

the people of this State will tolerate this Chamber. Members are playing with a fire. If they are going to keep this Chamber to buttress and retard legislation which is desired by the whole of the people, I wonder how long the people will tolerate it and how long it will be before they rise up in force and abolish this House.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: You have not told us of the particular legislation which has been blocked.

Hon. T. MOORE: I have told the hon. member one phase of it—when you interfered with money Bills and when the Government in office, by the mandate of the people asked this House to pass certain legislation and this House refused to pass it. It is time the system was altered.

The PRESIDENT: It is usual for hon. members to address the Chair.

Hon. T. MOORE: I apologise. It is rather remarkable to find how little interest is taken in this Chamber by the members of the House. Nothing further need be said beyond calling attention to the fact that there are so few members present. How many of those who are present can say they are here honestly believing that they are going to do any good?

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member is getting pessimistic now.

Hon. T. MOORE: Not at all. We shall never do much good while we permit this state of affairs to exist. After all it is men who matter, not other things. I hope members will take that view. We are here on this planet for a certain time and I suppose we all do the best we can. If, unfortunately, some of us are not able to get sufficient money to buy a home which would entitle us to a vote for this Chamber, surely we should not be deprived of that privilege.

Hon. J. Duffell: If you rent a house for 7s. 6d. a week, you get a vote for this Chamber.

Hon. T. MOORE: Surely those people who are good enough to go out back and do all the hard pioneering work are good enough to exercise the franchise for this Council. Members should remember how much has been said in the past few years regarding democracy. What was it that mattered in the last few years? Was it bricks and mortar that saved the people during the recent war or the men we sent away? When members again record their votes on this question, I ask them to give to men the right to vote for the country they were good enough to fight for and not only to them but to the fathers and mothers who bore them.

On motion by Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 10th August, 1920.

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

VISIT OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE PRINCE OF WALES.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with the resolution adopted by the House last Thursday, I attended His Excellency the Governor and presented the Address to His Majesty the King, adopted by this Assembly. His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:—

The Governor has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of an Address passed by the Hon. the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia on the 5th August, 1920, and to intimate that it will afford him pleasure to transmit this Address by telegram to the Right Hon. The Secretary of State for the Colonies for presentation to His Majesty the King. Government House, Perth.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.43]: With your permission, Sir I should like to make a suggestion to hon. members in regard to the asking of questions. I suggest that it would be of great convenience to Ministers and heads of departments generally if hon. members, in giving notice of questions during the week, would ask for replies on the following Tuesday. No

doubt there will be a number of questions that will be answered immediately, that is, on the following day. I merely make the suggestion to hon. members on the ground that it is difficult to get replies to the large number of questions that may be asked in the short time that elapses between two sittings of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: Why should not the questions be answered on the second day? Questions asked on Tuesday could be answered on Thursday?

The PREMIER: If hon. members would ask for replies to questions on the following Tuesday, it would be far more convenient. I realise that those hon. members who wish for an answer to their questions on the following day must have such questions answered at that time.

QUESTIONS (2)—WHEAT.

Quota for Export.

Mr. MALEY asked the Premier: 1, What was the original quantity of wheat apportioned to this State for export in connection with the last contracts made with the Imperial Government by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Central Wheat Board? 2, Owing to the subsequent drought conditions in the Eastern States, was any revision of this State's quota agreed upon? 3, If so, what was the quantity and how much has been shipped to date?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No specific allocation was ever made. (2 and 3), Answered by No. 1.

Bulk Handling at Geraldton.

Mr. MALEY asked the Premier: 1, Has an application been made to the Government by the West Australian Grain Growers' Co-operative Elevators, Ltd., for a site in connection with the bulk handling of wheat at the port of Geraldton? 2, If so, is it intended to grant the application? 3, Is it considered practicable, in connection with the scheme of harbour improvements decided upon and commenced some years ago at Geraldton, for a terminal elevator for bulk handling to be included therein.

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. (2 and 3), Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE HOSPITAL, FEES FOR CERTIFICATES.

Mr. ROCKE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is the Fremantle Public Hospital a Government institution? 2, Is Dr. Stubbs an officer in the service of the Government? 3, Is it a fact that Dr. Stubbs makes a charge for a medical certificate to indigent persons to enable them to obtain relief from the Government? 4, If so, into what fund is money received from that source paid? 5, Will he make arrangements whereby needy persons may obtain the necessary certificates without being penalised?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Fremantle Public Hospital is not a Government institution, but is independently managed by a board under the Hospitals Act, 1894. 2, Dr. Stubbs is not in the service of the Government, but is an officer of the hospital board. 3, I have communicated with Dr. Stubbs, who states that no charge is ever made in the circumstances indicated in the question. Where it is necessary for men to obtain a certificate before going back to their employment, a charge of 2s. 6d. is made, if they are able to pay it, and this goes into the hospital funds. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, Persons applying for relief on account of physical infirmities or disability are not charged at present.

QUESTION—OLD AGE PENSIONERS, RATIONS.

Mr. ROCKE asked the Colonial Secretary: Is it a fact that instructions have been given to discontinue the issue of rations to persons in receipt of old age pensions at Fremantle?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Instructions have been given that any rations allowed to old age pensioners were to be discontinued as it was considered that the onus of providing for them rests upon the Commonwealth. Very few cases are affected.

QUESTION—LOAN, OFFER FROM LONDON.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government been offered a loan of £2,000,000? 2, If so, was the offer made by the same institution, corporation, or persons who usually place Western Australian loans? 3, What were the terms and conditions attached by the underwriters of the offered loan?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, Terms and conditions are regarded as confidential. The hon. member may, however, see the correspondence.

QUESTIONS (5)—STATE STEAMERS.

"Kangaroo," cost, earnings, etc.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Was the price paid to the builder £140,000 for the motor ship "Kangaroo"? 2, Was this £140,000 paid by an insurance company under an endowment policy? 3, Were the premiums paid on the policy earned as profits on the working of the "Kangaroo," and what amount has been so paid? 4, What amount of money, if any, has been paid from Loan or Consolidated Revenue of the State for the purchase of the "Kangaroo"? 5, What amount, if any, has been paid to the Consolidated Revenue as net profits earned by the "Kangaroo"? 6, Did the Government decide to sell the "Kangaroo" and in consequence of such decision

was a definite and firm offer of £280,000 made for its purchase? 7, Did the expert shipping authority express surprise that the Government did not accept the offer, it being £100,000 in excess of that anticipated, owing to the condition of the engines and the speed of the ship being only nine knots? 8, What was the reason for rejecting the offer of £280,000? 9, When did the "Kangaroo" last visit Western Australian ports?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, Yes, £20,947 10s. 4, Nil. 5, The book working profit of this vessel has been £353,288 19s. 2d.; all profits of this service available in cash have been handed over to Consolidated Revenue. 6, The Government did not decide to sell the "Kangaroo." 7, The Government has no knowledge of the expert shipping authority referred to or of any such statement by any person as suggested. 8, It is the Government's intention that this vessel shall be brought back to Australia for work as soon as she is out of her over-sea commitments. 9, November, 1918.

"Bambra," Ports of Call.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Was the office staff of the State shipping service on strike with the Civil servants? 2, If not, why did the s.s. "Bambra" fail to run her regular trip arranged before the Civil Service strike took place? 3, Seeing that this ship called at Port Hedland going north, why was it announced in the Press that she was going to Broome direct, and why were people who were desirous of going to Port Hedland prevented from getting a passage?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes, with the exception of the manager. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, It was not intended that the "Bambra" should call at Port Hedland going North, but she was called into Port Hedland to pick up a quantity of wool that had collected there, with a view to relieving the wharf and to allow of further consignments to be brought in to be picked up by the "Bambra" on her return from Broome.

Purchase of New Vessels.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Have the Government placed an order for the construction of new ships for the State? 2, If so, when was such order placed? 3, Are the Government negotiating for the purchase for the State of ships already constructed? 4, If so, when did such negotiations commence?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, No. 4, As soon as the statement appeared in the Press of the Government's intention to extend the plant of the State Shipping Service, many vessels were offered to the Government by shipping brokers.

Mr. Bennett's Qualifications.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it a fact, as reported, that a man named Bennett has gone to England to supervise the purchase or construction of State ships for the North-West trade? 2, Does Mr. Bennett hold a certificate as marine or any other class of engineer? 3, Has Mr. Bennett ever been employed in any capacity at sea or in a ship-building yard? 4, Has Mr. Bennett ever been on the North-West coast?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Mr. H. Bennett, Superintending Engineer of the State Shipping Service, has gone to England to advise the naval architects of local requirements, and to confer with our advisers regarding the purchase and construction of ships for the North-West Coast, but not to supervise or purchase any vessels. 2, The Government has no knowledge of what certificates Mr. Bennett may hold. 3, The Government's knowledge of Mr. Bennett's experience has been as manager of the Fremantle Harbour Works, and the Government is fully satisfied with his ability to do the work needed in London. 4, It is not known, but we do know that he has a full knowledge of the class of ships required for the North-West trade.

"Penguin," reconditioning.

Mr. ROCKE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What was the total cost of converting and reconditioning the steamer "Penguin" for the purpose of trawling? 2, Under whose advice and supervision was the work carried out? 3, What are the qualifications of Mr. Feltham in—(a) shipbuilding; (b) marine engineering; (c) navigation; (d) practical trawling?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, All accounts are not yet in. The estimate was £2,800, but it is thought that the total will exceed £3,000. 2, Mr. Butcher, A.M.I. M.E., late of the Harbour and Light Department, and Captain Feltham. 3, (a) and (b), Usual qualifications unnecessary; (c) master of steam trawlers in "home" waters; (d) twenty or more years' practical experience (from apprentice to master) on board smacks and steam trawlers in the North Sea and other "Home" waters.

QUESTIONS. (2)—BOULDER MINERS' STRIKE.

Payment to Special Constables.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: What was the rate of wages per day and what was the total amount paid to the special constables who were sworn in during the strike of miners at Boulder in November and December last year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The rate paid was 12s. 6d. per diem and the total amount was £6,754 7s. 6d.

Cost of Prosecution.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Attorney General: What was the total cost to the Crown of the prosecution of all the men who were charged with offences arising out of the disturbances on the Boulder mines in November last year?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: £1,728 10s. 9d.

QUESTION—NAREMBEEN RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: Will he cause the report of the Railway Advisory Board upon the Narembreen Railway Extension to be made available as soon as possible.

The PREMIER replied: I have already done so.

QUESTIONS (4)—RAILWAY MATTERS.*Widgiemooltha Station.*

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the necessity for an officer to be placed in charge of the railway station at Widgiemooltha? 2, With a view to protecting the goods delivered thereat for the residents of St. Ives, will he cause an early appointment to be made?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, A caretaker has been appointed at Widgiemooltha.

Return tickets.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Why are return tickets no longer issued in the country districts? 2, Are return tickets still issued over the metropolitan and suburban railways? 3, What is the reason for this discrimination against country residents?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Because return fares have been abolished in these districts. 2, Yes. 3, Return tickets in the metropolitan-suburban area are only available on the date of issue and because these people are constantly travelling.

Motor ambulances and oil locomotives.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What steps are being taken to supply motor ambulances on the railways? 2, Have any further steps been taken to bring to a practical stage the utilisation of oil locomotives on branch and spur lines? 3, Has he a copy of Sir J. D. Connolly's report from Canada and America of December 11, 1917, dealing with this question? 4, If not, would he care to have it, and would he accept it from me?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Ambulance attachments have been fitted to the motor trolleys used by the per-

manent way gangs stationed at Albany, Koorda, Narrogin, Shackleton, Dellyanine, South Kuminia and Cordering. 2, It having been decided that it would be unwise to experiment with the chassis of any road motor vehicle (these being built for 4ft. 8½in. gauge between wheels) for adaptation to our 3ft. 6in. gauge, it is proposed to request the Agent General to invite tenders for three self-contained petrol or oil driven vehicles to a specification which is now being finalised. 3, Yes. 4, See answer to number 3.

Returned Soldier Employees' Holidays.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that railway employees who enlisted in the A.I.F. and have since returned to the service, have been refused payment for the full number of holidays which they would have received had they not so enlisted, and for which payment was made to employees who remained in Australia. 2, If so, will he see that servants of the Department are not thus penalised by reason of their war service?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. Railway employees who enlisted with the A.I.F. have been paid for the full number of normal holidays, viz., 12 days per annum, which they would have received had they remained behind, and in the same way as the normal holidays to those who remained behind. 2, Yes, servants of the department will not be penalised by reason of their war service.

QUESTION—NATIONALIST WORKERS.

Mr. JONES asked the Premier: 1, How many of the individuals who reluctantly severed their connection with the Fremantle Wharf on the 5th May, 1919, have since been paid compensation by the Government, and what was the total amount so disbursed? 2, How much was paid these men as sustenance, charity or otherwise, prior to the final payment of compensation? 3, Is it his intention to lay on the Table the report of the Royal Commission?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 215 persons were paid compensation. The total amount disbursed was £14,140 11s, being £17,928 15s. awarded by the Royal Commission, less £3,788 4s. deducted as shown in answer to No. 2. 2, £3,788 4s. since recovered as shown above. 3, Yes.

QUESTIONS (2)—IMMIGRATION.*Arrangement with Commonwealth Government.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: Is it his intention to place on the Table of the House all papers and documents relating to any agreement or other arrangement made or about to be made between the State and Commonwealth Government in regard to immigration?

The PREMIER replied: When the negotiations are completed papers will be laid upon the table of the House.

