenty of women and children.

Mr. SCADDAN: If there is one thing that Ministers should tackle, it is this question of recognising the importance of problems such as this, and they should get ready to solve them. It will be of no use sitting down and waiting, as we Britishers are unfortunately in the habit of doing, until we strike trouble, and then wake up and do something. We must prepare. The establishment of a poultry farm for some, while others are waiting for land will not solve the problem. We want to retain all the men who come back, and we must not do anything which will make them discontented. It must not be forgotten that there will be

big competition with neutral nations in the way of getting population after the war, and what we want to do is to see that British blood goes to British colonies.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You want to raise money, too.

Mr. SCADDAN: There are too many in the community who imagine that what we are doing to-day will have to be paid for in the future. That is wrong. We have not made a single shell, or gun, which has not been paid for. All we are doing is to call upon those in the community who have the capital to put it out in a different direction. We are asking them not to send it to foreign countries to invest it for the purpose of winning the war, and if we have the right to call upon those in the community who possess capital to put that capital into the coffers of the State for the purpose of maintaining our national existence, we have the right to demand that they shall put it into the commerce of the State for the purpose of developing the industries within our own borders. The money is here. Do we imagine that when we buy or sell something that the person who receives the money throws it into the sea? The money goes into circulation. Surely we can organise to get money for the purpose of developing our industries. If we have to hold Australia as a white Australia, if we are to hold it as part of a British possession, we must people the country, but we shall not people it by sending wool to Germany just because we may be able to get 2d. a lb. more for it there.

Mr. Gardiner: The allied nations will help us with capital.

Mr. SCADDAN: There is all the money available which we require for the purpose of developing our industries, and we shall not maintain our prestige if we do not follow that course. We must prevent attempts to send raw material away and make an effort to produce a finished article from the raw material which we have here. We have not done this in the past simple because we were foolish enough to imagine that we had no right to call upon the man with capital to use it in the best interests of the country in which he lived. We must wake up to the necessity for doing something as a nation and not as

individuals. It is not to our advantage to grow wool and send it away; let us grow it and convert it into the finished article within our own borders, or at any rate within the Empire and use it for the benefit of the people of the Empire.

Mr. Gardiner: If the legislators will not wake up our citizens will.

Mr. SCADDAN: The problem which they will have to face will make the legislators wake up. Is it imagined that we can go on from day to day passing this kind of legislation and that after the war things will go on in the usual way? I venture to say that we will wake up when we hit our noses against the wall. There are big problems to be faced. There is no room for a difference of opinion on the one great question, the building up in this part of the Empire of a glorious heritage, peopled and maintained by a white race and developed as it ought to be developed. I wish to touch upon the boasted attitude of the Treasurer in refusing to continue to issue Treasury bills for the purposes of meeting sinking fund charges on revenue instead of making direct payment from revenue to the sinking fund trustees. The policy may be wise or unwise. Even if it were unwise, I still consider that to take money from this State to distribute it in London is absurd at present. If the Treasurer was not prepared to make sinking fund payments by way of Treasury bills, he ought in the interests of the State to have brought down a measure suspending sinking fund payments at the present juncture. For he still has to borrow money to pay sinking fund charges. Even on this very Budget he is going to borrow somewhere the amount of £260,000 which he pays to the trustees in London for the purpose of buying back our own stock. What an absurdity! I ask the hon. gentleman to quote to me one single financial authority of any note that has not deliberately stated that in times of distress such as these it is a positive absurdity to continue to make contributions to sinking fund.

Mr. Collier: It is mad finance.

Mr. SCADDAN: As a matter of fact, it is worse than mad when one has to borrow money at 6 per cent. to do it. Of course, one might possibly buy one's own stock at so much below par as to receive the equiv-

alent of 6 per cent. But what advantage is there in taking money out of the State to put it into the pockets of bond holders in London who are not entitled to repayment for many years to come? I venture to say that everywhere sinking fund legislation has been repealed, or else suspended for the period of the war. I do not think our stockholders would for a moment object to the suspension of sinking fund payments for the period of the war and twelve months thereafter.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Why did not you propose it?

Mr. SCADDAN: I did propose it, and my action almost caused a scene in this House. There was even talk about repudiation. But what sort of business methods are they which lead the Treasurer to continue to borrow for the reduction of loans? Surely that is not a method to be pursued at the present time. If the Treasurer is not prepared to retain the sinking fund money in this State, then, I ask, is the present Treasurer going to the Prime Minister to say to him, "I want you to raise me a quarter of a million to buy back Western Australian bonds in London"? I have considered this matter pretty carefully, and I recognise that under existing conditions there is extreme difficulty in raising the money required to carry on public works and private industry.

Mr. Gardiner: Do we not hold a considerable amount of our own stock?

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes. In the first instance I submitted to the trustees a proposal that, instead of sinking fund payments being made, the stock which the trustees hold should be cancelled to an equivalent extent. They declined my proposal, and then I suggested this very method of issuing Treasury bills. We are now lifting bonds much before the time when the holders can demand that the bonds shall be lifted. In times like these such a procedure is folly. Or perhaps it is a matter of party politics with the present Treasurer, because he opposed a move I made in the interests of the State. He will take his own course, even if it means ruining the credit of the country. The Treasurer's action means the sending away annually of £260,000 of good Western Australian money to London to be circulated amongst bond holders

in the United Kingdom who cannot demand payment for many years to come. In concluding, the Treasurer said that his predecessors were responsible for the position as he found it. He said, "The position is not of my own making." But, as I have already explained, so far as this Budget is concerned the position is of the Treasurer's making. If he is not responsible for the Budget, why does he produce it? Why does he not say, "There is the Budget prepared by my predecessors, for which I am not responsible; take it or leave it; I am going to carry on as my predecessors declare I should carry on"? The hon. gentleman knows very well that when on this side of the House he announced a policy which as Treasurer of the State he must keep faith with. I believe the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) knows something about a resolution carried at a certain conference, and about a bargain that the head of the present Government should carry out as Premier the policy he announced when in Opposition. After a certain bargain had been made, certain members said, "We insist that when in office you carry out your policy as you outlined it when in Opposition." The hon. gentleman, of course, is trying to do that; but he cannot do it. He cannot do it by applying business methods, a monopoly of which is claimed by our friends opposite. The Country party insist that he must apply his policy, but his policy is simply one of drift, drift, drift. After all the talk about squandering, the Treasurer brings down a Budget differing from previous Budgets only as regards increased expenditure. There is increased squandering, and, side by side with that, we find taxation proposals for raising a quarter of a million additional money from the people, over and above the amount which the Treasurer is extracting from them by increased charges for services rendered. And yet this is the heaven-born financier! This is the business man, the only man who can lift Western Australia out of financial chaos! This is the head of the party commanding so large a measure of the public confidence that they hold only 17 seats in a House of 50! The occupants of the Treasury benches, I say, instead of helping and benefiting the

State are going to bring about chaos and difficulty, and instead of pointing to dislocation of trade and commerce due to the war they will presently be pointing to dislocation due to their financial policy, due to their want of business methods. Even at this hour I urge the Treasurer to view the finances of the State from an entirely different standpoint. The necessary funds to carry on the affairs of the State must be obtained, and I will help him to get them. We cannot continue to furnish services to the public unless the public pay for them. If the public do not pay for them, there must be a shortage on revenue account. We must raise additional revenue, but I do ask the Treasurer to consider the proposition of raising revenue from those of the community who are least feeling the effects of the present trying conditions.

Mr. Collier: In all these taxation proposals, practically, the wealthy go scot free.

Mr. SCADDAN: I daresay that every member of the community has felt some of the effects of the war and the drought.

Mr. Foley: The wool kings are making more money than ever.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am not sure of that, but I do know there are drapers in Perth who are making larger profits than before the war. I have never yet denied the right of the Treasurer, under existing conditions, to call upon everyone to render tribute to the State, and, through the State, tribute to those men who are conserving the privileges we all enjoy; but I say that everyone should render tribute according to the value of the services he is receiving. To ask a little trader to load a petty commodity he sells over the counter with all sorts of charges and pass those charges on to the small customer is utterly wrong. Again, to ask a man living in Meekatharra to contribute 15s. additional railway revenue, while a man living in Armadale pays an additional 1s., is also utterly wrong.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): You did exactly the same.

Mr. SCADDAN: That is not so. The Honorary Minister does not yet appreciate the difference between the increased railway charges imposed by the previous Government and those imposed by his Government. In

connection with the increases I made, a deputation waited on me at Kalgoorlie, comprising those most strongly opposed to the increase. Here I may mention that the present Government have put on their increases without first taking off those we made. I said to the deputation, "If we increase the charges in the short zone by 20 per cent., and in the next zone by 15 per cent., and then in the next zone by 10 per cent., and in the long distance zone by 5 per cent., would you consider that a fair method of increase?" A member of the deputation replied, "Yes; I would not have complained had you done that." He was startled when I told him that that was exactly what the Scaddan Government had done. Our friends opposite, however, cannot see that an all round increase of 10 per cent. means an extremely heavy tax on a man sending goods over a long distance. There is no equality of sacrifice as between that man and another man sending goods over a short distance. Again, to come along with a tiddly-winking measure to provide for the repatriation of soldiers is utterly absurd. Is the citizen who visits a picture show or a football match or a race-meeting the only class of citizen who obtains protection from the men in the trenches in France? Every citizen of the community, whether he is a man working for 9s. a day or a man receiving an income of £9,000 a year, is receiving protection. Therefore the cost of the repatriation of our soldiers must be charged up against every member of the community according to the value of the service received. I again urge that the question of financing the State under existing conditions is one of which I appreciate the difficulties. The Treasurer has my sympathy, but I only wish to heaven that the hon. gentleman may learn the lesson that the finances of the State are a matter which affects him not only when he is on the Treasury benches but also when he is in Opposition. I hope he will learn that as a member of Parliament he is a director for the people, and that it is his duty above all to consider the credit of the State first, and not to consider first his party interests.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

[Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.]