Ex-Imperial Soldiers.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier in connection with the policy of immigration of ex-Imperial soldiers: 1, Is it intended to settle these men on virgin country or on partially improved farms? 2, If the latter, what steps are being taken in preparation for settlement? 3, What financial assistance, other than the advance by the British Government, will be afforded? 4, What is the estimated number of anticipated arrivals during the ensuing financial year?

The PREMIER replied: 1, As far as possible on virgin country. 2, Surveys are being made as fast as possible. It is now too late to partially prepare land before settlement. 3, The usual Agricultural Bank conditions will apply, except in a number of cases of British ex-service men, who will come under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. 4, No estimate is possible.

QUESTIONS (2)—VERMIN ACT.

Wire Netting, Supply.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, What action has the Government taken in regard to the supply of wire netting to settlers under the provisions of the Vermin Act? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to supply wire netting to settlers under the said Act? 3, If so, when?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Prices have been obtained from time to time, but owing to the excessively high cost and the inability to obtain large quantities only small lots have been purchased and supplied for fencing in water supplies. 2, Yes, as soon as netting is available at a practicable price. 3, Answered by No. 2.

Wire Netting, Cost.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Have any steps been taken to try to get the price of wire and netting reduced? 2, Has inquiry been made from the big manufactory reported to have been started in the Eastern States as to price and supplies, so that consumers may secure cheaper supplies of this very necessary commodity?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Inquiries have been made. It is not possible to obtain supplies at a reasonable price. 2, It is known that large works are being established in Australia.

QUESTIONS (2)—GAME ACT.

Kangaroo Skins.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is he aware that by a recent proclamation under the Game Act a royalty of 4s.

per lb. was imposed by the Government on kangaroo skins? 2, Is he aware that this royalty was the full price of the skin obtainable from country buyers at that time, and that it is now in excess of the present value of the skins? 3, Is he aware that kangaroos are increasing in numbers and are a constant menace to settlers' crops, particularly in the newer districts, where substantial fences cannot be erected owing to the present high cost of fencing material? 4, What is the object of the Government in confiscating the full value of kangaroo skins by royalty, and compelling a settler who kills a kangaroo for food to hand the full value of the skin to the State for nothing? 5, Is it the intention of the Government to substantially reduce the royalty, and thus avoid the present economic loss to the State caused by the royalty, under which kangaroo skins are now being thrown away as worthless?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, The Government has no desire to confiscate as suggested the full value of kangaroo skins taken from kangaroos killed for food purposes. 5, No.

Opossum Trapping.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is he aware that a recent proclamation under the Game Act threw open the districts south of the Wagin-Bowelling-Collie Railway and the Wagin-Lake Grace Railway for opossum trapping for the months of May and June last, whilst the districts north of the said railways remained closed? 2, On whose recommendation, and why, was this arbitrary boundary fixed? 3, Is he aware that the opossums have failed to recognise same, and have increased in numbers north of the said railways, to the extent of doing considerable damage to the orchard gardens? 4, If further opossum trapping is permitted later on, will he treat the districts north of the said railways in the same way as those south of same, in regard to opossum trapping?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, (a) The recommendation of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries; (b) because north of it the increase of opossums has not been so general as in the areas to the south of it. 3, It is recognised that in some parts north of the boundary mentioned opossums have increased in numbers. Where they have so increased and are shown to be destructive to property, authority to destroy has been granted under Section 21 of the Game Act and may be granted in other similar cases. 4, Yes, if circumstances warrant.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE SITE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: Will he make available as soon as possible the report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the site of the proposed Agricultural College?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: Yes.

QUESTION—MACHINERY PURCHASE TERMS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Attorney General: 1, Has he perused the Canadian Machine Act which I laid before him? 2, Do the Government contemplate bringing forward any amendment of the Act relating to the purchase of machinery under hire purchase terms?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Owing to recent events the Attorney General has not had time to personally peruse the Act in question, but he has referred it to the Law officers for perusal and report. 2, The matter will be considered upon receipt of the report referred to in the reply to question 1 above.

QUESTION—REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: Have the Government any intention of bringing forward this session a Redistribution of Seats Bill?

The PREMIER replied: This question has not yet received the consideration of Cabinet.

QUESTION—ALUNITE DEPOSITS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has any finality been arrived at in connection with the experiments made in the treatment of alunite for potash? 2, Is any serious attempt being made to utilise these deposits, and make this country self-supporting so far as its requirements for potassium fertilisers are concerned?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Laboratory experiments are being made as to the best method of making the potash in alunite available for fertilising purposes, but a final report has not yet been made. 2, The efforts to mine and use alunite are at present more or less suspended pending the results of the Laboratory investigations.

QUESTIONS (2)—IVES' FIND.

Crushing facilities.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has the officer of the Mines Department, who visited Ives' Find to inquire as to the need for a Government battery, yet made his report? 2, Is it the intention of the Minister to see that crushing facilities are provided at this promising field at the earliest time possible?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, At the date of the visit of inspection by the Superintendent of State Batteries, viz., 29-6-20, developments were not sufficiently far advanced to enable an opinion to be formed. This officer will, however, again visit the field next month, when it is hoped developments will have reached a stage which will enable a decision to be made relative to the installation of crushing facilities.

Medical facilities.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister representing the Health Department: 1, Have any steps been taken to provide medical facilities or requisites at Ives' Find? 2, If so, will he state what has been done?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, Inquiries have been made and negotiations have been entered into with the St. Ives Progress Association, which has arranged a basis of contribution to a medical fund. Pending the finalising of the proposal for a casualty ward and nurse, a medicine chest has been forwarded.

QUESTION—TRIBUTING ON MINES.

Mr. MULLANY asked the Minister for Mines: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill dealing with tribut- ing during the present session?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Yes. In the Bill to amend the Mining Act as mentioned in the Governor's Speech.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the PREMIER, ordered: That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m., onwards.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the PREMIER, ordered: That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam). [5.2]: I move—

That Sessional Committees be appointed as follows:—

Library Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Green and Mr. Smith.

Standing Orders Committee — Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, the Attorney General, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Walker.

House Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Mullany, Mr. Nairn and Mr. O'Loughlen.

Printing Committee — Mr. Speaker, Mr. O'Loughlen and Mr. Smith.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.3]: I would like to ask the Premier why it is that members of the Country party are not afforded an opportunity to be on these committees.

Hon. P. Collier: You are all of one party and the Government are represented.

Mr. PICKERING: I am asking the question. I think it would be only fair to give us representation on some of these committees other than the House Committee, seeing that the Government's members are on several committees.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.4]: I would like some intimation from the Premier as to who gave authority for certain doors in this building to be locked during the ceremony connected with the opening of Parliament on Thursday last. I understand it was the President of the Legislative Council. If such is the case—

Hon. P. Collier: The House Committee.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know whether it was done by the authority and instruction of the House Committee, but, whoever was responsible, I think some direction should be given that this unnecessary and high-handed attitude should be stopped. For some time past, it has been rumoured that people are usurping powers and functions in this House which it was never intended they should have. Probably one could say a good deal on this subject. I am speaking with the greatest possible restraint; otherwise I should offer some stinging criticism in connection with the conduct of some members who comprise these committees.

Hon. P. Collier: I think they all want censure.

Mr. LAMBERT: Let me say that on Thursday last, I had two or three invited guests in the gallery of the Legislative Council. By the act of someone, snobbishly or otherwise, the door in the main corridor was locked and my guests were compelled to go out into Harvest-terrace and return by the main entrance. While this is not a matter which we would expect to discuss in this House, I think it pretty nearly time someone fearlessly stood up and directed the House Committee, or whoever is in authority, that the conduct formerly associated with the opening of Parliament—the issuing of invitations and the deciding of the people who should occupy seats on the floor of the House, or in the galleries—should be reverted to. It should be put under a committee of direction. A good many members have spoken about this matter and have expressed unutterable disgust at the action, whoever was responsible for it. I hope that, without further labouring this matter, the House Committee will take the question into consideration. It is not one of very great moment, still it is one of the pinpricks which sometimes show the presence of snobbishness which we, at all events, should not tolerate. If I see any evidence of it again, I shall speak in the most unmistakable manner of what I consider should be the conduct of those who, for the time being, are vested with a little authority. From my own personal knowledge of our Speaker, I know that the rooms available to him have been made

available to the members of the Government and to other hon. members, but it cannot be said that the rooms allocated to the use of another Chamber have likewise been made available, and it is time the House Committee gave some very clear direction in connection with this matter. I hope that other members will voice their opinions and that the procedure, the altogether unnecessary and disgusting procedure which savoured of considerable snobbishness, displayed on Thursday last will never again be witnessed at the opening of Parliament.

The Minister of Mines: Is there no defence from the House Committee?

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.7]: With regard to the appointment of the Printing Committee I should like to have some information. I should like to know who is responsible for giving that information, whether it is the Premier or the members of the Committee.

Mr. Hudson: The Premier has moved the motion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I received a letter some time ago from the Western Australian branch of the Australian Journalists' Association protesting against the action of the committee with regard to the appointment of a member of the "Hansard" staff. I understand that the gentleman appointed from the Eastern States has not taken up the position and, therefore, it still remains vacant.

Mr. Johnston: The job frightened him.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I do not know what the intention of the committee is with regard to filling the vacancy, whether they are going to seek applications from the Eastern States or whether it is intended to secure a man in our own State if there is a suitable man available. Of course I do not hold for a moment that, because a person happens to be a journalist in this State, he should have a claim to a vacancy on the "Hansard" staff, irrespective of his qualifications for the position but, all things being equal, if there is a man in the State qualified to fill the position, then it would not be fair to go outside the bounds of the State to get a man for it. I should like to know from the Premier, or whoever is responsible, whether he can give us any information as to the intention of the committee with regard to filling the vacancy.

Mr. Johnston rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER [5.10]: As chairman of the Printing Committee, if I place the position clearly before the House, it might prevent hon. members from continuing a discussion which perhaps might not avail much when all the facts are before them: It is true that the Printing Committee appointed a gentleman from Melbourne on his qualifications, which placed him high indeed above any other applicant. I think we had in all about 27 applications, covering the States of New South Wales, Victoria, South Aus-

tralia, and West Australia. Unfortunately, after his appointment and after coming over here by boat, he became very ill and was unable to take up his duties.

Mr. Johnston: The work frightened him.

Mr. SPEAKER: It was an absolute breakdown in health. If the hon. member was in possession of the knowledge I have, the appearance of the man and the doctor's advice, instead of trying to make it appear that the work was too heavy for him, he would sympathise with him in his trouble. I released him from the appointment and called a committee meeting at the earliest possible moment—on Tuesday last—and the further consideration of the appointment of the sixth "Hansard" reporter was held over until after the new committees were appointed. I would be pleased, if there is any doubt in the minds of members, because of some difficulties which have arisen with the Journalists' Association in connection with this appointment, to show them the applications. I would be pleased to place the whole of the applications before the House to justify the action of the committee in the appointment they made. I am perfectly satisfied that the committee, acting in a straightforward manner and dealing with every application on its merits, could not have done other than what they have done to date. The applications are now in my room awaiting further consideration by the committee. I do not want to say anything which may perhaps militate against any of the applicants in Western Australia, but I may say that there were seven applicants—I am speaking from memory which, I believe, does not fail me—and three of them were turned down by the Chief "Hansard" Reporter as being unable to comply with the terms of the advertisement because they had none of the experience needed. The Chief "Hansard" Reporter discussed the other three applications with me, and we decided to give them a test. One of these applicants was a man who, on his application, should have been capable of taking the position. He was living at a distance, namely, at Bunbury, and the Chief "Hansard" Reporter suggested that he should be given a trial. We went so far as to pay his railway fare from Bunbury to Perth, in order to give him a test, because I thought it was unfair to put him to that expense. He came up from Bunbury. The three applicants were tested on a Saturday afternoon. Two of them dropped their note and did not continue. The third man continued his note. The matter of the test was selected by the Chief "Hansard" Reporter from a Federal parliamentary debate and was for 15 minutes.

The Minister for Mines: No wonder he broke down!

Mr. SPEAKER: When he went to write it up in longhand, it took him $3\frac{1}{4}$ hours, and the time allowed, I think, should have been $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours. His transcript of the speech, as corrected by the Chief "Hansard" Reporter is in my room and, if members look at it they will see that he was

placed in an absolutely hopeless position and was incapable of filling the vacancy. Two others or three others from the staff of the "West Australian" were tested in the Chamber during the previous session, and the Chief "Hansard" Reporter reported to the Printing Committee upon their capacity. The Chief "Hansard" Reporter's report on them is in my room, and hon. members can see it. With all that evidence, and in view of the reports made to us by the Chief "Hansard" Reporters in the Eastern States, the committee could have done nothing else, on the papers before them, than what they did. I want to say that I agree with many hon. members who think that when we have a vacancy in this State and have also in this State a man capable of filling the vacancy he should have the preference. But when we call for applications in the Eastern States and ask for credentials, we can do nothing but act on the credentials which come before us, no matter in what part of the Commonwealth the applicant may reside. A further meeting of the Printing Committee will be called after another place has appointed its members on that committee. Then other applications will be considered.

Mr. Johnston: Applications in Western Australia alone, or applications from elsewhere also?