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [7.32]: To my mind the statement made by the Treasurer is positively alarming. A deficit of one and a half millions and a declining revenue! People should pause and consider what this really means. Surely the fact that we owe £110 per head should at least cause a feeling of uneasiness in the breast of every man who realises that he has that hanging over his head. A deficit of nearly half a million for the year! Under these circumstances I ask, what can be done? If the leader of the Opposition, the ex-Treasurer, was genuine—and I have no reason to doubt his sincerity—when he said to-night that he was prepared to put the finances of the State above party politics, to put the State first and the party next, then I see no reason why the services of that gentleman should not be utilised. We have here at my right hand an ex-Treasurer. Why should not the Treasurer and those two ex-Treasurers work together for the benefit of the State, and let party politics come second? Comparisons were drawn by the Treasurer between the years 1910-11 and 1915-16. Personally I do not take very much notice of the comparison. Those of us who were interested in business undertakings in 1910-11 know that we were then in a very different financial position from what we are to-day; and for that reason, considering the difference in the times as between the two years under review, I cannot give much heed to the comparisons drawn. But I have to take notice of the fact that a halt must be called. Economy has to be practised. The financial position must be met by fresh taxation. I take it we are all agreed upon that, and I again say that the brains of those two gentlemen among us who have made finance a specialty should be utilised at a time like this for the benefit of the State.

Mr. Walker: Do you mean join them to the Cabinet?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I mean put finance beyond the cavillings of parties.

Mr. Walker: By consultation?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes, let them consult.

Mr. Walker: They can always do that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: But it has never been done yet, although that is no reason why it should not be done now. The State would

benefit materially. If we are to have fresh taxation, surely we should also have rigid economy. Where and how is this to be practised?

Mr. Collier: It is not disclosed in the Estimates,

Mr. WILLMOTT: In the economical administration of our various departments. Surely this is where one would expect to find the pruning knife skilfully used and economy applied. But no, in the general summary of expenditure we find increases under nearly every head; some small, certainly, but others comparatively large. To me it seems astounding. Surely these departments are not doing the same volume of business now as before the war. When the population was increasing, when people were rolling into the State, and public works were booming, a large staff was required to cope with the work; but now, with a meagre list of works, I find that the Public Works administrative expenditure is to be increased by £25,500.

Mr. Walker: And that, after stopping the Esperance railway.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Again, there is nothing doing at present in regard to land settlement, yet the departmental estimate is only £977 less than last year. I want to know how the time of these men is employed. What do they do? It strikes me that either the civil service has been grossly overworked in the past or that it is over-staffed at present. If the latter be the case the people are to be taxed to maintain a certain section of the community in positions carrying salaries, and I doubt if there is at present sufficient work to keep them profitably employed. Take some of the big firms we have in the State. Do we find them conducting their affairs on those lines? When the volume of business decreases the staffs are cut down, hands are dispensed with, and the salaries of the staff that remain are also reduced. When orders were coming in freely the business was run as a business should be run. An efficient staff was kept up and that staff was paid for their brains; but now, when orders have decreased, we find that those big firms have all acted in the same way, have dealt drastically with their staffs. Why? Because it is only

business so to do. If we do not conduct business in businesslike fashion, we shall soon be in bankruptcy. I ask, why has not this course been adopted in regard to our public departments? What I am going to say will probably bring at me epithets from both sides: I am afraid votes have something to do with the question of retrenchment.

Mr. Collier: You are on the right track now.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am of opinion that no adequate steps will be taken to place our public departments on a proper economical footing until the interests of the State are put before the interests of party and of votes.

Mr. Collier: There is a solemn court sitting now with a view to the retrenchment of certain officers.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If it is going to cost as much in proportion to deal with all that could be retrenched on the score of there being insufficient work for them, it would probably be as profitable to continue to pay their salaries. Seriously, if these men are not profitably employed steps should be taken to have the departments economically administered. The Railway Department, I notice, shows a loss of £48,000 and the Commissioner in his report prophesies a further loss of £56,000 on the reduction of freights on manures and the abolition of terminal charges. Surely it has not been taken into consideration by the Commissioner that the extra production to be secured as a result of the reduction of the freights on manures will give him an extra haulage which will far more than compensate for the few pounds which he prophesies will be lost in the cartage of manures.

Mr. Scaddan: Follow that out to its logical conclusion, and where do you come to?

Mr. WILLMOTT: The hon. member has contended that the increased freights on other commodities used by the farmers mean that what the farmers have received on the one hand they have been called upon to pay away in increased freights on the other. He is really getting nothing. I am laying the true facts of the case before the House. We have heard repeatedly that the farmer has

got everything given to him. The farmer has to pay for everything that is loaned to him. He has never been given anything.

Mr. Bolton: He could not get it from the associated banks, all the same.

Mr. WILLMOTT: In normal times the haulage of timber and wheat would have turned the loss of this year into a substantial profit. Now we find that there are some millions of bushels of wheat still in the country to be hauled. The loss is only for the time being and we will have the benefit of the haulage next year. What does it matter who gets it, so long as the State gets the benefit? I stated that we should put the finances of the State above party politics. The leader of the Opposition said so before the tea adjournment and I support him there. I notice that the trams show a profit of £9,233. I notice also that no less a sum than £75,000 is estimated to be the amount required to put the system into anything like repair.

Mr. Scaddan: That is capital.

Mr. WILLMOTT: In addition to that, another £10,000 is required for cars. If this expenditure is to come out of our pockets I say we had better hand the trams over to the municipal authorities and allow them to run them, even if the sum of £100,000, which the Commissioner says has to be found almost immediately, has to be spent in order to put the service into proper order. Some of the State trading concerns do not show up well. For instance, let me take the State hotels. They show a poor profit indeed. Yet one hears some people talking about the huge profits that are made in this traffic, and one would imagine that the profits realised by the State hotels would be something substantial.

Mr. Foley: So long as they keep them out of the farming areas they are right.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The State Steamship Service shows a profit, but so far as the steamers running in the North-West are concerned, they practically take the place of the railways in the South-West. Therefore, they are at the present time, at any rate, on a different footing to the other trading concerns. They are transports.

Mr. Foley: Were they not always on the same footing?

Mr. WILLMOTT: These various concerns, if they are to be continued, must be put on

a business footing and run as business enterprises should be run. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) has frequently said the same thing.

Mr. Taylor: That means increased charges.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If we are agreed upon that point the sooner they are put on this footing and given a certain definite capital and a working overdraft, the better.

Mr. Angwin: Would you allow them to get their material to the best advantage?

Mr. WILLMOTT: There are occasions when it is necessary for the State to step in. I remember many years ago on the Esperance road, between Esperance and Dundas, that there was a number of private condensers and the owners of these condensers charged the people exorbitant sums for the water. The State very properly stepped in and instructed the Coolgardie Water Supply to erect condensers on that road. These were erected and the price of water was brought down by two-thirds. The State condensers never paid, because the owners of the private condensers took care to keep their water rates slightly below the rate charged upon the Government condensers. In that case the public got the benefit. They were paying 1s. a gallon before the Government condensers were started, and 2½d. a gallon afterwards. The interests of the individuals using that track were safeguarded. We policed the track by these condensers and no one except the owners of the private condensers could have any objection.

Mr. Scaddan: Is that not the same with the bricks that you are paying 10s. a thousand and more for than you can produce them at?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am glad to see an increase in the value of the wool exported, namely, £127,300. I notice that there are 18¼ million bushels of wheat as against 2½ millions of the previous year. We have something to be thankful for, after all.

Mr. Bolton: They can afford to tax them.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Why tax the men who have had one good season after suffering from four or five bad ones? Give these people a chance to make up the leeway.

Mr. Scaddan: What about the man who has had all bad seasons?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Timber shows a considerable reduction, being about one-third of the amount exported in 1913-14. There must, I think, be an enormous demand for our hard woods at a later date and this industry should then be in a flourishing condition. I doubt very much if hon. members who are not directly in touch with the timber industry have any idea how this industry affects our towns and ports in the South-West.

Mr. Taylor: And the railways.

Mr. WILLMOTT: And the railways, of course. When the timber industry is at a standstill, as it practically is now, we suffer. Everyone suffers, the business men as well.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And the people flock to the towns.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes, and unfortunately the people flock to the towns. Anything that can be done to keep that industry going should be done and it behoves us to see that everything is done to preserve the forests in the future, so that the State may continue to derive a substantial benefit from them for all time. This is only possible with very careful administration and I am exceedingly pleased that a thoroughly competent and well trained man has been placed in charge of our forests. Now we want to see that the whole of the revenue derived by our Forestry Department is not collared by the Treasury. Let, at least, a portion of that revenue be put back for the benefit of the forests.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will they agree to that?

Mr. WILLMOTT: We must make them agree to it. The fruit industry is beginning to assume an important position in our export trade, and with greater facilities to enable the growers to get their produce to overseas markets it should make great strides.

Mr. Scaddan: There would not be anything wrong in giving them a chance to put their fruit on the local markets.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The local markets are well supplied, but unfortunately the grower does not get anything like a proportionate amount of the sum charged to the consumer. We are gradually succeeding in bringing the consumer into closer touch with the producer and, in my opinion, and that of the fruit-growers, this is most desirable. I think it

is a moderate estimate to say that the year after next, with normal seasons, we should be exporting half a million cases of fruit. I am pleased to see that space for 190,000 cases has been promised. If growers are wise they will use every endeavour to utilise that space. In the past growers have suffered by having their fruit shut out at the last moment and their goods sacrificed in the local market.

Mr. Scaddan: Sometimes they would not take the space when it was available for them.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Frequently the space has been offered to us at too late a date.

Mr. Scaddan: On one occasion we secured space for them and they would not take it. We secured it at their own request.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is impossible for the orchardist months ahead to say what space he will require.

Mr. Scaddan: It was not a question of that but a question of their going elsewhere.

Mr. WILLMOTT: And they got their space?

Mr. Scaddan: Yes.

Mr. WILLMOTT: They perhaps got it cheaper.

Mr. Scaddan: We got it for them at their own request and under their own arrangements.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is a matter for argument. It is a matter I have argued out with Mr. Moody and the manager of the Associated Fruitgrowers, who both have their own tale to tell.

Mr. Foley: How about getting your own ships for your own wheat this year, if it is a problem?

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is an excellent idea. If the hon. member likes to make me an offer for the wheat I will submit it to the Premier as a representative of the growers.

Mr. Foley: Your executive would not allow you.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If the expected influx of population takes place at the conclusion of the war, it will be of great benefit to the country. The member for North-East Fremantle is very pessimistic, I notice.

Mr. Angwin: I say you will get plenty of women and children.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Let us get women and children as well as men. If we have this influx of population the Lands Department will have a very busy time and we must take steps, as the leader of the Opposition said, and I have no doubt we have already taken them, to cope with this influx. We must do all we can to induce people to come here. We must not forget that Canada is very much closer to England than we are. To many people even South Africa seems to have greater attractions than Australia. To my way of thinking, however, there is no comparison between the two countries. When we compare the climate of Australia—and one must be hard to please if one cannot get a climate to suit one in Australia—with the climate of Canada and South Africa, then I question anyone choosing either of those countries in preference to this one.