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot tell what action the committee will take, whether they will call for other applications or will act on the applications which I have still in my room. In view of the last applications being called in March of this year, I think it would be unwise or unnecessary to call for fresh applications in the Eastern States. However, the committee will consider that point, and I have no doubt that the committee will treat the whole matter on its merits.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [5.18]: As the only member of the Printing Committee who is present in this House with the exception of yourself, Mr. Speaker, I desire to make a few remarks in regard to the negotiations which have taken place up to date. I recognise the futility of having anything in the nature of a general discussion, because I hope that in the course of the next three or four days the committee will decide the question. But it is just as well, seeing that there has been some reference made in the Press to what may be looked upon as the unpatriotic attitude of the committee, to elaborate the matter a little. You, Sir, have stated the case fairly well; but perhaps I may make the position a little clearer. Some time ago there was a complaint lodged by the "Hansard" staff that the work was too strenuous, and the Printing Committee in their wisdom decided to appoint a sixth reporter, and to call for applications accordingly. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that at the meeting in question I moved a motion that applications be confined to Western Australia. It is on record on the minutes of the committee's proceedings that I was the only member who voted in that

direction. I strenuously opposed the calling of applications in the Eastern States, believing—and at the present time there is a movement for our patronising all things Western Australian—that the vacancy should be filled by a local applicant. Personally, I do not attach the importance to the "Hansard" staff that one or two other members do.

Mr. Underwood: Or the "Hansard" staff themselves do.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I realise that the "Hansard" reporters have to be thoroughly competent and capable men, but the fact is that only about two per cent. of the people of Western Australia read the "Hansard" reports. For that reason I do not think it is necessary that we should go to the ends of the continent in order to secure a man.

The Minister for Mines: The fact that "Hansard" is not more widely read is not the fault of the "Hansard" reporters.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The point I made was that we had men in Western Australia capable of giving an accurate report, and that is borne out by the applications. However, men were tested in the other States, and one of their number was appointed. I was not present at the meeting when the appointment was made. The meeting was constituted by the Speaker and the President, two out of six members, but under the rules those two members have authority to decide. They decided on getting a Mr. Dickson from Melbourne. Hon. members have heard the result of Mr. Dickson's appointment. I tendered my resignation from the committee but I found that I had not sufficient legal knowledge of the position. I may mention that Mr. Sanderson of another place made a similar mistake. It is impossible to resign from a committee of this kind without dying, and I do not want to die just yet. However, seeing that this question has not been settled and that my name has again been submitted to-day, and seeing also that a meeting of the Printing Committee is to be held in the course of three or four days, I propose to see the matter through. However there is no mistaking my attitude. I say with the leader of the Opposition that in the case of two men, one here and the other beyond the borders of Western Australia, being equally fit for a position, the man here should get the preference. It is rather a reflection on ourselves that we should be obliged to send away the plums of our service to the Eastern States instead of picking them for our own people. I believe that three or four men now occupying positions on the Federal "Hansard" staff were recruited from this State, and that fact in itself ought to be sufficient to show that the Printing Committee could secure at least one "Hansard" reporter from amongst the pressmen of this State.

The Minister for Mines: But, still, when you bring a man from the East to do work here he does not continue to reside in the East. He becomes a citizen of Western Australia. We have all come from the other side.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is true, but if such a policy is to be pursued I do not approve of it. I do not say a local man should have the appointment unless he has the necessary ability. My own view is that if there is a position going in Western Australia and if there is a man here competent to fill it, he should be appointed. I do not wish to say anything further on the matter except to express the hope that the Printing Committee will decide without further expense or delay on the appointment of a man, provided that man fills the bill.

The Minister for Mines: I know they have always been able to get a man when the staff has been overworked here.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If that is the case, why could not they have got a man permanently? I will say no more now as the committee meeting will be held in a few days.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [5.24]: The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) has referred to the closing of certain doors on opening day; and as one who has represented this Chamber on the House Committee for years past, I wish to say that such action was not taken with the authority, or I believe with the knowledge, of any Assembly members on the House Committee. On opening day I had the same experience as the member for Coolgardie. I desired to bring some lady friends through the door, and was told to go to the further end of the block. Thus it appears that visitors coming to see Parliament House on opening day could not be shown over the building. I think the action taken was an entirely wrong action on the part of the person responsible; and I had intended to mention the matter at the next meeting of the House Committee were I again appointed to that committee. I wish, however, to state distinctly that the House Committee were not responsible for the action which was taken. Further I wish to point out that there are many matters in which the powers of the House Committee do not appear to be clear. The whole question wants going into, and if re-elected to the committee I propose to take action with a view to finding out exactly what the powers of that committee really are.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.26]: I also would like to touch on this matter. Last year I had what was described to me as the temerity to ask for seats for friends of mine on the floor of another Chamber. I believe I asked for about four seats. Probably, in my innocence, I asked for a little too much. When one bears in mind, however, that members of this Assembly on going to another Chamber to hear the Governor's Speech delivered find about half the chairs on the floor vacant, one wonders why he could not have his lady friends occupying some of those chairs. I desire to mention that from an official of another place I received the reply that I was asking something which not even any member of the Legislative Council dared

to ask. I wrote again in all humility and meekness stating that I was extremely sorry I had transgressed the rules, but that as I saw civil servants—on whom I cast no reflection, because they are fully entitled to be there—occupying those chairs on the floor of another Chamber, it was rather puzzling to me that members of this House could not enjoy the privilege of having their wives and friends similarly accommodated.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The gallery is there. Mr. THOMSON: I want the matter to be brought under the notice of the House Committee. I would like to know who has the authority.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The President.

Mr. THOMSON: It was not the President who replied to me.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The reply you got was by the President's instructions.

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly. I think the privilege in question should be extended to members of this House equally with people occupying official and other positions outside.

Mr. FOLEY (Mt. Leonora) [5.28]: In connection with the closing of certain portions of Parliament House on opening day, the question of the rights and privileges of members bringing friends to the House, either on the opening day or other days, crops up. I think every member of this Chamber recognises that the Assembly representatives on the House Committee had nothing to do with the closing up of the further end of the building. There has been a rumour, however, that the strangers' room was also closed on the opening day. That room should not have been closed at all. In my opinion it is unwise to close any portion of Parliament House on the opening day. Regarding the Printing Committee's work, there is one aspect I would like to press on that committee's attention. In Western Australia at the present time there are many young men taking up the profession of shorthand writing and typing. Our educational system aims at educating them in that direction. There are in Western Australia many secondary schools and various correspondence colleges to which the taxpayers of this State send their children, at considerable expense, to be taught. If it is good enough for the State to educate children for this occupation and for parents to spend their money in having their children taught the subjects in question, it is good enough for Western Australia to make use of the education which the men I refer to do in many cases possess. We have seen in the "Hansard" box various members of the literary staffs of our various journals taking notes, and I was rather surprised to learn that it was not possible to get in this State a man fit for a "Hansard" appointment. I notice that one of the hon. members proposed as a representative of the Assembly on the Printing Committee is now absent from the State, so that the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) will find him-

self in the same position as before. If absence from the State is a disqualification for appointment, I would be in favour of cutting the absent member off the committee.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.30]: Whilst dealing with the question of the Printing Committee, I desire to voice a protest in regard to the number of copies of "Hansard" allowed to members of this Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss that on this motion.

Mr. LUTEY: I was informed that this was the proper time in which to bring the matter forward.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House has agreed on the number of "Hansards" to be distributed.

Mr. Troy: On the Estimates.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [5.31]: I do not desire to speak at any length on this question. I have always held that we have any number of people in Western Australia quite competent to go into the box and report the speeches made in this House. The reason for sending to the Eastern States and advertising in the Eastern States was that "Hansard" reporters endeavour to magnify their own importance. We have had, since I have been in this House, the Federal Government coming to Western Australia and taking a "Hansard" reporter from our box, and ourselves going to South Australia to pick one there to fill his place. I agree with the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley), that if we have not in this State trained shorthand reporters, our educational system is a failure. We have turned out from our schools tens of thousands of boys and girls who have been taught shorthand and typewriting, and to say that there is not one of these tens of thousands of boys and girls who could get into the box and report our speeches—

Mr. O'Loughlen: You.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, me.

The Minister for Mines: It is not correct. I know there are many who can do the work, but they would not take it on because they can do better elsewhere.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I know why they will not take it on: It is due to the fact that "Hansard" reporters are picked by a "Hansard" reporter, and this "Hansard" reporter wants to magnify his own importance.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Press are giving higher rates to-day; in fact the "West Australian" reporters are getting higher rates now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We should always pick a Western Australian, and never go past Western Australians to fill positions on the "Hansard" staff. I think, too, we could go through the public service and pick out any number of men or women who could go into the box and report well enough for us. I can assure hon. members that their work would be good enough for me. That is what has brought about the trouble. The "Hansard" reporters have been trying to make out

that this is an extraordinary profession, a profession of whose members there are only a very few in Australia. They say, in fact, that it is necessary to comb throughout Australia in order to get a "Hansard" reporter. The leader of the Opposition knows that one can get typists by the hundred in the civil service, who can at least express our meanings. There is another point. Judging by the report in this morning's paper, not only are they magnifying their own importance but they are magnifying their wages, and they want to be paid the wages of the man they have been short of during the last eight months. During that period they have been short of one man, and they want to divide up his wages amongst themselves. It is time we had a look at this. With regard to the House Committee, it is also time that we knew the position. I understood that the House Committee controlled all the arrangements of both Houses of Parliament. I do not know the attitude you take up, Mr. Speaker, or the attitude the President of the Legislative Council takes up, but I take up this attitude, that you, and the President, are only members of the House Committee, and that whatever is decided upon by the House Committee shall be carried out. I claim, on behalf of members of this Chamber, that neither the President nor the Speaker is allowed to lock any of the doors unless instructed to do so by the House Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before putting the motion I may be able to clear up some misunderstandings with regard to the references of the hon. member to the "Hansard" reporters, and to the number of different men in Western Australia who are capable of going into the box and reporting the speeches of members of this Chamber. I would point out that advertisements appeared in the "West Australian" and the "Kalgoorlie Miner" and, as a result, there were only seven applications. I have told hon. members before that three out of these came nowhere near the requirements for the position. Three of the applicants were tested and failed. Three were tested in the box, and out of those three who were tested in the box there was a recommendation that the work of one was satisfactory. It was shown clearly that their work was impossible, with the exception of the work of one man. That is the result of advertising the position in Western Australia. I desire to make that quite clear. With reference to the locking of the doors in Parliament House, I have gathered that a door was locked at the other end of the corridor in the Legislative Council. I know this was locked on the authority of the President. The rooms occupied by the President and the Speaker are not under the control of the House Committee, nor are the galleries of this Chamber. They are under the control of the Speaker at this end, and of the President at the other end. That has been laid down in the House of Commons and in all Parliaments in the British Dominions. I am con-

fident that no officer of this House locked that door without being instructed to do so by those in authority. The statement about the strangers' room being locked, I do not think can be borne out. If that door was locked it was done without my knowledge, and there is nobody else in a position to authorise it to be locked. I feel confident that it was not locked, but I will make inquiries. Had the hon. member drawn my attention to this before the House met, I would have been able to enlighten him on the position. Being chairman of the House Committee and of the Printing Committee, I should at least be able to explain to the House how things are.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second day.

Debate resumed from 5th August.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.39]: I should like to express the hope that the Premier and his colleagues are entering upon the work of the session completely invigorated in health after their long and, I am sure, strenuous period of work during the recess. It is true that the continuity of their administrative efforts has been somewhat broken by the frequent calls to attend conferences in the Eastern States. These interruptions must have been irritating at times, particularly to certain Ministers who seem to have been singled out for special duty in the Eastern States.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are they not going to build an office there?

Hon. P. COLLIER: However, I suppose there was no alternative but to obey the call of the East. If the affairs of this State are not as satisfactory as I believe a large section of the community would like them to be, it cannot be attributed to any interruption of work on the part of Ministers by their having to attend to their parliamentary duties. I have no desire to say anything discourteous this afternoon and hope I shall not be considered other than polite, but I should like to ask the Premier why there was this delay in calling Parliament together until practically the middle of August. Last session terminated, I think, on the 5th December, and Parliament has met for the transaction of business on the 5th August, a period of exactly eight months. The House, members and the country are entitled to some explanation from the Government as to the cause of the delay.

The Premier: I will explain that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If I may anticipate the Premier's explanation, it will be that the date of calling Parliament together was postponed in order to enable him, and perhaps one of his Ministers, to attend the adjourned conference of Premiers in Melbourne. I venture to say that such an explanation will not be deemed by any means satisfactory. I do not see any necessity for more than one Minister to attend that adjourned meeting, whatever necessity there may have been for a Min-

ister to accompany the Premier at the initial meeting of this conference of Premiers. There was no necessity for the recess to be continued because one Minister, or even the Premier, was called away to Melbourne. There is undoubtedly a great deal of work lying before this Parliament that might have been performed during the past month or so. There have been industrial disputes from one end of the State to the other, involving the occupations of thousands of employees. Had Parliament been in session at this time, as has been the case usually in past years, the deplorable and regrettable strike of civil servants and school teachers would not have eventuated. Had Parliament been sitting, Parliament would have been in a position to deal with that matter. There have not been sufficient grounds advanced by the Premier in any statement that has appeared in the Press for the delay in calling Parliament together. I confess I cannot see why there has been this long period of rest, during which Ministers have been living in easy street, nor can I see that it has produced any tangible or beneficial result. One might have expected, after having had such a length of time in which to consider their policy for the present session, that the Government would have presented something to this House adequate to the situation that confronts them. But if one turns to the Speech it is found to be in many respects similar to Speeches that have been given before. There are the usual stereotyped paragraphs with regard to the bountiful season and the excellent prospects of the harvest, the continual prosperity of the principal primary industries—mining, agricultural, pastoral, and so on. Even allowing for the inclusion of these well-worn phrases, there have been in past years some points in the Governor's Speech around which a debate on the Address-in-reply might be turned. But with regard to the present Speech, I have failed, after a diligent search, to find anything whatever of a definite or specific character of real importance.