Mr. Collier: They are much closer to the big centres of population of the old world than we are.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That is so. If we are going to have this influx of population we have the country upon which to settle it. I hope that these expectations will be realised and that the producing population in our South-West district will enormously increase the prosperity of the State. Not a population in our towns, but a population on the land itself producing something. With such a population in our South-West, we could produce dairy produce at least sufficient for ourselves. That would mean that we would be saving a million per annum which at present goes elsewhere: It is largely to the South-Western portion of this State that we must look for the future prosperities of Western Australia.

Mr. Foley: It is a long while coming.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That is because, unfortunately, the South-Western portion of this State has not had sufficient encouragement, has never had a fair deal.

Mr. Foley: It had a fairer deal from the Labour Government than from any other Government.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That may be so, but we want an even fairer deal. We should make every effort to bring the South-West into full production. People unacquainted with that part of the State have no idea of

the land we have there upon which we could place the people.

Mr. Scaddan: That is not the point.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That certainly is the point. We have the land and we have the water.

Mr. Scaddan: But you have not the land ready; that is the point.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We should get the land ready if we tackle the question in a proper way.

Mr. Scaddan: Yes, if we spend money there.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Quite so; we must spend money, but I maintain that it would be money well spent. It would be better spent in the South-West than in the drier portions of the Eastern Districts. I do not condemn the Eastern Districts; no one who goes into those districts to-day and sees the waving crops could condemn those Eastern Districts. But we should put the bulk of our population into that part of the State which does not suffer from droughts, and in which the people are always able to produce, and that is the position in the South-West province. Unfortunately, in the past we have placed all our eggs in one basket—

Mr. Scaddan: That could not be helped during the past five years.

Mr. WILLMOTT: And the result has not been in the best interests of Western Australia. I say that for the time being at least we should concentrate our energies on the question of the development of the South-West. If we do that, I see no need for fear of the future of Western Australia. As the leader of the Opposition knows, in the South-Western portion of the State settlers could be put on small holdings and could make a living on them, which means that we could place a large population on a small area. Look at the saving that would mean even in railway communication alone and in every other way. Let me now utter just one word of warning. We have a wonderful country in the South-West, extending from Bunbury right down to Albany, but unfortunately at the present time some of this country is not connected with our railway system. I would not advocate placing a single man on any of that country which has not railway facilities.

Mr. Scaddan: How about the land alongside the existing lines down there which needs development?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I agree, and I have voiced the opinion already in this House that those people who hold large estates, or even small estates, and keep them in an unproductive condition, should be made to pay for the privilege of holding the land.

Mr. Carpenter: Your Government will not do that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: My Government will. I say that when my Government is in charge of affairs of the State we will do so.

Mr. Scaddan: But we cannot wait until then.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury) [8.5]: I find it difficult to address myself to this Committee in the way I should like on account of the very extraordinary manner in which the unfair proposals have been placed before the Committee by the Treasurer. Seeing the difference between the two parties, it would seem we must realise there would be some little difference in the methods of taxation of the two parties; but it seems to me that not only is the Treasurer lacking qualities of mind in bringing down such a proposal, but that he must also be lacking in qualities of the heart when he finds himself able to prepare proposals which will weigh so heavily on that section of the community least able to bear it, and bear so lightly on those whose ordinary circumstances and present position make them well able to bear the burden.

Opposition Member: He has to do as he is told.

Mr. THOMAS: It is often stated that the occasion brings forth the man; and in the stress of great circumstances on important occasions it sometimes happens that a man of ordinary mediocre ability rises to a high level of statesmanship. It might almost be said that the eyes of the people of Western Australia were fixed figuratively speaking, on the Treasurer. From him was expected something great in this great crisis in the affairs of our State. The people looked to him for some constructive statesmanship, to lay before the Parliament of Western Australia such proposals as would give the people courage, would hearten them and cause them to realise at the same time that whereas there were difficulties ahead and

great burdens to carry, at least the Treasurer of Western Australia was a man who could forget the petty party lines dividing politicians, and would place on the statute book taxation which was fair, just, and equitable to all. But what do we find? We find that every paltry, piffling, petty, miserable little trickling stream of taxation is being tapped.

Mr. Bolton: That is a good string.

Mr. THOMAS: Perhaps I may have overdone it on this occasion. But it does strike me that it is petty statesmanship to resort to all these petty methods when by a fair constructive policy, taxation proposals could have been put forward that would in one measure have provided the revenue which is so sorely needed at the present time by the State. Adam Smith, who wrote "Wealth of Nations," and who has since come to be accepted as an authority, laid it down as the first principle that the amount paid by any individual by way of taxation to the State should be proportionate to the advantages he received from the State. I would like to ask whether in these taxation proposals there is anything akin to the principle laid down by Adam Smith. Can it be considered that there is anything akin to that in a proposal to tax to the amount of 1d. here and 1d. there people attending 3d. or 6d. picture shows, in placing a tax of 1d. on a box of matches sold over the counter?

Mr. Nairn: Your own Labour Government proposed to tax amusements.

Mr. THOMAS: They proposed that at a time when the conditions were different. It must be remembered that the Government in placing a tax on those amusements is also placing taxation on the trader and as well as other taxes on the people which I propose to deal with later.

Mr. Seaddan: The Labour Government introduced it together with an income tax.

Mr. THOMAS: That is so, with a respectable income tax. What do we find now? That the Government have increased the amount of income tax upon the poorer section of the community by 50 per cent., but they have increased the income tax on the man owning £5,000 a year and over by 15 per cent. only. What a magnificent act of justice at a time when it must be realised that the big business firms and trading con-

cerns generally are in many instances making bigger profits than at any time in the history of Western Australia. But this Government could not forget party prejudice, could not forget its bitterness towards the people who send Labour members to Parliament.

Member: Rubbish.

Mr. THOMAS: I say it fearlessly. I say this is political vindictiveness carried to a point which it should never reach in this State. At a recent banquet which I had the honour and pleasure of attending we heard the statement made that party politics should be sunk and that we should stand as one man and do our best to ensure the prosperity of Western Australia. I heard the chairman at that banquet say that a fair deal should be given to the toiling masses, and I honour him for the sentiment. The leader of the Government, who was present, re-echoed those remarks and applauded what had been said.

Mr. Bolton: His tongue was in his cheek.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, his tongue was in his cheek. He was sneering at the want and the sufferings of the people. Coming away from there what has he done? He has increased the taxation on the man almost on the starvation line by 50 per cent. and increased the taxation on the wealthy, prosperous citizen by 15 per cent. only. Can that by any stretch of imagination be called fair, just or even honourable, or indicative of statesmanship? Is it an action that the Liberal party have any reason to be proud of? Not only are they placing an increased income tax upon the poorer people least able to carry it, but all the minor taxes such as amusements and retail taxes generally are going to fall on the same section of the community. Further than that, by their wanton, wilful carelessness they allowed to be struck off the statute book an Act which formerly operated here, providing for a fair control of the price of foodstuffs during war time. In what interest that action was taken I am at a loss to know, if it was not for the deliberate benefit of their wealthy friends. If it was not done in that interest, in what interest was it that we should place the toiling masses of the people at the mercy of rings, combines and traders banded together for the purpose of robbing the poor of the little

they have? Surely the dictates of common sense and ordinary kindness of heart should have induced the Government to take steps, irrespective of the wealthy traders or wealthy citizens, irrespective of what might happen to them to reinstate that Act on the statute book, so that every reasonable possible effort should be made to prevent a rise in the cost of living to the poorer citizens of our State. We are going through a time of stress and trouble; we are going through the greatest difficulties this country has ever known, or is ever likely to know, and if we cannot rise above party differences on this occasion—

Mr. Hardwick: Why do you not try?

Mr. THOMAS: Am I not trying?

Mr. Hardwick: You are making an appeal to your electors.

Mr. THOMAS: In what way? I am concerned about the welfare of Western Australia, and I cannot understand what object the leader of the Government can have in his proposal other than either the complete infatuation for his friends in high places and the complete disregard for the welfare of the people, or a desire to run his party on the rocks. I think those are the only reasons I can conceive of, because he surely can never anticipate that the people of Western Australia will tolerate the infliction of such an injustice as has been proposed in the Budget speech which we heard early in the week. I have never heard, and I have never read anything to approach within miles of the proposals recently laid before this House. I think that the greatest possible consideration should be given at this time to the people who are in receipt of small salaries or small wages, and who have large families. I raise no objection whatever to taxation in Western Australia.

Mr. Nairn: What do you call small salaries?

Mr. THOMAS: Anything up to £300. The income tax has been increased from 4d. to 6d., or 50 per cent.

Mr. Nairn: What would it be, not more than 6d. a week?

Mr. THOMAS: It will amount to considerably more than 1s. per week. Fancy at the present time, with the cost of living as high as it is, asking men earning less than £2 a week to contribute to an income tax in

Western Australia. What has a man left after he has paid for his cigarettes and even his cool drinks? That should appeal to the member for Katanning.

Mr. Thomson: You are an authority on temperance.

Mr. THOMAS: I bow to the hon. member's superior knowledge on that question. Fancy placing taxation on an individual receiving less than £2 a week, especially after hearing the gloomy view which was expounded by the Treasurer. What solicitude he has displayed towards the wealthy citizens of the State? What an absurd and ridiculous and even contemptuous tax to place upon a man in a high position! Would it have been unfair to increase the tax of the man earning over £1,000 a year to, say, 2s. in the pound? Is it not better that the man in receipt of £1,000 a year should pay 2s. in the pound and that the man drawing £150 a year or less should not pay anything?

Mr. Thomson: Why did not your party try to do it?

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member has a very bad memory or he does not study the proposals that come before the House. The taxation proposals which were introduced by the present leader of the Opposition, called the war emergency tax, while they had some little faults which might have been remedied, were, in my opinion, as fair as any that could be introduced anywhere. The time will come, and at no distant date either, when Western Australia will realise that on the shoulders of the man who is best able to bear it the burden of taxation must be placed. What nonsense to start talking of taking something from the man earning £2 a week. Is it believed that we can hoodwink the people of Western Australia all the time? Do we think that commonsense people will calmly sit down and contemplate such things as these? Further than that, the drift of the policy of the party in power is still towards centralisation. The further a man lives from the centre of population in Western Australia, the further he gets away to try and develop the country, the more he is penalised. What a travesty on justice! What a fearful misuse of power, and what lack of foresight and commonsense! What a glaring injustice!