Mr. Nairn: It has had all the corners knocked off it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am aware that these remarks of mine are not original; they have been urged by members of the Opposition in years gone by.

The Minister for Mines: I never heard them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know they are quite new to the Minister for Mines, but this Speech stands without parallel in its indefiniteness.

The Premier: It is very much better than they used to be.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I never heard such twaddle.

The Premier: Why do you not discuss the Speech?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I shall discuss, not the words of the Speech but what has been left out of it. If I were to discuss only the points in the Speech worth discussing, I should have to sit down at once.

Mr. Pickering: I will give you a few of my notes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the hon. member will do justice, and I have no doubt he will, to the independent policy of his party he will require very ample notes to deal with the Speech himself later on.

The Minister for Mines: At any rate he can always get them from his next-door neighbour.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let us turn to the legislative programme for the session as indicated in the Speech of the Governor. We have a number of Bills not one of which is of first rate importance, and not one of which affects the whole of the people of the State.

Mr. Pickering: What about the Public Service Act Amendment Bill?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That only affects a section of the community, although the recent action of that section affected the whole of the community. As I proceed I shall have to acknowledge my indebtedness to the hon. member for some information which I obtained from the letters he wrote to the "West Australian" on that subject. These Bills are important enough so far as the particular interests which will be affected by them are concerned, but after all that will be a very small section of the people of the State. With regard to the first Bill set out in the Speech, the Bill to place the State trading concerns under a commissioner, I fail entirely to understand why it appears in the policy of the party now occupying the Treasury bench. We shall not be in a position to criticise the provisions of that Bill until we have it before us, but if it means anything it means that the Government have accepted the State trading concerns as a permanent part of our public life, because the measure will seek to place the trading concerns on what might be described as a permanent basis. I would like to know what the party which came into office specifically to dispose of the State trading concerns are doing by introducing legislation to give those trading concerns greater permanency.

The Premier: Better management.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Premier and his party had attempted to carry out the policy they professed from one end of the country to the other, there would be no State trading concerns in existence to-day. They have had four years in which to give effect to their policy to dispose of the trading concerns, but we find that the whole of their herculean labours in the direction of carrying out their policy have carried them no further than the closing down of the State fish shops. Then we have a Bill to remove the disqualification against women offering themselves as candidates for Parliament. Why is a Bill which seeks to remove the disqualification against citizenship confined to this one item? There are many items of even greater disqualification against the exercise of the full rights of citizenship to both men and women in this country, which apparently do not come within the purview of the Government.

The Premier: One thing leads on to another, and all will come right in the end.

Hon. T. Walker: Which end?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that all will come right. A Bill dealing with this matter, and even more important questions, passed through this House last session, but of course failed to obtain approval in another place. Then we have a Bill to amend the Mining Act and the Mining Development Act. That, as the Minister for Mines explained this afternoon in reply to a question, will deal with the matter of tributing.

The Minister for Mines: Tributing and oil.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And whilst dealing with the question of the amendment of the Mining Act, I might refer to that paragraph in the Speech which touches on this great primary industry. Evidently that paragraph escaped the notice of the optimistic Premier. It is the only pessimistic note that has been struck in the whole of the Speech. Everything else is in a flourishing condition, or in the way of becoming flourishing. All the industries, primary and secondary, except that of mining, are flourishing. I do not know where the Minister for Mines obtained this paragraph, but I am afraid that one of his officers, in order to avoid the trouble of thinking for himself, turned up a copy of the Journal of the Chamber of Mines and lifted the paragraph in its entirety from it.

Mr. Munsie: There is a big agitation going on for an increase of wages.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The paragraph in the Speech dealing with the mining industry states—

The position of the mining industry—which has played, and is playing so big a part in the affairs of the State—is occasioning my advisers serious consideration. Difficulties have arisen amongst the mines chiefly responsible for the State's large gold production. The exploitation of the lower levels of these mines has been attended by increased cost and lower values, whilst the scarcity of labour, and the shortage of and high price of fuel are causing anxiety. The declining premium on gold is a factor that also has to be taken into account. These matters are receiving the attention of the Government with a view to ascertaining what steps may be taken towards keeping down the costs of the requirements of this and other industries.

The Premier: That is very good.

Hon. P. COLLIER: An exactly similar paragraph has appeared in the Chamber of Mines Journal for the past five or six years, and it has been inserted in the Governor's Speech in order to curb the desire of the men employed in the mines to secure higher wages and better conditions.

The Premier: Quite the reverse.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am surprised at the Premier attempting to justify it. Where is all his optimism? Has it oozed away to the bottom of his boots? If the Premier has one virtue more than another it is that of optim-

ism in regard to the industries of the country. The Premier has not been in the habit in the past of proclaiming to the world in Governor's Speeches, or in speeches of his own, the fact that any of our industries are experiencing a difficulty in carrying on.

The Minister for Mines: If you tell the truth it does not matter about the habit. All the new mines are affecting our gold production very seriously for the time being.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are affecting our gold production?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, seriously.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Because the labour has gone to them?

The Minister for Mines: The gold-producing mines are short of labour.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the contention of the mine managers on the Golden Mile, but I do not know that it is borne out by facts. In any case they will continue to experience that difficulty so long as they oppose any increase in the wages paid to the miners during the past 25 years. However, as I have said, the paragraph in the Speech is one which I do not suppose the managers on the Golden Mile will miss when the arbitration case now pending comes before the court. Next we find that it is proposed to introduce a Bill to amend the provisions of the Land Act regarding pastoral leases. If I remember rightly, a similar statement appeared in the Governor's Speech of last year. Such a Bill was promised last session, and as a matter of fact the promise was kept because the Bill was introduced the day before the session closed, and it was finally disposed of on the last day of the session. The Premier knows that after having abandoned half of his own Bill the other half was only finally dealt with by another place on the last day of the session. There are a few other Bills, of very little importance; but the Speech is conspicuous for the fact that it gives no indication whatever of the Government possessing any public works policy. There are no references in the Speech to the construction of railways, of harbours, or of water supply. Some of the outposts of the State are languishing for harbour facilities. The Premier, I understand, has had a small army of surveyors in various parts of the State, especially in the South-West, surveying new railways during the past 12 months. I do not know what is going to be the result of that survey work.

The Premier: I promise you the Bills.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier may come along with railway Bills during the last days, or say the last few weeks, of the session, when there is very little opportunity to discuss these measures. Again, the policy of the Government, if policy it can be called, is notable for the fact that it contains no reference whatever to any legislation of an industrial character; that is, apart from the Shops and Factories Bill, which was introduced last session and which will come up for consideration during the present session. Have the Government and their supporters

failed to grasp the fact that industrial disputes have been extremely prevalent in this State during the present year—so prevalent, indeed, that the disputes committee at the Trades Hall have their time fully occupied almost from Monday morning to Saturday night? Do the Government fail to understand that that condition of things is due largely to the inefficiency of our industrial legislation? Our Arbitration Act has been rendered perfectly obsolete by the march of recent events, in the light of alterations which have occurred in the industrial, social, and economic life of our community. The Arbitration Act passed in 1912 now entirely fails to achieve the purpose for which it was intended. But the Government ignore that fact. They and all their supporters get on the house tops to complain when the employees resort to the desperate expedient of ceasing work. When that occurs we hear a cry from those who are not affected by the high prices that prevail and the unfavourable conditions that obtain in many industries, against the action of these men. But the fact remains that the employees have been crying out for several years for an amendment of our Arbitration Act in order to bring it into line with altered conditions. The talk about round table conferences is mere platitude and piffle of the paltriest kind. There is no use talking about bringing employer and employee together in order to create a better feeling between them.

Mr. Harrison: That is what there ought to be, all the same.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The only way to create a better feeling in the minds of thousands of men and women who have to work for a comparatively low wage is to create a better feeling in their stomachs. As regards this creation of a better feeling, the interests of employer and employee are directly opposed. There can be no question of that. On the one hand we have the employer attending, naturally, to his own interest and welfare, in the same way as everyone else in the State. Practically the employer's sole object is to make the highest profit that it is possible for him to make. He can secure that highest profit only by obtaining the labour of the employee at the lowest wage that the worker can possibly be induced to accept.

Mr. Harrison: That is nonsense.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is not an employer in this or in any other country that I know of, except possibly an odd one here and there, one in a thousand, who will pay a higher wage than he is compelled to pay either by Arbitration Court awards or by the law of supply and demand.

The Minister for Mines: Henry Ford is an exception.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He is one exception.

Mr. Harrison: Do you agree with the principle of profit sharing?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not agree that profit sharing is a solution of the industrial problem. I admit that the employees of Henry Ford are enjoying much higher wages

and much better conditions than the employees of the great multitude of employers in England. I believe that Henry Ford has established a six hour day and a minimum wage of £6 per week. I read so somewhere recently. Those are conditions considerably in advance of the conditions generally obtaining in the industrial life of England.

Mr. Jones: Ford is only an isolated case.

Mr. Underwood: What is your case against arbitration?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not trying to make a case against arbitration at all. I say that the two forces, the employers and the employees, are endeavouring to go in opposite directions.

Mr. Harrison: You do not agree that they work on parallel lines?

Hon. P. COLLIER: If I say that they are going in opposite directions, it hardly conveys that they are working on parallel lines. Take the case of the thousands of men in the Boulder mines who are now going to the Arbitration Court. They have cited the employers for increases in wages. It will be the object and the duty of the employers and the mine managers to keep the minimum wage down to the lowest possible amount that they can persuade the judge of the Arbitration Court to adopt. There is no doubt about that. They will spend money and time and energy—I am not complaining of that; they will have to do it—in presenting to the court such a case as will secure to the employer the lowest minimum wage that can possibly be obtained. On the other hand, the men are spending their time and their money and their energy now in preparing such a case as will secure for them the highest minimum wage they can possibly obtain. There is a complete illustration of my argument that the objects of the two parties are to be sought in opposite directions. And the same thing holds good, with very few exceptions as regards the great mass of employers and employees in this State and the wide world over.

Mr. Harrison: I am bound to say I do not agree with you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am sorry to hear that hon. member say that, but I shall be glad to hear him refute my contention. In the meantime I say it is possible for Parliament to ease the tension and minimise the struggle between employers and employees by passing industrial legislation which, at any rate for the time being, will serve to meet the situation. It is absolutely necessary, for this end, to keep such measures as the Workers' Compensation Act and the Industrial Arbitration Act thoroughly up to date. I believe that such an Act as the Industrial Arbitration Act, if it is going to achieve anything at all in the direction intended, should be amended every year.

Mr. Nairn: It has achieved a great deal.

Hon. P. COLLIER: True, but it would have achieved a great deal more had it been kept

up to date. Industrial conditions are always changing. The outlook and point of view of those appealing to the Arbitration Court are continually changing. To be effective, the Act should be amended annually in the light of the experience gained during the preceding 12 months. In this State, however, we have an Arbitration Act that is eight years old.

Mr. Johnston: It was the best Arbitration Act in the world when it was passed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I believe that to be a fact. But we learn by experience, and from observing the affairs of life we know that there are now better ways of doing certain things than we thought of previously. It is a fact that to-day the great body of trade unionists, who after all are those concerned with the working of the Arbitration Act, have lost faith and confidence in that measure. Many of those who because of their organisation are not eligible to approach the State Arbitration Court are now forming combinations and amalgamations with the object of approaching the Federal Arbitration Court. They might not so amalgamate if it were possible for them to obtain satisfaction in our State court. They have no confidence in our State court to-day because of the Act being so defective.

Mr. Harrison: What do you suggest as an alternative?

Mr. Lutey: Doing away with the Supreme Court judges as presidents of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I suggest amending the Arbitration Act. It would be impossible for me to outline now the many amendments that are required.

Mr. Harrison: What particular lines would you suggest?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Many particular lines. One particular direction in which the Act should be amended in order that the confidence of the employees of this country may be regained is that of providing that the awards of the court should be based on a basic wage ascertained by tribunals which exist or which may be created for that purpose. The State Arbitration Court should take cognisance of the basic wage so ascertained, and awards should be framed upon a sliding scale, having regard to such basic wage. To-day a union of employees may spend £1,000 in preparing a case for the Arbitration Court, and after waiting 12 months to get to the court receive an award increasing wages by sixpence or one shilling per day. Then they find that all their time and energy and money have been spent in vain, because the cost of living has gone up the week before.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Before tea, I was dealing with what is described as industrial unrest and the need for amending many of our industrial laws. With regard to the question of arbitration, I am not one of those who advocate what is known as the class struggle, but whether I or anybody else advocate the class struggle or not, the fact remains that

there is a class struggle going on in society. This struggle is going on between the two great opposing forces. It is going on the wide world over, and will continue to go on, in my opinion, regardless of whether we advocate it, support it, or otherwise. It is an economic fact. It will continue to exist so long as the state of society continues as it is at the present time with what is known as the capitalist system. What is called class struggle will only cease when that state of society gives way to some more perfect or at any rate better state which I believe will happen in future, though perhaps not in our time.