Mr. Scaddan: Can you blame these people for flocking into the towns?

Mr. THOMAS: How can we blame them when they have such enormous railway freights to pay. Why do we not ask the city of Perth, which is more prosperous than ever, to take up a fair share of the burden instead of placing it on those people in the outback areas, who are fighting to make the best of their lot in this country? Whenever are we going to reach the turn of the tide? If we continue this policy of centralisation what inducements shall we offer to men to blaze the track? We are doing absolutely nothing whatever. I know that political parties all over Australia prate about what ought to be done and what facilities should be given to induce people to go out into the vacant spaces, but are we not making it more difficult every year for people to go out back by asking them to carry a heavier share of the burden? We heard a great deal prior to the advent of the present Government to office about the business acumen of the Liberal party. We heard a blatant discussion about the marvellous things they would do; how they would lift the burden from the shoulders of the people if once they were allowed to get back to the Treasury bench.

Mr. Underwood: They had business acumen enough to get there.

Mr. THOMAS: I should say it was bluff and humbug and deception of the people that got them back to the Treasury bench, because they have not adhered to the promises they made. I am inclined to think they never will keep those promises, because behind them stands the great, powerful Press of Western Australia, which will make every effort to hide their faults and extol to the house-tops the very few virtues they have. I agree in some measure with the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) when he made his complaint that enough was not being done to practise economy in the various Government departments in Western Australia. It has always been a contention of mine, not that I find much fault with any individual man in the Government service, that the whole system under which they are paid and controlled and worked is wrong. We are working the service now under prac-

tically the same conditions which prevailed 20 years ago. It is not my fault and I do not know that it is the fault of any individual, because the task of re-adjusting the Government service should be undertaken with a view of placing all the departments upon a scientific business basis, and it is a task which should occupy the attention of a highly trained business commission for some years. In America they have a system of applying to their gigantic business concerns what they call scientific measures. We find individuals applying the highest trained scientific intelligence to big business concerns, and they place them then upon the most economical basis that it is humanly possible to do. Every fraction of waste, every moment of time that is ill-applied, everything that is wasteful to the construction of their projects is eliminated, until we find in the manufacture, say for instance, of the Ford motor car, that by a system of the highest scientific development the manufacturer of those cars is able to pay the highest wage received by any artisan in the world. And I believe recently he distributed a bonus to all the women in his employment which, if I remember rightly, amounted to three millions sterling. The result is that he has produced a car which, for its purpose, is one of the best in the world, and this has been done by scientific management. Our own service is carried on in a most slipshod and most unscientific manner. It would pay Western Australia, if need be, to spend £50,000 to modernise its methods, and the money would be saved in one year and probably in less time than that. If we could make every man in the service understand that there was a place for ability high up the tree, if we could make him understand, no matter how humble his position might be, that if he could improve the place in which he was employed, if he could make suggestions for the betterment of the department, his own remuneration would be increased and preferment was waiting for him.

Mr. Scaddan: He knows it now.

Mr. THOMAS: How is he going to get promotion?

Mr. Scaddan: The same as the Irishman, by being kicked out.

Mr. Heitmann: Do not forget that America has not applied these methods you speak of to Government institutions.

Mr. THOMAS: Some of the American private institutions are as big in their turnover as the whole of the businesses of Western Australia.

Mr. Heitmann: But America has failed to apply those methods to her public institutions.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes; because America has a fixed method of changing the civil service with a change of Government. I am not too sure that there is not a modicum of wisdom in that system. Sometimes it seems to me that a new broom sweeps very clean, and that if we were to have a clean-out by a new broom occasionally it would be of advantage. We are face to face with great problems to-day, and I believe in learning from other nations, even from Germany and her scientific methods. The adoption of scientific methods would enable us to pay the public servant considerably better than he is paid to-day, and at the same time to reduce the cost of the service by 25 per cent.

Mr. Scaddan: The first essential is modern, up-to-date offices.

Mr. THOMAS: I entirely agree with the leader of the Opposition. In this Chamber I have more than once advocated that where a department employs a number of individuals they should be placed all together in one large room, with the head of the department in a glass office able to overlook every one of them. The Lands Department and the Works Department are mere rabbit hutches, where, if one asks an official for some detail, that official will ring up somebody else, and that somebody somebody else, until eventually someone on 50s. a week is reached and supplies the information. A great deal of expense could be saved by the system of larger offices. The Education Department affords an illustration of extravagance. The department had offices in the vicinity of this building—offices which were, if not palatial, quite good enough. At all events they were good enough when times were better. But in the stringent financial conditions now prevailing the Government have seen fit to shift the Education Department into a pa-

latial house belonging, I believe, to Mr. A. E. Morgans, and costing a rental of about £500 a year. That is where the business acumen of the present Government comes in. The old offices are now empty and bringing in nothing, but the Education Department has been housed in a most luxurious building at an unnecessary cost of £500 per annum. Business acumen! Throughout the whole of the proposals laid before the Committee, after all the weary months of talk from hon. members opposite when they were in Opposition about the marvellous economies which would result from those hon. members' resumption of the loaves and fishes of office, the Government have effected no economy anywhere. After all, they propose to have this year a deficit larger than any previous deficit in the history of Western Australia. Business acumen! Long lives of business training! Wonderful abilities! Apparently, the Government want to gloss over some of the mistakes they have made by inflicting the punishment for those mistakes upon the people who are least able to bear it. After listening to the flow of eloquence at the Palace Hotel a little time ago, after hearing the fair promises of all joining together for the future benefit of Western Australia and for the advancement of this young country, I am indeed disappointed. I came away from that meeting full of hope for the future of this State. What has been the outcome of it all?

Mr. Scaddan: Blasted hopes.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes; blasted hopes and broken promises. There has never been a time in Western Australia when thought was more urgently needed to inspire the people with hope and to lead them to understand that, no matter what party bitterness and party differences there may be, some of us, at all events, are prepared to rise to the occasion and do what is fair and right by the great mass of the people. I do not think that we in Western Australia have quite realised the position we are in. It is my opinion that Parliament wastes 90 per cent. of its energies in fighting party battles, and devotes only 5 or 10 per cent. to the interests of the country. That 5 or 10 per cent. must be increased to 100 per

cent. Every little personal or party difference or cleavage or division should be forgotten to-day. If we are not able to rise to such a claim at a time when our country needs us more than ever, the position of the Parliament of Western Australia is hopeless. Canada at the inception of the war realised more fully than we did what should be done to prepare for the difficult times ahead. An appeal was made to the people through the Press and on the public platform. I quote now from a newspaper article—

We have emphasised the necessity for the producers to increase production, for the manufacturer to adopt improved methods, and for the nation to pull together in an honest attempt at readjustment. The result of this appeal was extraordinary. In 1915, the wheat crop was increased to 336,000,000 bushels, or an increase over the previous year of 108 per cent.

The appeal made to the Canadian people to rally to the assistance of the Empire, to go in for productiveness to the last ounce of their energies, was thus answered; and Canada therein shows her true patriotism, because it is the soldier of the plough, possibly, who is going to render the greatest aid towards the attainment of the ultimate result of the gigantic struggle. It may be that all that Canada can produce and all that Australia can produce will, in the final analysis of things, be much needed by the Old Land. The article continues—

The oat crop showed an increase of 40 per cent., and other crops in the like proportion.

Now let hon. members listen to this—

The total value of grain and fodder in 1915 reached the stupendous sum of £177,000,000, being an increase of £50,000,000 over the previous year.

That is an indication of what a united effort on the part of a nation means in a time when she realises the great need of the Empire. Prior to the war her imports exceeded her exports by 20 millions per annum. To-day, as the result of her efforts, her exports exceed her imports by 20 millions. Listen to this also. It says that—

The banking resources of the Dominion are now the largest in her history. The

deposits in the chartered banks exceed two hundred millions and provide sufficient to finance the crops and furnish accommodation for every avenue of industry.

Mr. Scaddan: Australia has done something for the primary producer.

Mr. THOMAS: I would like to ask you if Australia has risen to the occasion in the same degree? We have been loud in our advocacy of supporting the primary producer, and when that support is properly applied I am with the Country party, or any other party, right up to the hilt. Mistakes have been made in the past, and I suppose will be made again, but while we have done a lot to help the primary producer we have apparently forgotten our secondary industries in Australia. We are still sending out wool to England, America, and other places to be made up into cloth and sent back again for us to wear, and even the wheat is being sent Home, instead of our sending away flour and keeping the by-products in Australia. In that direction our efforts must lie in future. And something more must be done not only to develop our primary industries, but our secondary industries as well. On this question we could learn much from Germany, where for years past they have brought scientific knowledge to bear upon their industries, both primary and secondary, and where steps have been taken to compel industries to get into line with the highest scientific methods of production. I believe when the time comes for us to make a step forward in this direction, much will be based on what the Germans have done in times gone by. When we realise that they were in a fair way to capturing the commerce of the world and that their science of production was the highest in the world, it will pay us to forget some of the ill-feelings we have towards them and profit by the example they have shown us.

Mr. Scaddan: And they were largely dependent on us for the raw materials.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes. In other words we have provided them with the means of prosperity; whereas if we had made use of scientific chemists hundreds and thousands of pounds worth of manufactures could have been provided by ourselves, and a home market furnished for our primary industries.

Mr. Scaddan: And we could have maintained a much larger population, merely by using up the waste.

Mr. THOMAS: A population doubled and trebled. We have had too much prosperity and easy comfort in Australia. We do not seem to have focussed our attention on avenues of development, a little harder perhaps at first, but in the end more productive of wealth than the industries we have pursued. If we are to populate Australia effectively it cannot be done merely by putting men on the land. There must be other avenues of employment provided. If the development of our country, the preparation of Australia to take its place in the world, to make it fit to maintain itself as an outpost of the white race, if this is not worthy of serious consideration, what other problem is there with which one can get the serious ear of the Chamber? There is much to be learnt, and it is time we began to tackle higher problems than we have attacked in the past. There is something bigger before the politician in Australia than there has been in previous years. We have had enough of fighting over paltry party differences that are not of any great consequence in the long run. It is time Australia had a chance, it is time we brought earnestness to bear in our searchings of the future, it is time we attempted things that in years to come will make Australia a great and prosperous nation.

Mr. Taylor: Put the Government out.