Mr. Pickering: At the millennium.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, we are all marching towards the millennium, but I would point out to the hon. member that many things which hundreds of years ago, and even more recently, were thought to be impracticable are now established facts. Regarding arbitration, I want to know whether the Government are under the impression that the population of this State is made up entirely of those who are engaged in primary industries. The Government seem to be unconscious of the fact that there are in the community tens of thousands of men and women wage-earners depending for their living upon their daily or weekly wages, and while the Government have provision in their policy this year, and have had it every year since they have been in office, for amendments to legislation dealing with primary industries, particularly with regard to agriculture—and rightly so too, because it is necessary to keep on amending those Acts every year as we find by experience that amendments should be made—the Government should not forget that this community is not composed entirely of that section, but that there are tens of thousands of people whose interests can only be attended to by amending those Acts to which I have referred. Take the case of the Arbitration Court: the court sits solemnly for weeks hearing the most elaborate evidence with regard to the cost of living in order that it might be guided towards fixing a rate of wage in accordance with the statute which lays down that the wage shall be sufficient for a man, his wife and three children to live in reasonable comfort. But after spending weeks of time at a cost of hundreds and in some cases thousands of pounds to the organisation concerned, and after hearing evidence and fixing a wage in accordance with the cost of living at that particular time, the fact that the cost of living increases on the day or in a week after the award is delivered by an amount in excess even of the increase granted, renders the whole work of the court absolutely futile. Consequently the employees concerned are precisely where they were before they went to the court.

Hon. T. Walker: Or worse off.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In fact, they are often worse off. It has often happened that when an increase of 6d. or 1s. a day has been granted, the increase in the cost of living has been double that amount. That is the reason why thousands of employees in industrial life have lost confidence in the Arbitra-

tion Court. The award of the Arbitration Court usually binds them down to twelve months, two years, or sometimes three years, and employees find that the wages awarded to them when the cost of living was at a certain rate is no longer sufficient to allow them to live in reasonable comfort. When they approach the employers for an increase, they are informed that they are bound by the award of the court which has been fixed for twelve months or some longer period, but that they might make an application for an increase when the award has expired. Can it be wondered that these men decline to carry on until the expiration of an award? Can it be wondered that these men take the matter into their own hands by resorting to what is called direct action? In my opinion one of the most effective remedies—I do not think there is any real remedy; all we can hope to do by legislation of this kind is to avoid the possibilities of friction and dispute here and there as much as we possibly can—is to have awards fixed on a sliding scale, so that when a union has spent time and money in obtaining an award, its members will know that if the cost of living increases in the following week or month by an amount equal to 6d. or 1s. or 2s. a day, their wages will rise automatically. That is the only logical viewpoint we can take at the present time.

Mr. Pickering: Should not that cut both ways?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Certainly, and the employees would be quite content to accept it on the basis that it should cut both ways. I do not say that it should operate only one way. If the court fixed 15s. a day as a fair wage at the present cost of living for work in a certain industry, and the cost of living increased, the rate of pay should automatically increase in order that the workers might live in the same standard of comfort; and if the cost of living decreased, the sliding scale would operate accordingly.

Mr. Pilkington: You would need some tribunal to fix the amount by which commodities had increased.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

Mr. Pilkington: Then wipe out the court and have that tribunal sitting all the time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I believe the Arbitration Court adopts the policy of accepting "Knibbs" as its authority on the cost of living, but whether we accept "Knibbs" or some other authority, the wages would operate in accordance with the cost of living.

Mr. Pilkington: A basic wage.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, going either up or down in accordance with the movement in the cost of living.

Mr. Davies: There is one union, the certificated engine-drivers, working under that in this State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But only recently, I believe.

Mr. Davies: Since last May.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In any case the Arbitration Act, as it exists to-day, is obsolete and out of date. The Government must realise this fact, and I

hope there will be sufficient influence amongst representatives of industries on the Government side of the House to get amending legislation introduced this session. It is of no use talking produce, produce, produce, when production is all the time being hampered and held up by industrial disputes on all hands. Such disputes will continue to take place, and in my opinion they will increase and multiply in the next twelve months unless legislation of this kind is introduced this session. I know the feelings that exist in many organisations in this State. I have recently received letters from scores of them, inclusive of the biggest unions which have always been recognised as unions which adopted a moderate course, and which have never had the question of direct action in their programmes, urging me to endeavour to secure an amendment of the Arbitration Act in the direction I have indicated. Failing this the men comprising these unions will be forced to take direct action. They realise that the unions which resort to direct action and ignore the Arbitration Court are succeeding. Very often these unions have only to strike, or even to threaten to strike, in order to secure sufficient of what they demand to satisfy them and induce them to continue at work. This is not fair to the unions which are loyal to the Arbitration Act, and which pursue their callings in conformity with the Act. They have to wait six or twelve months and spend a large amount of their funds in order to get awards, while others are succeeding by the other method. I hope the Premier will consider this aspect and endeavour to bring the Arbitration Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, and other statutes that affect the daily life of the wage-earners, up to date and in line with the latest thought and experience, just as he is doing in connection with legislation for the benefit of those engaged in the agricultural industry and in primary production. I must now refer to the aspect of the Government's administration which is the outstanding feature of their failure—the finances. Before dealing with this question, I should like to express my utter surprise at the fact that the House has not met until practically the middle of August and the Government have been carrying on without the authority of Parliament since the end of June. The Government must have expended already some hundreds of thousands of pounds without Parliamentary authority, and we are to-day discussing the Address-in-reply and the Premier has not introduced a Supply Bill. True, he gave notice this afternoon of his intention to introduce a Supply Bill to-morrow, but it should have been his first duty on meeting the House, even if it were the opening day, to secure Parliamentary authority for the expenditure of public funds. The fact that the Premier can look upon the matter in this lackadaisical way is evidence that he and the Government have entirely lost control of our finances. It is indicative

of the attitude of the Government towards the finances of the State. Not only have the Government lost control of the finances, but Parliament has lost control of them. The same thing applies to members of this Chamber, and the majority who support the Government. Apparently no one cares. There was a time, when Governments had deficits, that the fact was proclaimed from the housetops, and when members of this House, and the public of Western Australia, were never permitted for one week to forget the fact that we were accumulating a deficit. That is now altered. I do not know whether it is by reason of the fact that the people of this State have become accustomed to the expenditure of large sums of money. The Federal Government have been spending tens of millions. Governments throughout Australia have, during the war period and since, expended huge sums of money. It appears to me that the public, who after all have to carry the burden and pay for the maladministration of our finances, or the want of capacity in their handling, have become so accustomed to the position that they are now indifferent as to what may happen. The Speech is not quite silent on the question of finances. It says—

You will be further invited to consider proposals with a view to bringing the annual revenue and expenditure into closer accord.

Only that and nothing more! There is not even, as has been the practice in the past, the statement that "the condition of our finances is causing my advisers grave anxiety."

Mr. Munsie: It has become too stale.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To the Premier and his colleagues the position causes no anxiety. Let us even cut out the figures contained in the Speech. The only information given in it is the total revenue for the year and the total expenditure, and even the amount of the deficit itself is not specified.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are not going to advertise that from the housetops.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the Government intend to introduce proposals to bring the annual revenue and expenditure into closer accord.

Mr. Pickering: That is a sign of optimism.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is need for it, because the revenue and expenditure have been greatly estranged during the last two or three years; so much so that it will require a great deal of tact and diplomacy to bring them into accord again. There can be no proper consideration of the finances unless the figures are kept steadily before the public.

The Premier: We did our best for five years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And with a certain degree of success. I believe the fact that the hon. member and his colleagues kept the

financial position ever before the country, aided by the Press of Western Australia, is responsible for their being on the Government benches to-day. But a strange silence has now settled down in those quarters from which, in years gone by, we heard so much regarding the deficit. They never refer to it now, and not even a paragraph appears in our newspapers on the subject, and scarcely a Government supporter ever comments on the position of our finances.

The Premier: They are constantly referring to it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The whole question has dropped into oblivion.

The Premier: No fear!

Hon. P. COLLIER: A National-Liberal-Country-Independent Party Government may have a huge deficit but the State is comparatively well off, and a Labour Government may have a comparatively small deficit and the reverse be the position. Two years ago the then Treasurer (the member for Irwin) speaking in this Chamber upon the finances said: "The State is right up against it." We are further up against it now to the extent of £1,300,000.

Mr. Davies: It shows what a marvellous State this is.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are up against it to the tune of £1,300,000 more than we were when the member for Irwin made that statement. Just prior to the Premier coming into office in April, 1919, the "West Australian," dealing with the financial position, said—

We want Treasurers and heads of departments who will put the position frankly and squarely before the country; who will stress it time and again, till the sense of it enters into the inner consciousness of the people.

I make no apology, therefore, for endeavouring to give effect to that policy to-night in my endeavour to stress it time and again.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have they said anything about it since?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that it has had too much prominence since.

Mr. Munsie: It has been stated that there was a deficit in Queensland.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are kept well posted as to the operations of the Labour Government in Queensland.

The Premier: I will bet you cannot mention the Queensland deficit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I saw an article in a newspaper which supports the Premier.

The Premier: It does not say the amount.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This was last year, and the paper was dwelling on the condition of the finances in Queensland, and showing that the country was going to ruin. It stated that the deficit was £360,000, that the Government were not disturbed, and yet the fact was quite overlooked that we had a deficit of four million pounds in our own State.

The Premier: What is the deficit in Queensland to-day?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not anywhere approaching the deficit the Premier has achieved during the time he has been in office.

The Premier: I will tell you that is not so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members cannot make wagers here.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In order to bring the situation clearly before the minds of hon. members let me briefly trace the result of our financial operations during recent years.

The Premier: We will do the same.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not afraid of any comparison the Premier may make as to the results of the operations of the Labour Government as compared with those of the Government in office during the past four years.

Mr. Nairn: Neither of you is proud of it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I was not altogether proud of it myself when we were in office and had a deficit, but in comparison with the achievement of our friends opposite I am proud of it. Beginning with the year 1911, when the Premier's party went out of office and Labour came in, there was a small surplus of about £13,000. It was the one period when the finances had been square for a long term of years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Before that there were big deficits.

Hon. P. COLLIER: At the end of June, 1911, there was this small surplus. Labour came into office and continued for nearly five years, and when we went out of office at the end of July, 1916, we had accumulated a deficit of £1,360,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had droughts and two years of war.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I need not refer to the conditions. We have had a bountiful harvest lately, but it does not seem to have materially affected the financial position. Our average deficit for the five years was, therefore, £270,000 a year. We were turned out of office by our friends opposite, mainly because of the activities of the Premier and those associated with him in endeavouring to show our incapacity for handling the finances of the State. For years I sat and listened to my hon. friends now sitting opposite, and heard them predicting ruin and bankruptcy for this State unless Labour was turned out of office, all because of the manner in which it handled the finances. It was on that score that the present Government obtained office. What has been the result? The first Liberal Government, under the leadership of the member for Moore (Sir H. B. Lefroy), during the financial year 1916-17 accumulated a deficit, in round figures, of £700,000.

Mr. Underwood: And they have kept it up.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have been remarkably consistent ever since. That deficit was more than double the deficit for the last year during which we were in office.

The Premier: What about the year before?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Our deficit was £348,000.

Mr. Underwood: It was three times our average.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the following year of the Lefroy Administration the Government excelled their performance of the previous year, for the total deficit of 1917-18 was £705,743. The deficit for the year 1918-19 was £652,015, and for the year which closed on the 30th June last it was £668,224. For the four years during which they were in office our friends opposite had a deficit ranging from £650,000 to £700,000, each year, more than double the amount of our deficit during the last year we were in office. Apparently it does not matter what the constitution of the Government is, whether it is changed from Liberal into National, or mixed up into a Liberal-National Government, or changed into a Liberal-National-Labour-National-Liberal Government, or a National-Liberal-Country Party-Independent Government, the results have been the same for the past four years. I think it will be admitted, in these circumstances, that they have a joint and several liability.

The Premier: You are not blameless in the matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am blameless so far as the last four years are concerned.

The Premier: Oh no!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I absolutely decline, while sitting on this side of the House, to accept any responsibility for the administrative acts of my hon. friends opposite. They may say that they have been faced with circumstances over which they had no control. I am sorry the Minister for Mines is not here because, according to the Premier, he was one of those who set the State on the road to ruin.

The Premier: I did not say "the road to ruin."

Hon. P. COLLIER: He was the very man responsible for that, and yet the Premier went out of his way to take him into his Government when he was not even a member of this Chamber. He said, "Come in and help the Government." The Premier cannot deny that he said it was the result of the work of the Government, of which the Minister for Mines was the leader, that the State was landed in its present condition. In order to redeem the State from that position the Premier brings into his Cabinet the very man responsible for sending it there. Is that the argument of the Premier?

Mr. Johnston: There being no one else suitable amongst hon. members.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was a grave reflection on members sitting on the cross benches.

Mr. Pickering. And it was duly resented.

Mr. Munsie: It was an error of judgment on the Premier's part.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This deficit of £1,360,000, of four years ago, has now in-

ceased to £4,193,000, an addition to the accumulated deficit of exactly 2½ million pounds. We have also started off in the new financial year with a deficit of £106,000. The Government have fairly lost control of the finances, if they ever had it. What are their supporters going to do about it? What are all those responsible for bringing the Government into office and keeping them there, and who joined with them in the cry of financial ruin a few years ago, proposing to do about it? Do they believe, as apparently the Government believe, that this condition of affairs can continue indefinitely? Do the Government believe that the State can continue to drift to leeward to the extent of £700,000 a year? It means that we shall have to increase taxation.

The Premier: It is entirely due to the investment of borrowed money.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not entirely due to that. The Premier will see that the increased amount he has had to find for the last financial year for interest and sinking fund was only £90,000 over that of the previous year. That does not account for the difference.

The Premier: We are losing £400,000 annually on the railways.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is because of the incapable administration. There is no attempt to economise. There is only one thing that is clear to anybody who considers the matter for five minutes and it is that the Government, not only the present Government, but the Government who have been in office for the past four years, have allowed the finances to drift without the slightest attempt at economy. There has been an increased expenditure each year right along the line in every department. A comparison of the Estimates will show that.

The Premier: We paid £400,000 in wages and salaries more than was paid the year before.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And I shall show the Premier how much more he received in taxation. The difference in the deficit created by my friends opposite each year, and the deficit the Labour Government had, does not entirely sum up the position, because whilst the present Government have doubled the deficit they have received double the amount in direct taxation. I will quote some figures.

The Premier: Due to prosperity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not a matter of what it is due to. The fact is that the Treasurer has had the money, and having had the money he has not been able to show results in the total figures at the end of the year. In 1915-16, the last year of the Labour Government in power, the State received £47,716 from land tax. Last year there was received £46,425 or £1,291 less. With regard to income tax, in the last year of the administration of the Labour Government, the amount received was £91,664, while last year income tax produced £271,384, or an increase of £179,720.

The Premier: Due to prosperity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does not matter what it is due to. I will tell the Premier what it is due to; it is due to the amendment of the Income Tax Act passed by this Chamber when the exemption was wiped out and practically every wage earner getting £2 a week was taxed. The big increase is due to the fact that the large army of wage earners have paid taxation during the past four years.

Mr. Pilkington: The whole tax was raised.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And the exemptions were lowered. But it matters not for my argument where the money comes from. What I am endeavouring to show is that the Government should have shown better results because they have received so much money by way of revenue. Dividend duty in the last year of our administration yielded £103,584 and last year it produced £144,748 or £41,164 more than four years ago.

The Premier: More prosperity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The totalisator tax in our last year of office produced £12,442 while last year it gave £45,911, or an increase in that tax alone of £33,469. Stamp duties—and this is one of the items in which the Government has piled on taxation—produced in our last year of office £64,857, while last year the total was £173,533, or an increase in the four years of over £108,676.

Mr. Pilkington: All the taxes were increased.

Mr. Hudson: By this House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course they were increased by the House. I am not saying the Premier is taking money without authority.

Mr. Pilkington: You are not saying it is due to prosperity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Prosperity would mean that an increased amount was obtained while the incidence of the tax remained as it was. As a matter of fact the total amount received from direct taxation in 1916 was £407,996 and last year it was £844,197, or an increase for the four years from taxation alone of £436,201. This is how it affects the taxpayer. The increased amount is due to the fact that the party sitting on the Ministerial benches have increased the income tax, the dividend duties, the totalisator tax, stamp duties—

Mr. Brown: They even increased their own salaries.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have increased direct taxation in four years to the extent of over £436,000. That would not be so bad if as a result they were able to say, "We were forced to do it to square the finances." But look at the result! Whilst doubling direct taxation the Government have also doubled the deficit. That is where their incapacity comes in. That is the position as it stands to-day. During last year alone the Premier received £215,000 more from direct taxation than was received in the previous year. We have now this position, that there has been received for the financial year which has just closed no less than £918,650 more than was received by their predecessors in the year before.

The Premier: Principally from the railways.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does not matter where it came from. I have shown already that substantial sums were received from direct taxation. The Premier also received £90,000 more than was received in the previous year from the Fremantle Harbour Trust. He has been fortunate enough to receive close upon a million pounds more in revenue than was received the year before, and he is not able to show any improvement in the year's operations. As a matter of fact he shows an increased deficit compared with that of the previous year. What does that indicate on the face of it. Any Treasurer fortunate enough to have a swelling revenue, finding that it is increasing to the extent of one million pounds in the year, would endeavour to keep a tight hold on his expenditure, such a tight hold as would enable him to bring the revenue and expenditure more closely in accord, to use his own term.

The Premier: Do you not admit the increased cost of running the railways and the trading concerns?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will deal with the railways presently. The Premier received £560,000 more than he estimated he would receive.

The Premier: On both sides of the ledger.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That shows that the Government have no hold on the expenditure. Any Treasurer fortunate enough to have his estimate exceed by over half a million pounds, and the amount he receives almost a million pounds more than the revenue of the previous year, would at any rate see that the expenditure was curtailed to such an extent as to more closely balance the ledger at the end of the year. Notwithstanding the fact that the party at present in office are responsible for doubling the taxation on the people of the country, and are responsible for increasing the burden by indirect taxation in the way of increased charges for services rendered, all they can show is that they have accumulated a deficit of £4,190,000, or in their four years of office a total of 2¾ million pounds. I want to ask the Premier in all sincerity, having regard to the result of their administration compared with that of the five years of the Labour Government, whether he is not ashamed of the cry which was raised at the time the Labour party were in office.

The Premier: Certainly not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are told in one line of the Speech—in fact the whole subject is dismissed with one line—

Mr. Underwood: I would not give it a line if I had anything to do with it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is responsible for a portion of this expenditure, he cannot get rid of the responsibility by claiming himself independent to-day. I did expect to see, now that the hon. member has been nearly 12 months out of the Govern-

ment, some better results from last year's financial operations.

Mr. Underwood: I will tell you how to cut it down when I speak.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member did not tell his colleagues how to cut it down when he was associated with them. If he did they did not listen to him. The expenditure will not be cut down by squandering money all round the place, it will not be cut down by throwing away £17,000 on the black legs who worked on the Fremantle wharf; it will not be cut down by the expenditure of £6,000 on special constables to walk about the streets of Kalgoorlie after the settlement of the strike, nor by the expenditure of £1,700 on a vindictive prosecution of 12 or 13 men who were brought from Kalgoorlie to Perth for trial.

Mr. Underwood: There are other ways in which expenditure can be cut down.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are too numerous to mention, as the auctioneer says when he is selling chattels. If we go on at this rate we shall have to increase taxation each year to the extent of about £200,000 in order to cover the interest bill on the deficit. We are fast approaching that stage when there will not be sufficient revenue left to pay for public service. I shall refuse to give this Government any increased taxation because, as they said when they sat on this side of the House, it will be providing more money to squander. We have given them £400,000 in four years, and with what result? It is time that the House put its foot down and said that the Government should have no more money until they brought down a definite policy by which the position of the finances could be rectified. Does the Premier think that he is going to sail along and talk "Produce" and settle the finances of the State by that method? It cannot be done, because before we have reached that stage of production we shall probably be bankrupt.

The Premier: I daresay we shall be bankrupt if we have strikes upon strikes. There were 24 weeks of shipping strike last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member was not responsible for the shipping strike, but he had a strike of his own for which he did have some responsibility.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How do the Government propose to meet the situation? We have a hint of taxation in the Governor's Speech. What form is that taxation going to take? The Government cannot increase the income tax; they cannot increase the dividend duties; they cannot increase the stamp duties. All those forms of taxation have reached their limit at the present time. I presume the Government are not going to impose a tax of a halfpenny or a penny on the amusements of the children, and this on top of the Federal tax. They are surely not going to increase the charges for services rendered in the way of railway freights, tram fares, and water rates. What is the policy of the Gov-

ernment with regard to the matter? In none of those directions which I have mentioned can State taxes be increased, because, coming as they do on the top of Federal taxes, they would in many instances create a very heavy burden on the people. I want to tell the Premier one direction in which he can raise more money, and it is a direction which will have the support of the majority of members of this House. From the figures which I have quoted it will be seen that the one tax from which no additional revenue has been obtained in recent years, indeed for very many years, is the land tax. That is the tax to which the Government must have recourse in order to meet the difficulties in which they find themselves. It is a tax that will be supported by members on this side of the House, and also by all members on the cross benches. As a fact, two-thirds of the members of this Assembly are pledged to it. A member of the Country party shakes his head, but the hon. member has his instructions from that conference which sat last year, and I believe those instructions will be renewed during the present week.

Mr. Maley: That tax will be turned down.

Hon. P. COLLIER: "The wish was father to the thought." The hon. member comes from one of those districts which have sent along notices of motion to rescind the resolution of last year, the old settled district of Northampton and Greenough, where land values are high, higher perhaps than they ought to be, and where the residents desire that values should be kept high. The notice to rescind the resolution has reached the agenda paper of the farmers' and settlers' conference from such places as Northampton, Greenough, Katanning, Wagin, Balingup—all old settled places where men have secured comfortable properties, the value of which is increasing each year, and not entirely by reason of the efforts of the owners themselves, but by reason of the development of the State. In other words, those owners want to reap the benefit of increased values created by the community. The men who went out and blazed the track and created the Murchison goldfields also created industries hundreds of miles from Greenough and Northampton, which industries created the enhanced values of the Greenough and Northampton lands.

Mr. Maley: There are many of those men settled in my district, old pioneers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Those pioneers of the Murchison, hundreds of miles away, increased the value of land in the cities. What has increased the value of land in Perth? Are not the mining and the agricultural industries and others carried on in various parts of the State? Perth being the capital city, the value of the land here has increased without any effort on the part of its owners. I know that our friends opposite, or a great number of their supporters, imagine that land values taxation will be paid mainly by the man upon the land. But that is not so, as is evident from the figures supplied by the last report

of the Commissioner of Taxation. The report sets out that the area liable to tax on unimproved value at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound—

The Colonial Secretary: More than half of it is outside the metropolitan area.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. The unimproved value of metropolitan land from Midland Junction to Fremantle taxed at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. represents £5,480,451, and the unimproved value of similar land taxed at 1d. represents £1,555,760, or a total of £7,036,211.

The Attorney General: What is the percentage of the tax raised in the metropolitan area as against the other?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Country lands, alienated or in process of alienation, taxed at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 1d. are valued at £6,701,769 as against the £7,036,211 I have previously mentioned. The percentages of land tax imposed are: Metropolitan and suburban 44 per cent., goldfields towns 1.1 per cent., other towns 6.7 per cent., rural lands 40.3 per cent., pastoral 7 per cent. In the metropolitan area it is 44 per cent. as against rural land 40 per cent.

The Colonial Secretary: Not a big difference.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, but it is in favour of the City.

Mr. Troy: As it ought to be.

Mr. Pilkington: The City would pay much more per head than the rural taxpayer.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but the percentage is 44 in the metropolitan area as against 40 in the rural. This is the only form of taxation we have which has not been adjusted in recent years to meet the altered position of affairs. It is the only tax we have that has remained stationary. I say that a paltry £46,000 a year received from the unimproved value of land in this country is something entirely inadequate. That is the direction in which the Government will have to turn for taxation now. Not only is it equitable taxation, but if recourse had been had to such taxation in the first instance during recent years, the Premier would not now be faced with the heavy deficit on the railways of which he complains. Why are the railways showing a loss of £370,000 per annum?

The Premier: Because there are too many people in the cities.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the hon. gentleman will introduce taxation that will make available to our people the better class of land adjacent to our existing railways within reasonable distance of the City, it will be an inducement to the people to go out of the City. Western Australia is to-day the most overbuilt State in the Commonwealth in point of railway construction. We have about five times the mileage per head that New South Wales has, and about three and a half times the mileage of Victoria. We have long arms of railways reaching into the South-West, and into the Great Southern district, and to the goldfields, and running through land for the most part idle. No one who has travelled along the Great Southern line from say York southward, or along the South-Western railway, but must recognise that hardly 10 per

cent. of the land is under cultivation or being profitably used.

Mr. Maley: Could not you bring that land more quickly into use by raising the assessment on unimproved land on the present land tax basis?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We could raise the assessment, but I think the more equitable way is to increase the amount of the tax. Then we should not have men holding large areas of good land out of use.

The Premier: Do you know what the taxation amounts to now, Federal and State and roads board?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know there is no Federal tax on properties worth less than £5,000. Therefore the Premier's interjection would refer only to large estates. But the fact remains that owners of property in the City have had the value of their land increased during the past 20 or 25 years by enormous sums. Those increases have been due, not to any effort on the part of the owners, but to the expenditure of public funds in the construction of railways, water supplies, and harbours, and in the general development of our mining and agricultural areas by the men producing in the various industries.

Mr. Underwood: Land has not increased in value in Perth during the last 20 years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The value of my land increased even last year. The position, it seems to me, is that the majority of the House is pledged to increase land taxation. As a fact, on the agenda paper of the farmers' and settlers' conference meeting this week there appear several notices of motion to censure members of the Country party for not having pressed forward that reform since it was agreed to last year by the conference. Apparently the resolution in favour of that reform is going to be reconsidered by the present conference. Such is the sense of obligation that certain hon. members have towards their conferences. A conference meets and instructs members to proceed along certain lines. The members sit down for a year and do nothing, in the hope that the conference of next year may change its mind.

Mr. Johnston: The reform you speak of is not in the platform; it is only a pious wish.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member interjecting is in a very happy position indeed. I am glad to have the hon. member's admission that resolutions of his party's conference in favour of land taxation and other reforms are only pious wishes.

Mr. Johnston: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Pious wishes not intended to be taken seriously.

Mr. Johnston: We are bound only by the platform.