Mr. THOMAS: That is the leading thought in the hon. member's mind. The country can go hang so long as the Government are turned out. However, knowing the sins of the Government and their faults of omission and commission, I am with the hon. member. I only want to say in regard to the settlement of the people in Western Australia that I am afraid the policy leaves much to be desired. I read in the paper that Mr. Colebatch was going to settle on the land 25,000 farmers per annum. I would not be far wrong if I said we have only about 25,000 farmers in Western Australia to-day, representing the work of 20 years at enormous cost. Yet that breezy optimist, Mr. Colebatch, makes that statement.

Mr. Scaddan: Show me something he has done of a practical nature.

Mr. Wansborough: How long have you been in the State?

Mr. THOMAS: Nearly 25 years.

Mr. Wansborough: It is plain you do not know much about the conditions of the farming industry here.

Mr. THOMAS: My experience of farming is very nearly as great as that of the hon. member. I spent a great number of years on a farm.

Mr. Wansborough: You could afford to learn something of the farms here 60 years ago.

Mr. THOMAS: My friend apparently belongs to the political troglodyte era. If we are in earnest—and I do not believe we are—about the settlement of Western Australia, why do we not, as the Americans say, get down to tin tacks, get down to a practical scientific proposition? The war may end at any time and we may then expect an influx of immigrants ready to settle on the land. What have we done to prepare it for them?

Mr. Scaddan: Given an interview to the Press.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, that is about all. Are we going to bring out here men unaccustomed to Western Australia?

Mr. Taylor: Do you think the policy of the present Government reaches the acme of your ideals?

Mr. THOMAS: I do not think the policy of the present Government will do any good for Western Australia.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You are a great man at heaping up differences, but you are not consistent.

Mr. THOMAS: I am not heaping up differences. A legitimate, honest, conviction should always find expression on the floor of the House. How can the Government be successful with such intelligent followers as my friend?

Mr. S. Stubbs: I have just as much brains as you have, anyhow.

Mr. THOMAS: Then they must be latent. I have never seen signs of them.

Mr. S. Stubbs: I have gone straight. I do not go to temperance meetings and banquets within the same hour.

Mr. THOMAS: What does the hon. member mean? I went to the banquet, not like my hon. friend, to feast on the turkey and drink the champagne and indulge in a guzzle. I went to enjoy the feast of reason and the flow of the soul. However, I do not desire to pursue that any further.

Mr. S. Stubbs: No, I do not think you had better.

Mr. THOMAS: I would advise my friend to be silent. I have spared his feelings so far, but if he continues I may not remain so considerate. In conclusion I hope that with regard to this problem of the settlement of expected immigrants from overseas, something will be done immediately, will be done upon a fair scientific basis; that provision will be made when these men arrive here, that they may be placed immediately on land that will be reproductive. I have many times pointed out in the House that such a scheme could be inaugurated in the South-West, which is crying aloud for closer settlement and intense culture. On ready-made farms there, an untold number of immigrants could be settled with every prospect of prosperity. It is the only district in our wide State in which a drought is unknown, in which we have an area larger than Victoria with a certain rainfall. There the Government could place men on small holdings of 50 or 60 acres under proper conditions with every hope of success, and therefore we should have closer settlement and more intense culture than we have ever dreamt of.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [8.58]: I would like to have heard someone from the Ministerial side give an honest opinion on the Budget.

Mr. Seaddan: They have not got any.

Mr. CARPENTER: I think they must have, and I am sure it would be very interesting if those gentlemen on the back Government benches, and still more, those on the Government cross benches, would tell the Committee and their constituents what they really think of the Budget. I am not surprised at the conspiracy of silence, for they have fallen in, and their emotions are too deep for utterance. Their policy is to remain silent. We had a few remarks from the leader of the Country party.

Mr. Bolton: But not on the taxation proposals.

Mr. CARPENTER: He was certainly careful to say as little as possible about the taxation proposals of the Government. He makes his usual remarks about that great and glorious South-West which has been going to be a great place for the last 30 years and we still hear prognostications from him and from the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) occasionally as to what is going to be done there.

Mr. Willmott: What we hope will be done.

Mr. Seaddan: You will be done on the hustings.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am quite sure that if the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) would give us his honest opinion as to what he expects to be done by the Government in the way of development he would say that he is still hoping. I found myself in great accord with the remarks of the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) when he spoke of the dream which he had of united action, irrespective of party interests and party considerations for the development of this, our great State. One cannot help believing that he is quite sincere when he goes to banquets and hears this oratory and that it causes him to be fired with an inspiration that after all something is going to be done to lift us out of the rut into which we have fallen, and place us upon the high road to national prosperity. I would be glad indeed if I could believe that we have reached that stage in our political development when we can forget our partisanship and unite for those things which we have all recognised to be essential for the upbuilding of Western Australia. Even if we, as members of the House, could sink those differences, I very much fear that the people outside who send us here are not quite so ready for that lofty conception of political life. Certainly the Budget before us to-night does not contain any indication that the Premier of the State has any hope of realising that high and lofty ideal. I have heard many Budget speeches in my time and I am bound to say, speaking with all honesty, that I have never heard one on such narrow party lines and devoted to such narrow party interests as the one which we are now

considering. We have had some discussion in this House on more than one occasion as to the remarkable agility the Government possess for shirking things, shunting them on to somebody else, or seeking to hide themselves under someone else's responsibility.

Mr. Heitmann: Shaking things.

Mr. CARPENTER: I should be out of order if I referred to some of the things that are notorious as the outcome of the shunting proclivities of the Government. I understand there is always a good opening for shunters on the existing railway system, and there should be a fair prospect for employment for some of the members of the present Government.

The Premier: We are quite satisfied with our present billets.

Mr. CARPENTER: I quite believe that. The hon. member was an applicant for his present billet for five years, and as to the means by which he arrived at it the least said the better.

The Premier: Give us the history.

Mr. CARPENTER: The very taxation proposals of the Budget which we are now considering make it the most notorious and best hated Budget from the standpoint of the people that we ever had, not only in this but in any other Parliament in Australia. These are the outcome of the shirking ability of the Government.

Mr. Underwood: Their business acumen.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Government said "We want someone to advise us about this so that we can come along and say—this was submitted to us by the Committee." We had the extraordinary spectacle of the Treasurer of the day calling upon two or three civil servants to submit proposals to him.

The Premier: What for?

Mr. CARPENTER: For raising money.

The Premier: Nonsense; I did not do anything of the sort.

Mr. CARPENTER: Then I have not been able to understand the plain English of the report.

The Premier: What report?

Mr. CARPENTER: The report which I have seen in the Press. It is the report of three gentlemen in the civil service, namely

Mr. Toppin, Mr. Black, and Mr. Paterson, who have advised the Treasurer as to what he will do in the way of taxation.

The Premier: No no; it was about moneys which you did not charge up last year.

Mr. CARPENTER: And the Treasurer has adopted very largely their recommendations. Let anyone read the report and just see how much these taxes consist of the recommendations of at least two of that committee of civil servants. The one thing that did show little bit of statesmanship, had it come from a Minister, the Premier turned down. We have had the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) bemoaning the fact that in spite of the expenditure on the railways the trains still run past miles of undeveloped and unused country. He admitted that something ought to be done, and said that something must be done to bring that land into use. The recommendations of this committee advise the Colonial Treasurer that it would be a good thing to put a tax on unused land. This was the one gleam of hope in the report, and that gleam of hope the Treasurer shuts his eyes to. He gives us the rest, which is the most remarkable jumble I think that ever we have had the pleasure of looking upon. We have proposals for fancy schemes of taxation under which the Government propose to take, I almost said filch, from the pockets of the people a 1d. here and 2d. there, and the iniquity of the whole thing, as has been pointed out by previous speakers, is that the taxation is levied upon the class of people least able to bear it.

The Premier: Which one do you mean?

Mr. CARPENTER: Everything that a man drinks from whisky to lime juice is levied upon, and every amusement that we may have from a river trip to a dog show is to be taxed.

The Premier: Did you not propose it last year yourselves?

Mr. CARPENTER: Our musical instruments, everything from a piano to a mouth-organ, are to be taxed.

The Premier: You put it in your bill last year.

Mr. CARPENTER: We did not do anything of the sort.

Mr. Walker: No.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member knows what was in our Bill and what it was proposed for. In addition to that, the man who goes to his work by rail in the morning has to pay an extra tax, and on his return he again pays an extra tax.

Mr. Heitmann: He pays it on the clock which wakes him up.

Mr. CARPENTER: And this in addition to the high cost of living which the present war has brought about. One would have thought that any Treasurer with any idea of statesmanship at all would have taken the existing conditions of the people into account and have said "As the people themselves have been called to make sacrifices and suffer hardships during the war we will put an extra burden upon those who have felt the hardships the least." But he has done the very opposite to that.

Mr. Thomson: Are the people who go to picture shows feeling those hardships?

Mr. CARPENTER: Many of them are.

Mr. Underwood: They go to relieve their mental stress.

Mr. CARPENTER: I know that many fathers and mothers who can ill afford it squeeze out 3d. to send their children to the picture show at the weekend. It is the one little spot of brightness in the lives of their children, but the Treasurer comes along, sticks up the children at the door and demands a tax from them before they can enjoy that little bit of brightness in their lives. That is the most unheard of thing.

Mr. Thomas: It has been in existence in France for years.

Mr. Underwood: A lot of things are in existence in France that we do not want here.

Mr. CARPENTER: We have always held that Australia is God's own country. We have always preached and believed that the people here enjoy some things, and indeed many things, which they do not enjoy in the older countries of the world. If the present Treasurer has in view the object of bringing us down to the miserable level of the working classes of the old country then we can understand his purpose of bringing a Budget of this sort before the House. I believe that even those who sit behind him do not agree with him, and if they have to

vote for these iniquitous things they will do it only from a sense of party loyalty. I will go further and say that the Treasurer is straining their party loyalty in calling upon them to support proposals of this kind. Then we have that abortion, the income tax. In Great Britain they certainly have some show of statesmanship in the government of their affairs. There they said to the people who can afford to pay, "The times are abnormal, and we must call upon you to make a special effort to give us the money we require with which to carry on the affairs of the State." What have they done? They have simply put on an honest income tax with a super tax, which on the biggest incomes represents a sum of 5s. in the £ and the patriotic Britishers are paying it. If our Premier had taken anything like that high stand and had told the wealthy people of this State, "for the time being at least, we are calling upon you to make a sacrifice in proportion to what you enjoy," those men would have paid it and paid it without demur. But instead of that he comes along and says to the man who was getting £2 per week, "I am going to tax you." He puts the flat rate on them.