Hon. P. COLLIER: These resolutions, then, merely represent a playing up to that section of the public who believe in these particular reforms. Perhaps that conduct deserves to catch a few votes.

Mr. Johnston: The reform is not portion of the Country party's platform.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member will have an opportunity of explaining.

Mr. Troy: To conference.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know one or two delegates to that conference who are enthusiastically in favour of this particular form of taxation, and I will see if they have not sufficient influence to have the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) brought up during the week.

Mr. Johnston: Like the hon. member's party, we are bound only by the platform at the time being.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think the hon. member's party are bound by anything.

Mr. Pickering: Oh yes, we are!

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that is so, they are certainly bound to this reform. Now I should like to say a word or two regarding another form of taxation imposed by the Government since the last session closed. I have already shown the increases in direct taxation; but, in addition, the Government have burdened a section of the community—

The Premier: You are wrong.

Hon. P. COLLIER: With increased taxation to the extent, according to their own figures, of about £250,000 for the year. I want to know from the Premier why it was that the railway freights and fares were increased without the authority of Parliament and without consulting Parliament.

The Premier: Because we increased the wages.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The wages were increased last year, or two months before Parliament closed. The Government knew what they had to face, and although the question was brought up in this House on more than one occasion before the close of the session, and the Government were asked whether they intended to increase the railway freights or not, no indication whatever was given that they intended so to do.

The Premier: How would you make up this increase of wages and costs?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not complaining of that. Before Parliament closed last session—

Mr. O'Loghlen: That is the point.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Before Parliament closed on the 5th December, the Government had already agreed to these increased rates which were gazetted on the 15th December.

The Premier: I do not know about that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I do know. The session closed on the 5th December, and the Minister for Railways left Perth for Melbourne on the 5th December. The increased rates were gazetted ten days later, and I take it that before the Minister for Railways left the State, the matter of the increase in rates was dealt with.

The Premier: I will tell you exactly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We heard much in years gone by of the action of Labour Ministers—

The Premier: How could the increased wages have been paid otherwise?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is an absurdity. The Government have not the power to levy £1 increase of direct taxation from the pockets of the people except by the consent of both Houses of Parliament. The Government are

not permitted to alter the incidences of the land tax or income tax, not even to the extent of £1, unless they bring down a Bill and get the authority of Parliament to do so, and whilst they are not permitted to do that with regard to direct taxation, nevertheless they are permitted to levy—

The Premier: Under the law.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To levy taxation to the extent of £250,000.

The Premier: Under the law.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And that without consulting Parliament in any way whatever.

The Premier: Parliament has given us that power.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not saying that the Government acted illegally. There is authority in the Government Railways Act for what they have done, but that does not absolve them from the moral responsibility of informing the representatives of the people what they intended to do. Simply because they have that power, they are not free to make up their minds to levy increased taxation upon one section of the community to the extent of £250,000 a year.

Mr. Johnston: The producing interests pay it all.

Mr. Nairn: They do nothing of the kind. They pay only their share.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The producing and consuming interests pay it.

The Premier: Tell us how the increased wages could have been met otherwise.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why did not the Government afford the House an opportunity to discuss the increase before they imposed it? Is that dealing with this House openly and frankly?

The Premier: When you increased freights, you did not discuss it with the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: During our term of office, the rates were never increased while the House was sitting. I should regard it as an obligation to inform the House, if the House were sitting, when such a decision was arrived at, but the Government, having already decided to increase the freights, refrained from taking the House into their confidence. They were not frank; they increased the rates after the session closed. They deliberately waited till the session closed in order to place on a section of the people a burden which they knew this House would not agree to.

Mr. Underwood: You have another session now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am dealing with it now in the only way open to me.

The Premier: How would you meet the increased wages on the railways?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is not the point.

The Premier: It is the point.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will the Premier persist in refusing to see the point?

The Premier: I see the point.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No doubt increased wages to railway employees, causing increased expenditure, requires the Government to obtain increased revenue.

The Premier: Where from?

Hon. P. COLLIER: This House should have been afforded an opportunity to discuss the matter.

The Premier: But you agree?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I might not agree with the incidence. I should like to know what the Country party intend to do in the matter.

The Premier: That is all very well.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The deputy leader of the Country party has already spoken on the Address-in-reply and has not referred to these increases at all, although the agenda paper of the Farmers and Settlers' Association conference contains resolutions demanding the resignation of some members of the Country party, who agreed to these increases, and suggesting that other members of the Country party should be refused nomination at the next election for having agreed to these increases.

Mr. Pickering: We had no more opportunity to discuss them than you had.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, but the hon. member's leader had.

Mr. Johnston: The first I knew of the matter was when I saw it in the newspaper.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member's leader had an opportunity. When the increases were made public, some members of the Country party did not agree with them.

Mr. Duff: Nobody in the party knew anything about them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then what are you going to do about it?

Mr. Green: They will stand it.

Mr. Jones: They will stand anything.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Some members took action in regard to the matter. They called a meeting, and what was the result? We had the spectacle of one Minister and two Honorary Ministers, all members of the Country party, breaking the Government Railways Act in order to wriggle out of or justify their action. I do not know whether the Colonial Secretary is aware of Section 80 of the Government Railways Act, which reads—

Any deputation in which a member of Parliament takes part, or at which he is present, shall interview the Minister and not the Commissioner.

That section prohibits members of Parliament from going by way of deputation to the Commissioner of Railways upon any subject whatever.

The Colonial Secretary: I did not go to the Commissioner. It is news to me to know that we had a deputation to the Commissioner.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will leave the House to say whether the party I am about to mention constitutes a deputation. In the "West Australian" of the 5th February the following appears under the heading "Fares and Freights":—

The effect of the increases in freights and the alterations in the fares over the Government railways has been receiving

consideration at the hands of the Country party and farmers generally. On Tuesday last the Ministerial members of the party—the Colonial Secretary, (Mr. E. Broun), the Honorary Minister for Lands (Mr. F. E. S. Willmott), the Honorary Minister for Agriculture (Mr. C. F. Baxter), and the leader of the Country party (Mr. T. H. Harrison), conferred with the Acting Commissioner of Railways (Colonel Pope), and discussed with him the effect of the imposts, the relative proportion of the increased burden borne by the people in the metropolitan area and those in the country districts, and other aspects of the problem. When seen yesterday, Mr. Harrison declined to make any statement regarding the discussion.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Wise old chap!

Hon. P. COLLIER: The paragraph continues—

It is understood, however, that a meeting of the executive of the Farmers and Settlers' Association will be held on the 11th January, at which the matter will be considered, and at that meeting members of the Country party are entitled to attend. The Colonial Secretary: You surmise that is a deputation?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is it not a deputation?

The Colonial Secretary: You surmise that we went to the Commissioner's office and waited upon him?

Hon. P. COLLIER: For what purpose?

The Colonial Secretary: Do you surmise that it is so? What reason have you for saying that was a deputation?

Hon. P. COLLIER: What was it?

The Colonial Secretary: Do you suppose we went to the Commissioner's office and waited on him?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Or that you called the Commissioner to your office.

The Colonial Secretary: It was a conference.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will be glad to have a definition of "conference" and of "deputation." What right had the leader of the Country party to meet the Commissioner of Railways in conference? He was not entitled to do so. I am not entitled to hold a conference with the Commissioner. Yet we have the Colonial Secretary permitting this sort of thing. He does not know the Act. He says a member of this House is entitled to meet the Commissioner of Railways in conference. The Colonial Secretary: Absolutely justified in doing so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He is not.

Mr. Johnston: Only by himself; not with another man.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They met the Commissioner in conference to discuss this increased taxation. What aspect of it did they discuss? Did they discuss the question with a view to finding from the Commissioner whether the Government were justified in the action they had taken? The Minister him-

self and two colleagues sat in Cabinet and approved of these increases. Whether they approved of them personally or not I do not know, but Cabinet approved of them. Then the Minister and his two colleagues six weeks afterwards saw the Commissioner and discussed with him whether the action they had already taken was justified or not.

The Colonial Secretary: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then what was the purpose of the discussion?

The Colonial Secretary: Never mind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This shows what a sense of the responsibility of his office the Minister has. He considers that he is entitled to take along the leader of the Country party and to hold a conference with the Commissioner of Railways.

The Premier: We will take you along tomorrow.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would have no right whatever to confer with the Commissioner of Railways with regard to increased railway freights imposed by the present Government. Neither has the leader of the Country party any such right nor any other member.

Mr. Maley: Not if you wanted to gain some information?

Hon. P. COLLIER: To gain information!

Mr. Maley: Yes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will the hon. member assert that the Colonial Secretary did right in approving of increased rates and then going to the Commissioner to find out whether he was justified? The Colonial Secretary, as a member of the Government, approved of the increased rates and a month later went along to ask the Commissioner—

Hon. T. Walker: All about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and whether the increases were justified.

The Premier: He had a perfect right to go to the Commissioner.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They had no right to go to the Commissioner.

The Premier: Of course they had.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have this procession going to see the Commissioner, the leader of the Country party in front and the Ministers following behind him. The Act prohibits me or any other member of Parliament from waiting as a deputation on the Commissioner of Railways.

The Colonial Secretary: It does not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member knows perfectly well that it does. I shall be interested to know what action the members of the Country party intend to take in order to have these increased fares and freights revoked. I would call attention to the fact that the Act requires the amended regulations to be placed on the Table of the House. When this is done, it will be possible to move to have them disallowed.

Mr. Johnston: Let's do it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is called upon from 20 places at the conference to take action.

The Premier: The conference proposes a land tax to cover the whole thing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yea, but the Government go in precisely the opposite direction and will not impose a land tax, but instead they increase the railway freights. It is not to be wondered that the conference, faced with a situation of this kind, is calling for a dissolution in the ranks of the Government. We had the same position in regard to increased tram fares. I remember the Minister for Railways saying in this House, and saying it dozens of times, that he was opposed to taxing the people by way of charges for services rendered. It must be conceded at once that charges for services rendered should be sufficient to cover the maintenance, upkeep, and other expenses that can be legitimately levied against the particular work. It is, however, distinctly unfair for any Government to levy charges for services rendered which are in their nature, and in fact, entirely a taxation of the people. Although the Government have perhaps ground for increasing railway freights, because the railways have been showing a loss of a considerable sum during recent years, there was no justification in the case of tram fares.

The Premier: The loss on railways last year was £400,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It may be argued that those who use the railways and receive the services should pay a sufficient amount to cover the cost of those services. That, however, does not apply to increased tramway fares.

The Premier: Why?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will tell the Premier.

The Premier: You have knocked over your argument in connection with railway freights.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. The Government have increased tramway fares although the tramways showed a profit last year of £43,605. Every year our tramway system has shown a profit since it has been acquired by the Government, notwithstanding the fact that each year £10,000 has been voted for what are termed belated repairs.

Mr. Munsie: It was £14,000 in one year for belated repairs.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last year the total profit on tramways was over £43,000, and yet the fares are increased. What justification is there for that?

Mr. Maley: I thought they were reduced, because of the penny sections.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Those who can take advantage of the 1d. and 2d. sections have had their fares decreased at the expense of those who live in the outer suburbs.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Taking it all round there has been an increase. There is no justification for this on the part of the Government, seeing that the particular service concerned is already a paying proposition.

The Premier: Tell me where the increase has taken place and when? There has been a reduction.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Life is too short to say when that increase took place. Fares have been increased without the authority of Parliament. It is unfair. In some instances it costs as much as 9d. and 10d. a day to travel on the tramways, and if the Premier will go into the matter he will find that is true. I wish to refer to another matter in connection with the spending of public money without authority. Shortly after Parliament went into recess the Government purchased a saw milling concession and plant in the South-West for £84,000. How are the Government going to justify that action?

The Premier: Ask the member for Collie.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He is not responsible for the actions of the Government. I am not complaining of the purchase itself or the principle involved, but I do complain, and am justified in complaining, of the action of the Government in doing this without the authority of Parliament.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They are arrant hypocrites.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The main purpose of the Government on coming into office was to dispose of the State trading concerns established by the Labour Government, and they said that these would be disposed of at the earliest opportunity. Instead of that they are still running these concerns. They have only closed down the fish shops, and rather than dispose of these trading concerns they have added to them by buying a sawmill concession and outfit without Parliamentary authority, at a cost of £84,000. I well remember the Minister for Works, who is mainly responsible for the purchase, when sitting on this side of the House holding up the Labour Government all night for having spent public money on the purchase of ships without Parliamentary authority. The charge levelled against the Government was that of acting without Parliamentary authority, and not so much for having entered into the business itself.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They can box the compass however they like.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And now the Government are going to put the State trading concerns upon a permanent basis by appointing a commissioner, and they have added to the outfit by purchasing this sawmilling concession in the South-West.

Mr. Pilkington: They have adopted the Labour policy.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and pushed it further than we ever pushed it. I do not believe, if we were now on the Treasury benches, that we could possibly further the main principles of our policy of State trading and State enterprises, or assist it more effectively than the Government are now doing. In fact, I do not think we could do it as well because we should be hampered by another place, which is apparently content to allow this Government to do that which it would decline to allow us to do. What can be said of the honesty or sincerity of a Government, which

comes into office for the clear and specific purpose of disposing of State trading concerns, but which to-day has in London a man who is negotiating for the purchase of more State steamships. The State Steamship Service established by the Labour Government was the particular State enterprise which called down the wrath of the Premier and his colleagues upon the party concerned. They said that these old tubs would be disposed of at the first opportunity, but to-day we find the Government negotiating in London for the purchase of still more ships. Again, rather than sell the existing sawmills, as it was the duty of the Government to do, in keeping with their pledges, especially when last year they had an offer which they had not the courage to bring before the House in conformity with the Act, they have now embarked in a big way of business in the jarrah trade.

Mr. Pilkington: That was not done until the session was over.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is what I am complaining about. If the matter had been brought before the House, I should have endorsed the purchase, as it would have been my policy to do so. I complain of these increases in railway freights and tramway fares, and of this purchasing of State trading concerns, because this was all done behind the back of Parliament. It was not so bad to increase railway freights, because the Government were supported in their action by the Government Railways Act, but where had they any power or authority to spend £34,000 on this jarrah concession?

Mr. Pickering: Was not the property under offer to other people for about £60,000?

Mr. Munsie: They refused to grant the sale.

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

Hon. P. COLLIER: Personally, I know nothing about that, and am not complaining about the merits of the deal.

Mr. Wilson: It was the best deal the Government ever made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was made behind the back of Parliament and without the authority of this House. The Government spent the public funds in the purchase of State trading concerns, which it was their policy, on coming into office, to dispose of.

Mr. Wilson: Was not the price £65,100?

Hon. P. COLLIER: They proposed to dispose of the karri mills. They failed to make a serious effort in that direction, and said they would now launch out in the jarrah trade.

The Premier: We were afraid of our deposit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The man whose enthusiasm carried this deal through was no less a person than the Minister for Works.

The Premier: As a matter of fact, we had full authority. We have a very good explanation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope it will satisfy the Premier's supporters, and those non-members who are opposed to State trading. They have said that the ruin of Western Australia is partly due to enterprises of this description. I even heard the Premier say that State enterprises were driving away investments of private capital.

The Premier: And I say it again, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And now he is going along the road towards his goal, and adding to the State trading concerns in the direction I have shown. He has even started trawling for fish in the South-West.

The Premier: You approved of that on the Estimates.

Hon. T. Walker: True, but it was not your policy. Therein lies the hypocrisy.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are not sailing under false colours. The party to which the Government belong obtained their lease of office on the ground that they were going to dispose of these State trading concerns.

Mr. Davies: They have lived and learned.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have been sailing under false colours. In the City to-day there has been discussed by a gathering of growers a subject which concerns, not only the wheat growers of the State, but the whole of the people. I refer to the question of the disposal of our surplus wheat, and as to whether a contract has been made by the Government, or a representative of the Government, for the sale of our wheat at a price very considerably below the London parity.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The conference has carried a vote of thanks to the three offenders and whitewashed them all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I did not know that. The fact remains that a contract, as far as a contract can be made, was completed by the Minister for Education.

The Premier: You know more than I do.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know more than the Premier knows.

Mr. Maley: He denied it this afternoon.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then there can be no truth in the statement. I know the Minister for Education, and if he denies it, that is the end of it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is time the Premier made a statement upon the point.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

The Premier: When I know a little more about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The matter has been dropped in the most mysterious manner. The executive of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association censored the whole of the correspondence. They told Mr. McGibbon and others concerned in the matter that the correspondence had to cease until the conference had considered the question. According to the evidence published by Mr. McGibbon that contract was made by the Minister for Education when he attended the conference in Melbourne in January last.

Mr. Maley: You ought to be satisfied with the contract.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We should like to know more about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not see why.

Mr. Maley: The people are getting bread at a loss of 7s. 6d. to the farmer.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does not affect this State, but affects the people of New South Wales and Queensland. The price of wheat is fixed. I do not see why I should be pleased that the farmers of Western Australia are compelled to sell their wheat at a low price in order that the public of New South Wales and Queensland may reap the benefit. The Parliament of this State is concerned in the matter. We have guaranteed a certain price to the farmers for their wheat.

Mr. Maley: It was a very nebulous guarantee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The farmers were guaranteed by Parliament.

Mr. Maley: A guarantee of 3s. with an extra 1s. later on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They were guaranteed up to 5s. per bushel. It may seem a small amount now, when wheat is bringing from 12s. to 14s. a bushel, but it was a substantial amount when wheat was fetching 2s. a bushel.

Mr. Maley: The guarantee did not cover the cost of production.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was a guarantee of twice the amount the farmers could have got for their wheat.

Mr. Maley: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The cost of production does not enter into the matter. The guarantee was a substantial one at the time.

Mr. Nairn: And they were pleased to get it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Had it not been for the guarantee of Parliament, I venture to say there would not have been half the surplus wheat available for the high price that there is to-day. Farmers would not have placed under cultivation the acreage which was cultivated, and there would not thus have been the surplus for export, but for the guarantee by Parliament of 5s. per bushel. I am surprised at the hon. member, because he must know perfectly well that at the time the guarantee was given it was of substantial benefit to the country, and as I have said it was by virtue of that guarantee that a larger area was placed under cultivation, resulting in a surplus to the wheat growers to-day of 10 or 20 million bushels for which they have obtained a high price.

Mr. Maley: How rapidly that area diminishes under the guarantee.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The interjections will have to diminish, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The area has not diminished since the guarantee was given. In the first two years of the war there was no guarantee and the area under cultivation fell to the extent of 500,000 or 600,000 acres. Now I suppose it will be greater this year than in any year of our history.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then it will be close up to our best year. It seems to me some hon. members who represent the farmers, or say that they represent the farmers, are never satisfied no matter what the country does for them. I am surprised that the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) has not a feeling of gratitude to the people who endorse the action taken by the House in giving a guarantee at the time it was so badly needed. I notice that the Government take credit—and this is a matter on which there has been some activity—for the number of returned soldiers who have been settled on the land. According to the Governor's Speech, 3,000 have already been settled on the land, whilst the number of applications received totalled 5,000. I would like the Premier to place a tabulated statement on the table of the House for the information of members and the country as well, showing the number of estates that have been purchased, the area of the properties, the price paid per acre, the number of holdings into which the estates have been subdivided and the number that have been taken up and still remain to be taken up. It is misleading in a way to say that 3,000 soldiers have been settled on the land, it is misleading in this way, that the average man might conclude from that that we have secured 3,000 additional settlers.

The Premier: Everybody knows we have not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The fact is that we have not added nearly so many to the total number of producers from the land as we should like to have seen added. A great number of those 3,000 soldiers were men who replaced other farmers.

The Premier: One-half at least.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Whilst we are pleased to see soldiers settled in a permanent way on the land, this kind of settlement is not good for the State, because in many of these instances it means that an experienced farmer has been bought out and in his place an inexperienced returned soldier has taken up the property. In some instances I suppose the farmers who have gone off the land have been men who have had 10, 15 or 20 years' experience of farming in a particular district. It would be much better if the Government secured land for these men so that they could become additional settlers and not settlers who replaced others.

Mr. Johnston: Generally speaking, the experienced men make another start.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When a man sells out one farm and makes a start somewhere else it means that the inducement has been that he has secured a price for his land which he considers, to put it mildly, satisfactory.

Mr. Johnston: He starts again out of debt.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are many reasons why they sell out. In some of the districts I have visited there seems to be a desire on the part of our farmers, which is not altogether a good omen, to sell their farms to the Repatriation Department for soldier settlement. I do not know the rea-

son for it. Whether it be that they are satisfied with their past experience or the prospects for the future, the fact remains that a large number are willing to do that. I hope the Premier will make available the information I have asked for. It will be interesting. Bound up with the question of soldier settlement is that of immigration. I hope also that the Premier will outline, or give some information to the House as to the policy of the Government, and what has been done to date with regard to immigration from the Old Country, and what it is proposed to do in the future. If we have such difficulties in obtaining land for our soldiers, if it can only be secured by purchasing from those who are already settled on the land, if there be no new country available, I do not know where we are going to settle that large number of immigrants who will be coming from the Old Country each year. I would like to know what the policy of the Government is and what they intend to do. At a conference held in Melbourne recently, it was reported that the State Governments had come to an arrangement with the Federal Government on the subject of the whole question of immigration. I notice in the Governor's Speech that the selection of immigrants will be entirely in the hands of the State Government.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It should be so. If we are to be responsible for finding land on which to settle immigrants the selection should be in the hands of the Government. But that statement is not borne out by the published report of the conference which took place recently. The Premier was there and I only know what appeared in the Press. I take it that the information which was published was in every way correct.

The Premier: We do not always accept the newspaper reports.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know whether the Premier will challenge this report or not. The report states that most of the time was devoted to the discussion in Committee of the immigration proposals put forward by Mr. Hughes, the proposals being that the Commonwealth should have full control overseas, and that the Agents General of the several States should form consultative committees in London. That seems to be very definite. The information was published in our local newspaper as a report of the proceedings which took place in Melbourne. Further on the report emphasises the point that the Commonwealth will consult with the States from time to time as to the number of immigrants required. In both statements it is set out that the Commonwealth only agree to consult with the States.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The States will deal with the immigrants when they arrive here.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The statement which I have quoted was given to the Press by the Prime Minister. This also appears—"Mr.

Mitchell interjected 'This is a good offer and should be accepted,'" but the offer which the Premier says which should be accepted and which he did accept according to that statement, means that the Commonwealth will have full control overseas and will only consult the Agents General.

Mr. Hudson: That means that the Commonwealth will make a selection of the immigrants.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It means that they have full control except that they will consult. Before I resume my seat I wish to refer to the strike of civil servants which took place recently. I say that the responsibility for that strike rests mainly with the Government. What led up to the strike was initiated in October last year by the Minister for Railways, who suggested the appointment of a board to deal with the civil service grievances, and he told them that if they did not agree with it he would take the matter into his own hands and appoint the board himself. The civil service agreed to the appointment of that board, and from October last, right up to the time the strike occurred, the Government do not appear to have given any further consideration to the request, and it was only on the day before the members of the service ceased work and after the ultimatum had been delivered to the Government that the Premier made a statement at all with regard to the board. It would seem that the Government did not seriously consider the question of the appointment of the board until a few days before the strike took place.

The Premier: No, the Attorney General went East to inquire into the matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know.

The Premier: You said that we gave no consideration to it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Some four or five months earlier one of the Premier's colleagues wanted the service to agree to the board. Am I to infer that the Minister for Mines was prepared to appoint the board without having inquired into the matter? It was he who first brought the question forward, and four or five months afterwards we are told that the Attorney General went East to further inquire into the matter. If the Government had agreed to the appointment of the board when it was first suggested, there is no doubt that the members of the service would not have gone on strike. They would have had an opportunity in the intervening period of having their grievances attended to by the board. Of course what happened may not have justified direct action on the part of the service, but the Government must accept a share of the responsibility—

The Premier: As much as you like.

Hon. P. COLLIER: For their neglect to take action.

The Premier: Look at the file.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not need to look at the file; the facts are as stated.

The Premier: Where did you get them?
 Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think the Premier was very well acquainted with the facts right up to the time the strike occurred. I do not think he took the matter seriously.

The Premier: I did.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He was indifferent to the requests of the service for the appointment of a board for six or seven months.

The Premier: No. You appointed the board years ago, and dishd them. We did not appoint the board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. gentleman is most reckless in his statements. The board was appointed by a Government of which he was a member, in 1911.

The Premier: It was appointed in 1912.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. It was appointed in 1911 by the Government of which the present Premier was a member.

The Premier: No. It was appointed by a statute of 1911.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I thought the hon. gentleman was referring to the reclassification board. I should like to know, too, what the Government propose to do. Apparently they have some policy which has been communicated to members of their party in caucus, and the terms of which are not yet known to the public. During the strike the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) wrote a letter to the "West Australian," in the course of which he said that the Government had given certain pledges or promises to the party which he, the member for Sussex, felt sure would be carried out. I think those pledges or promises ought to be made known. The hon. member's letter states—

I venture to think that the Country party, in arriving at its decision to support the Government in its maintenance of constitutional authority, did so mainly because it believes in governing the people through Parliament. Other reasons may have been because it believes that the Government will fulfil the promises it has made to the National party, promises which should result in a considerable reduction in the Public Service and an increase in the emoluments to the remaining, to represent in particular efficiency and the main factor for advancement and increased remuneration.

What are those promises? I do not think the Government are entitled to make promises to the National party as regards action they are going to take in dealing with the Public Service, especially in the settlement of a strike, without making those promises known. The letter of the member for Sussex continues—

I am convinced that the Country party will insist on the Government fulfilling its pledges. The methods by which this new system will be inaugurated will be, I think, entirely satisfactory to the general community.

Mr. Pickering: Hear, hear.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What are those pledges?

Mr. Pickering: They are known to the general public.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are not known to me.

The Premier: All that was said was published in the Press.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All that was said at the meeting of the party was not published in the Press. The letter of the member for Sussex refers to the pledges made at the meeting of the National party, not to pledges given to the Public Service. The hon. member has said either too much or too little. I hope he will take the opportunity of elaborating later on, and of letting us know what those pledges were. He expresses the intention of keeping the Government up to its pledges. In any case it was rather a regrettable incident, and I hope it will not occur again. The fact remains that the lower paid ranks of the Public Service and the school teachers are entitled to generous consideration, having regard to the cost of commodities at the present time. To me it does not seem creditable that there should be something like 1,200 out of 1,400 school teachers on less than £200 a year. Two hundred pounds a year is not a living wage today; it is not a living wage more especially to those engaged in the responsible task of training the young people of this State. I have nothing more to say, except to express my thanks to hon. members for having listened to me with such patience.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.20 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 11th August, 1920.

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

QUESTION—NATIONALIST WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Education. 1, What was the total cost