Mr. Bolton: A rate for flats.

Mr. Underwood: He put a flat rate on the Country party.

Mr. CARPENTER: Of 2d. in the pound on the man who gets £156 per year and has a family, in the same way as on the man with £5,000 a year who has no family.

Mr. Thomson: Have you worked out how much actual taxation the man on £200 a year with two children would pay?

Mr. Bolton: The man on £300 a year would pay 1s. 6d. per week.

Mr. Thomson: The £200 a year man I speak of would pay 12s. 6d. a year.

Mr. CARPENTER: May be so; but perhaps that man would be less able to pay that than would be the man with £5,000 to pay five times the amount he is being asked to pay. The hon. member probably has never been in the position of having to count every 6d. before spending it. The leader of the Opposition pointed out this afternoon, quoting from a compilation in the Press, just what it means a man on an income of £5 per week will be called upon to pay by way of increased taxation. It

means to him 181 per cent. increase, while the man with £5,000 is taxed only an additional 25 per cent. In other words, the man with the small income is taxed seven times more in proportion than the man with £5,000 a year. I ask hon. members if they can find any special reasoning or any party consideration which would justify a course of that kind? The thing is so bad one can scarcely speak of it with patience. I am surprised that the matter has not brought forth a good deal more protest from the public; and the only reason I can give for such protest not having been made is that the people have not yet realised what it means. Many of them doubtless, who do not follow politics closely, will not realise it until they have to pay the increased taxation. By that time perhaps the Treasurer will be off the bridge and somebody else will be in charge of the Liberal ship.

Mr. Underwood: No; the Liberal ship will be wrecked.

Mr. CARPENTER: If the Liberal ship is not wrecked by that time, it will be soon after. I wish to enter a word of protest as I have often done before, against our State services being used as a lever for taxation. I know that some of my colleagues do not quite agree with me on this point. I very much regretted to hear the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) advocating that it is quite a fair thing in the metropolitan area to raise additional taxation by increasing the railway fares on the suburban lines.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Why is it not a fair thing that they shall pay the same rate as people in other parts of the State?

Mr. CARPENTER: Because the traffic is so much heavier and it does not cost so much per head per mile to carry the people in the metropolitan area as it does in the country. There is only one reasonable basis upon which to work this out, and that is to ask what does it cost to carry a man, say, 10 miles, and if the cost be 6d., inclusive of all charges, let him pay that 6d., but to charge him 8d. or 1s. for what costs 6d. is to tax him unfairly. I say it is unsound policy and inimical to our State services. If we allow this sort of thing to be done, if we allow any Treasurer to look around and say that he will

add a penny here and a penny there to the charges for State services, then we shall destroy the efficiency, the value and the purpose of those services. I would very much rather see those services under private control when the users would have to pay a competitive rate and get a decent service for what they pay than make a State monopoly of the services and permit the Treasurer to come along and charge taxation upon services rendered. The practice is most dangerous, so much so that I cannot understand any one on this side of the House advocating it. The member for Bunbury, unthinkingly perhaps, has expressed agreement with the proposal for the taxation of the people of the metropolitan area on the railways. The position will probably come home to him when he discovers that some people who are using the railways and have had their fares put up are now asking the Government why they do not look to the harbours and raise the freights and harbour dues. I am certain that if the Government jumped to this fly and called upon the harbour trust, either at Fremantle or at Bunbury, to bring in additional revenue by raising the wharfage rates the member for Bunbury would ask to be informed why so foolish a policy was being entered upon. I say the thing is bad in principle and altogether opposed to the recognised policy of controlling certain undertakings by the Government and giving the people the best service possible in return for minimum charges. The danger is still greater when we have a Government not only putting additional taxes on their opponents' railway rates, but also lowering the rates to their supporters below the payable figure for the sake of buying a little support. Then the danger is very much greater. On the one hand it is a lever to extract money from the pockets of their political opponents and on the other a shovel to put money into the pockets of those who, for the time being, are keeping the Government in office. There is an element of corruption about it which we as members of this Committee should be very wide awake to. I hope the country will wake up to the danger which has been introduced by the present Government in buying political support by using State services to give people advantages for which they do not pay. I am quite in accord with the

member for Bunbury in asking that something definite should be done for our returned soldiers. I saw with amusement under big headlines in a newspaper a few days ago a scheme propounded by the Colonial Secretary for British consumption in which it was proposed or suggested we were going to provide for an influx of 25,000 people after the war was over. The Premier and all his colleagues well know that nothing of that sort is possible just now.

The Premier: But it will be when the war is over.

Mr. CARPENTER: Even when the war is over it is not practicable. We have hundreds of our own men coming back. I suppose the Premier will at least give them preference. Hundreds of our men are coming back and provision will be required to be made for them.

Mr. Underwood: Thousands.

Mr. CARPENTER: Probably thousands. Men accustomed to agricultural work will want agricultural work to go to when they return, and they will not expect to be told to go into the country and look after it.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Those men are coming back now.

Mr. CARPENTER: Exactly. That is what I am saying. We want something done now. Months ago I asked the late Government to put in hand some practical scheme.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): They are getting it now. Every man is placed as he comes back.

Mr. CARPENTER: Placed where? Does the Honorary Minister say that when a man comes back from the war and wants to settle on the land he will find a scheme already prepared under which he can take up land?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Mr. CARPENTER: He cannot do anything of the sort. Last year I asked the then Government with reference to the Yandanooka estate, which is owned by the Government and controlled by them, managed on their account by a practical man—I asked them to make some portion of that estate available for returned soldiers.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Do you not know that hundreds of returned soldiers are placed already?

Mr. CARPENTER: Placed with farmers?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am not speaking of agricultural labourers.

Mr. Collier: They are placed as farm labourers.

Mr. Bolton: That is good enough for the man who fights for his country.

Mr. CARPENTER: I was not speaking of sending men to work for farmers, but of men who desire to take up land for themselves.

Mr. Underwood: There are 700 farms on the Agricultural Bank's hands.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): The member for Pilbara is quite right.

Mr. CARPENTER: And what has been done to put these men on them?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): What do you mean?

Mr. CARPENTER: You must have some scheme for financing these men.

Mr. Underwood: We financed the last men who were on those farms.

Mr. CARPENTER: That is a totally different subject.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): It is not a different subject. A lot of the same men are coming back and returning to their farms.

Mr. Underwood: You had better get all that out of your head about getting the man on the land, until you prove that the land is good enough.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am speaking of one estate where the Government is now growing wheat profitably, where the land can be cut up into small holdings and worked on a co-operative basis. I am not an advocate of telling men, "There is the land, go on it and do the best you can." At Yandanooka we have an opportunity under the State manager, and a practical man at that, of allotting a certain portion of land to each man and there these men could have all the benefits of co-operative work.

Mr. Underwood: Let them have my farm.

Mr. CARPENTER: If they did not do better than the hon. member they would not do very well.

Mr. Underwood: I will sell it to them pretty cheap.

Mr. CARPENTER: At Yandanooka they could have all the benefits of co-operative farming and live a community life and not be separated from each other. If the Government want to tackle this problem seriously let them ask the manager of Yandanooka to report on a scheme under which he could take fifty or a hundred men and put them on the land in the next few months. What we ought to be able to do is this, to say to the men who come from the hospital and are discharged as fit for work—"If you want to become a producer, here is the opportunity." If we can do it by and by, when we get some money from the old country or when the Federal scheme for repatriation has become perfected, I see no reason why it should not be done now and it will be done profitably if we go about it in the right way.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Every man does not want to go on the land.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am speaking of those who do want to go on the land. I have mixed with them and long before they are discharged they say "I would like to have a farm of my own." There are some who have been working on farms all their lives and so far as I can judge they are capable men.

Mr. Underwood: If they take my advice they will get a St. George's-terrace farm. That's the way to make money.

Mr. CARPENTER: I want to urge the Government to take this matter seriously and try to devise some scheme which will enable the men who have served their country to at least become permanent citizens and wealth producers.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): I suppose you are aware that the War Council are doing this every week?

Mr. CARPENTER: I have followed their reports very closely and I have generally found that when they do have a practical proposal to make they disclose it; they do not hide their light under a bushel. It is no use the Treasurer trying to shirk this matter, he knows it has to be faced, and if the Government will not do it the people will take the matter in hand and ask someone else to do it. There are several vessels on the way out to Australia now full of wounded men

and we shall have hundreds, (probably thousands) back during the course of the next twelve months. If we leave the matter until those men are here we shall have nothing but confusion.

Mr. Underwood: The Agricultural Bank has any amount of farms.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member does not see the point. He has chaff from his own farm in his eye.

Mr. Underwood: There is no chaff on my farm.

Mr. CARPENTER: I ask the Government to give some attention to this problem and let the soldiers know what they can do if they want to become permanent settlers and wealth producers. I want to express disappointment at the Budget proposals and also my extreme regret that the political accident which gave the Government their life has brought about a result of this kind. It is going to hit not only those who sit on this side of the House and the people they represent, but will also hit very severely the members of the Country party, who were sent here to conserve the interests of the section they represent, and whose interests instead of having been conserved have been sacrificed.

Mr. PLESSE (Toodyay) [9.37]: I have not much to say in regard to the Budget except that the Treasurer's speech disclosed an extremely serious condition of affairs. I venture to say that the community as a whole thoroughly realise the difficult position the Treasurer finds himself in. It is safe to say that the people fully expect that extra taxation is necessary. Whilst many of the proposals as outlined by the Treasurer are deserving of further consideration I feel sure that there is yet time to effect a necessary alteration in some of those items. I wish to make special reference to one item of increase in taxation, and that is the matter of the additional railway freights. This is a very serious proposal indeed and it will bear very heavily on the outback settlers. The leader of the Opposition made a special point in his speech to-day of the fact that when increasing the railway freights he did it on a sort of zone system. The increases were certainly a great burden on the outback settlers, and were almost as great as those proposed by the present Government will

be. In many cases the farmers were staggered by the railway rates, and refused to take machinery over.

Mr. Scaddan: You take things for granted.

Mr. PIESSE: I know that the increase on one particular class of machinery to Dumbleyung was something like £8.

Mr. Scaddan: Under our increase?

Mr. PIESSE: Yes.

Mr. Scaddan: What was the tonnage?

Mr. PIESSE: I am not prepared to give the tonnage at the present time, but I make the suggestion that the present Government should consider the proposal of increasing the railway freights on a base principle, that is, if it is intended to increase the freights let us impose the same charge per ton from here to Mt. Marshall as we would impose from here to Armadale.

Mr. Scaddan: Why not make it a tax on incomes under existing conditions?

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member will enjoy the special privilege of an income tax in itself, but in this case it is necessary to get additional railway revenue to pay the increases in wages to the friends of members opposite which were made some time back.

Mr. Collier: That is not fair; what friends?

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member will not deny that the wages of his friends in the railway department were increased. I do not say that he selected special individuals for an increase, but the increases which were general ran into something like £100,000, and the farmers were asked to pay extra railage to make up that sum.

Mr. Scaddan: You were asked to increase the income tax to make it up and you would not do it.

Mr. PIESSE: I am referring to the increases given to the employees in one department and the then Government turned round and asked one section of the community to pay them.

Mr. Scaddan: That is not correct.

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member increased the terminal charges and the railway freights up to many thousands of pounds. I am merely pointing out now the unfairness of action of the late Government. I would suggest that the matter of the present proposed increases in railway freights be recon-

sidered, because it is undoubtedly a serious matter. The cost of the necessities of life in many localities will be increased to an alarming degree and the matter demands the closest consideration and revision. If increases are to be imposed they should be on the lines I have suggested, that is, on a base principle. I hope the Government will review their proposed increases and endeavour to make them a little more bearable. We have heard a good many speeches from the other side of the House to-night, and the leader of the Opposition in particular went to a lot of trouble to point out how severely the taxation will affect the struggling man. I do not hold a brief for the present Treasurer, but I do like to be fair and I like to listen to fair criticism, but when the leader of the Opposition in an indignant way points out how severely the proposed taxation will affect the struggling classes, I would remind him that he himself is not altogether guiltless, for when he was Treasurer he introduced taxation measures and attempted to impose burdens which were decidedly of a class nature.

Mr. Scaddan: What where they?

Mr. PIESSE: Let us contrast the treatment meted out to the settlers by the hon. member with what it is proposed to do at the present time.

Mr. Collier: What treatment?

Mr. PIESSE: In the case of the settler assistance was freely given, for which I have always been grateful; but it was given at six per cent. per annum interest, and with a demand for repayment from the first crop. On the other hand, palatial homes were built for workers, with special consideration as to payment, while many of my constituents were carting their grain 16 and 17 miles—and they are doing it even to-day. The criticisms of the leader of the Opposition on the Estimates are of no use, as the hon. member himself must realise. Let us hope the hon. member will set about helping the Treasurer in a more kindly spirit than he exhibited this afternoon. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) is not justified in asserting that the farmers have been spoon-fed. Every farthing advanced to the farming industry will be repaid with interest. Another instance of differentiation in the matter of taxation occurring during the ad-

ministration of the Labour Government was that they imposed a special water rate on all lands fronting the main pipe line to Kalgoorlie for a distance of one and a half miles back. The reason for the imposition of the rate was, simply, that the main ran through or by those holdings. In consequence many small settlers were called upon to pay large amounts.

Mr. Collier: But the amounts were only added to their indebtedness. They did not pay those amounts.

Mr. PLESSE: One man I know of was taxed for water to the extent of £32 a year. He could not even pay the land tax, and the water tax finally drove him off his land. I would impress upon the Government the necessity for giving relief to people similarly situated. The Government have no more right to tax the holders of the land through or near which the pipe line passes than they have to tax the people in Albany on the same basis. Why should the farming community bear special taxation on account of the goldfields water scheme? I hope the present Government will grant relief from this unfair impost, and I sincerely trust they will also give further consideration to the question of railway rates.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [9.53]: Most of the time of the Committee this evening has been taken up by hon. members who think that good will result from putting more money into the wheat-growing areas. My opinion is that if Western Australia did not produce a single ton of wheat for the next two years the men now engaged in wheat-growing could be better utilised to win the war. There are at the country sidings and on the wharves of Western Australia many thousands of tons of wheat. Much of this wheat is being destroyed by mice and weevils. I am forced to conclude that wheat-growing has proved a failure in this State up to the present time. Ever since I have sat in this Chamber, every penny that Governments have been able to get hold of has been lavished on the wheat grower. The money would have been spent to greater advantage had it been put into the one industry responsible for any prosperity this State has ever enjoyed; that is, the gold mining industry. Undoubtedly, in some instances the money advanced to the wheat

growers will be paid back; but in the meantime every other industry in the State has been taxed to maintain wheat growing—artisans, shop-girls, and apprentices have contributed the money spent in propping up an industry of problematical value to Western Australia. The State is in a condition of bankruptcy at the present time, because of the assistance granted to the wheat grower.

Mr. Thomson: That statement is not correct.

Mr. FOLEY: I separate the wheat grower from the farmer. Coming now to the farmer, I noted that the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) said that the farming industry was going to be the backbone of this country.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Quite right.

Mr. FOLEY: That industry is nothing but bone; there is no meat on it. As regards the South-West, we are told of something in the way of farming that is going to be done there in the dim and distant future. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure disclose thousands and thousands of pounds being paid every year to experts whose agricultural services, although of an expert character are absolutely useless to the State. It is a crying shame that other industries should be made to pay the salaries of experts whose services are not being utilised by the framers.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: What about the mining experts?

Mr. FOLEY: The advice of mining experts has been followed with satisfactory results. All that the South-West has produced is a little fruit. Therefore it is highly questionable whether we are justified in continuing to pay the salaries of wheat, agricultural, and fruit experts whose services are not availed of.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Mr. Connor is certainly worth his money.

Mr. Collier: He is the dairying expert. What progress has been made with dairying in this State?

Mr. S. Stubbs: It is going ahead now.

Mr. FOLEY: If all the good opinions expressed by our hon. friends concerning the South-West were well-founded, that district would now be supplying the goldfields with butter and dairy produce, instead of our

having to import those commodities from the Eastern States. And there is no better market anywhere for our produce than on the goldfields. Yet the South-West has been lying practically idle with a market at its very door. The explanation probably is that the land down there is too patchy. I have been told that the land compares with the fertile river flats of New South Wales and Gippsland, but there is no comparison. The dairying industry in this State will never do any good until the people are forced into dairying properly as was done in Victoria. In many parts of this State they have, as many members know, better conditions for dairying than there are in Victoria; yet we have done nothing up to date.

Mr. Griffiths: A lot is being done in that direction on the Wheat Belt to-day.

Mr. FOLEY: The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) has been writing to every newspaper in which it has been possible for him to secure the insertion of his letters for the last six months telling the people that "Pigs is pigs." I do not think it was through the instrumentality of those letters that the growers in the Wheat Belt have gone in for pig raising. So far as the dairying industry is concerned, unless the people are absolutely forced on to the flats there will be no great advance made in the industry. Until our friends opposite can show us that those districts of which they speak so highly have produced something, there cannot be anything in their argument.

Mr. Thomson: You would not believe it if we could show you.

Mr. FOLEY: Until that has been done I shall vote on every possible occasion against extra money being spent in that part of the State. I am opposed to the money of the people in every branch of industry being utilised in a forlorn hope which the dairying industry in this State has been up to date.

Mr. Thomson: Do not be a pessimist.

Mr. FOLEY: Much has been said as to what should be done with regard to the gold mining industry. There never was a time in the history of this State when the gold mining industry needed a little more nursing than it is in receipt of at the present time. The gold miners do not want to be spoon fed, do not want to get everything from the State and pay nothing in return. They are

to-day paying their water taxes on a basis of so much water per day whether the water is used or not. The Honorary Minister tells us that he is giving consideration to the question of reducing the cost of water to farmers and on the other hand, the Premier says that he still expects the mining industry to pay the existing exorbitant charges for water.

Mr. Thomson: How are they exorbitant?

Mr. FOLEY: The people on the fields are paying 5s. a thousand gallons for water which is utilised in the production of something valuable. They are not talking about producing, as are people in the dairying industry. There is a little more in my argument—they are paying and producing.

Mr. Piesse: They are paying 10s. a thousand gallons at Goomalling.

Mr. Griffiths: Do you realise that a farmer holding 2,000 acres of land paid £47 last year for water which he did not use and is this year paying another £47.

Mr. FOLEY: That is my argument. They are not making the best use of their land. If the land were so good as my friend said it is, then the farmer should be utilising that water and by means of irrigation should be producing something which he does not produce to-day.

Mr. Piesse: At 10s. a thousand gallons?

Mr. FOLEY: If the farmer does not use the water it is an evidence of carelessness on his part. I claim that the people in the gold mining areas are taxed at the present time, and will be under the Premier's proposals, to a greater extent than any other section of the people of the State. Everyone knows that the goldfields areas are good places for shows and entertainments of all kinds. No one can begrudge the man outback one night's entertainment in a week, whether it be a picture show, a lecture or an entertainment of any description. Unlike the people of the metropolitan area who pay 3d. or 6d. for a picture entertainment, the invariable charge north of Kalgoorlie is 1s. 6d. to 2s. Our Country party friends claim that they are paying everything. But I contend that the miner and the miner's wife, and also the farmer and his wife, should be put on a more equitable plane than at present in connection with this taxation. Assuming

that the man outback attends an entertainment only once a week, or probably fortnightly only, permitting his wife to attend on the alternate weeks as is very often done. It means that he is taxed an extra 9d. per week on his entertainment. Then, again, under the income tax proposals of the Premier those men will be taxed at the rate of 1s. 9d. per week. I am speaking of a man with a family of two children in receipt of £4 a week.

Mr. Thomson: Such a man would roughly be in receipt of £200 a year; he would pay 12s. a year taxation.

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member's mind will not soar higher than 12s. a year. Then again the man in the mining area is to be taxed at the rate of 1s. 6d. per week by way of extra charges on the railway. And unjust as this increased railway taxation may be in the metropolitan area, falling as it does on the shop girl, the labourer, the apprentice, and the lower paid persons who use the second class carriages—an impost of 2d. on a 3d. ticket—I consider it more unjust to put a toll of 1s. 6d. per head on the people outback, thereby bringing the actual increased income tax of those people up to 4s. a week. It is apparent that the Government, although they propose extra taxation, have no intention of providing equitable means of allowing persons engaged in the industry gaining some advantage from the industry. If the people in the mining areas were to rebel against this unfair differentiation and refuse to work the mines notwithstanding that they have sent more men proportionately than any other section to fight for the Empire, they would be called unpatriotic. The people of the fields have no wish to draw a line of demarcation between employer and employee. It must be said to their credit that they can settle their differences in a constitutional manner. But when increased taxation to the tune of 4s. per week is proposed, I contend that it is undoubtedly the duty of the Government to do something to assist the industry, and thereby give those people who are furthering the industry a reasonable opportunity of making a little money out of it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Do you not think it was equally unjust for the previous Government to raise the railway rates?

Mr. FOLEY: The 10 per cent. increase on railway freights means more than appears on the face of it to the man who pays his money to the retailer at Leonora for goods. The proposal of the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) when he was Premier meant an impost of one-tenth of 1d. in the pound. From my place in this Chamber I criticised that proposal, but when I went closely into the matter, I ascertained that it meant only one-tenth of a penny was put on any article.

Mr. Scaddan: That was the highest rate.

Mr. FOLEY: That is so; and many of the commodities in every day use by miners in their homes I found were absolutely free. In the present Government's proposal we find no distinction made. These proposals mean that instead of paying the one-tenth of a penny as under the taxation proposals of the late Premier, that 10 per cent. is put on every article. When the people of the goldfields were shown what the Labour Government's taxation proposal really meant and how lightly it rested on necessities there was very little criticism. But with a flat rate of 10 per cent., I assert that those persons who are outback endeavouring to open up our country are being taxed to a greater extent than those resident nearer the city. It is a well known fact that when taxation is imposed the retailer doubles the amount of the taxation and passes it on to the consumer. By the method adopted by this Government, the friends of the present Government, the big warehousemen, are left out of the question. They are in the position of saying to the consumers that it is the retailer who is getting at them, yet it is a well known fact that ever since the inception of the war the warehousemen have been securing better prices for commodities, and are doing so to-day, than they were before the war broke out. The tax is not an equitable one. It is a class tax and one which the Government ought to place before the people to see whether they want it or not. The differential rates on the railway system for many areas have been bad enough. Take the rates on some of our refractory ores. We want to do what we can to assist the Government and the nation in winning this war. Base metals are required

and we are doing what we can to produce them. The Government are assisting by making advances. They are, however, not assisting the farmer when they are carrying this ore from the Anaconda mine at a farthing per ton to Messrs. Cuming Smith in order that they may make fertiliser for the farmers. Cuming Smith, out of this phosphatic rock, extract sulphur and get 300 per cent. in advance of the price they got before the war. The farmers are paying for this, but there is never one word of criticism or protest from my hon. friends opposite. If the Country party wish to complain against this treatment of the farmers, they should complain to Cuming Smith, but they are afraid to do so lest Cuming Smith should knock off supplying their fertilisers. On the same train that this ore is carried at a farthing a ton we find that a prospector is having carried his 10 or 12-ton crushing. In one portion of the Mt. Margaret electorate the prospector has first to cart his crushing, because the battery facilities are not as they should be. He carts this 10 or 12-ton crushing down, and instead of paying one farthing a ton he pays 8d. a ton. There is, therefore, this differential treatment between the miner and the manufacturer, and the Government would have us believe that the farmer is getting something out of it. But the farmer is not getting something out of it. As in every instance these taxation proposals are going to keep something off the big man, so Messrs. Cuming Smith are making 300 per cent., and the Government are not taxing the big man except to make him pay 2d. on 2s., whereas the poor man has to pay 2d. or 4d. In some instances there is a 50 per cent. tax on the working man earning from £100 to £200 a year, and a 15 per cent. extra taxation on the big merchants, who are undoubtedly exploiting the farmer, the miner, and any one else who is producing anything in the State. If it is desired to get any assistance for any mining show it is necessary to put up a case. When a man puts in an application for assistance to the extent of £200 in connection with a mine an inspector is first sent along to inspect the mine, and he has to prove that the mine is worthy of assistance. The farmer, on the other hand, is put on the land and it is taken

as *prima facie* evidence that he should be given money.

Mr. Thomson: He pays for it.

Mr. FOLEY: I admit that he pays for it. As I was saying, it is necessary for a case to be put up as to whether the mine that is to be assisted will open up a new line of reef or not. If that can be proved, it has then to be proved that the man in question, who is asking for the money, is a worthy man to whom to give that money. That being the case, in nine instances out of 10 the money which is given for this purpose has been paid back with interest. If a man is going on the land and is to be given money, he should have to pay it back on reasonable terms. The goldfields people only wish that the same conditions should obtain so far as they are concerned. If these conditions obtain we could open up some of the old mines that are lying idle, and some of the new areas which are not being prospected, because sufficient encouragement has not been given to them. The Minister for Mines said he was going to have a conference. What I wish to see in place of that, is something new, so far as mining is concerned. If the Minister can bring forward some policy which is new and which is going to cut some ice, he will have no trouble in getting assistance from this side of the House, but the trouble will be to get his own fellow-Ministers and supporters of all parties to come round to his way of thinking. Mining is being treated in a very detrimental way when the lavish expenditure which is going on in regard to our farming areas is taken into account. Much of this money will never be repaid. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) said there were 700 farms lying idle at the present moment, and the Minister concerned admitted that this was so. That means, either that the men who were put on the land were not worthy, or that the land on which they were placed is no good. Many of those who have gone on the land have been robbed by land guides and land inspectors of the money which they had brought from the Old Country by being put on to useless land, about which pamphlets were written by the present Minister for Industries. There are men in the Wagin district on the land who should never have been put upon it. They have no chance of getting through even in that dis-

trict. There are areas in the State which have been settled by men who know nothing about the farming business, and who have received no other assistance than money from the Agricultural Bank, which is termed assistance. As soon as these two systems of assistance, that given to the miner and that given to the farmer, are brought into line, the less chance there will be of having men on the land who do not know how to work it properly. Another thing that is required is to see that the right class of land is chosen upon which to settle people. It should be determined, first of all, whether it is good farming or wheat growing land. We should then look at the question of whether the men to whom this financial assistance is to be given are worthy of this assistance and have a reasonable chance of making use of it. If that system was adopted in regard to the farming industry it would conserve the best interests of the State and we should not have the deficit which the Treasurer is using such devious means of getting rid of, and so pulling the State out of the hole it is in.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [10.25]: I heard the question asked this evening as to what the attitude of the Country party was in regard to the present position, and so far as the taxation proposals were concerned. I would just like to carry hon. members back to the first occasion on which the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) spoke in the Chamber. I will do this to show that the attitude of the Country party is the same to-day as it was on that occasion. The hon. member said—

We believe that at the present juncture and in view of the extraordinary circumstances in which this State finds itself, it is the wish of the people of the State that there shall be a legitimate truce, and the people are looking to the collective wisdom, integrity, earnestness and work of this Parliament as a whole to get Western Australia out of her present difficulties and put her again on the high road to prosperity. . . . At the present juncture we recognise that if amongst our party there is any special knowledge that can be used for the betterment of any of the acts of the Legislature or of administration that are brought before this House,

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the Government of the day have a right to come to us and ask us to give that knowledge fearlessly.

We have heard the Premier give us his idea with regard to this taxation proposal. He has pointed out that the taxation is equitably and fairly distributed. The ex-Treasurer, on the other side of the House, states that it is unfair in its incidence, that the man outback is going to be unduly taxed. They say that in a multitude of councillors there is wisdom. It appears to me that we are going on in an unorganised and haphazard way, and that instead of any wisdom there is all confusion. I have heard various members of the Chamber say that they are quite prepared to confer and assist the Treasurer in his present position in any possible way.

Mr. Heitmann: So long as the Treasurer thinks the same way as the hon. members.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have heard members in the House on all sides express the opinion that the time has come when this problem should be tackled, and that the country should have a financial council and confer with the Premier of the day.

Mr. Collier: You suggest a coalition and two or three more portfolios?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is time that we dropped this kind of talk and party strife, and looked at things seriously. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) laid great stress on the fertiliser freights. It is recognised in New Zealand that the free carriage of manures over the railways is to the benefit of the country and of the revenue generally.

Mr. Carpenter: Would you apply that all round?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Not necessarily, but in New Zealand it is recognised as a good proposition to the State. On the question of butter, we have heard a good deal about the suitability of the South-West. But, where the butter production is going to come from is the drier regions. Take even as far up as Baandee.

Mr. Underwood: Oh, we will take you up to Marble Bar.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Baandee has a rainfall as good as that of Euroa, and the butter output is steadily increasing right through the wheat areas. In Euroa they have a seemingly generous rainfall, 27ins., but it

all falls within about six months, and for the remainder of the year the cattle there have to be hand fed. As I have said, in our drier areas the production of butter is increasing very rapidly. I would ask hon. members to take seriously the proposition that the Treasurer should confer with the leader of the Opposition and the ex-leader of the Country party in an endeavour to put the finances straight and assist the State out of its present difficulties.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 28th November, 1916.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, By-laws adopted by the Greenmount Roads Board. 2, Medical, Health, Factories, and Early Closing Departments, annual report for the year ended 1915. 3, Abattoirs Act, amended regulation. 4, Fremantle Harbour Trust, amended regulation. 5, Cunderdin Board of Health, amended by-law. 6, Legal Practitioners Act, amendment of rules. 7, Aborigines Department, report for year ended 30th June, 1916.

SELECT COMMITTEE WHEAT MARKETING BILL.

Report Presented.

Hon. J. M. Drew brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Wheat Marketing Bill.

Report received and read.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [4.35]: I move—

That the consideration of the report be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.36]: I second the motion. I ask hon. members to be prepared to put the Bill through Committee to-morrow, because it is urgently necessary that it should be passed before the end of the present week. I am grateful to the committee for the trouble they have taken and trust that the report will enable it to be put through Committee without any suggestion of hurry or slurring over the matter in any way.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [4.37]: In supporting the motion I wish to make a suggestion that if the wishes of the leader of the House are to be carried out the amendments must not only be foreshadowed, but must be clearly and definitely placed upon the Notice Paper. It is impossible to move amendments in the terms of the report, and it would be far better, I think, if the amendments were sent down at once to the Parliamentary draftsman in time to have them on to-morrow afternoon's Notice Paper. If that is done, it should be possible to take the report into consideration when the Bill is in Committee, but if not it is impossible. If they are drafted in Parliamentary language and placed as amendments on the Notice Paper it will be quite possible to carry out the wishes of the leader of the House; otherwise I am afraid it would not be possible.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central—in reply) [4.40]: I may say that we have considered that aspect of the matter and are preparing the amendments which will be placed on the Notice Paper.

Question put and passed.