

Mr. LAMBERT: There should be no need for any adjournment. The Premier has not been called out of town, and it would be fairer to the country members that the business should go on as usual.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 15th February, 1917.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, Audited accounts and balance sheets for year ended 30th June, 1916, of (a) Government Refrigerating Works, (b) Albany Cold Stores, (c) Perth City Markets, (d) Metropolitan Abattoirs and Sale Yards, (e) Kalgoorlie Abattoirs. 2, Abattoirs Act, amended regulations.

RESOLUTION—WHEAT POOL, TO APPROVE ARRANGEMENTS.

Message received from the Council notifying concurrence in the Assembly's resolution approving of a payment of three shillings per bushel as a minimum price for the purchase of wheat grown during the season 1917-18.

QUESTION—STATE GOVERNORSHIP.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Premier: 1, Whether he had made representations to the British Government regarding the appointment of a local citizen as Governor of the State prior to Sir Ellison McCartney's appointment to the position? 2, If so, will he inform the House of the result of such representation?

The PREMIER replied: Nos. 1 and 2, No.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CARRIAGE OF GO-CARTS.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it true that folded go-carts, if accompanied by owners, are carried free on the railways in the metropolitan area? 2, If the facts are as stated, will he issue instructions to allow the same concessions on the railways in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder suburban area, and so afford mothers with children in that district the same privileges as exist in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes.

MOTION—WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

Debate resumed from the 13th February on the motion by the Hon. J. Scaddan "That the Government do not possess the confidence of the country, because of their action in introducing during the time of war purely party measures to the exclusion of more urgent and important legislation affecting our national welfare, their incapacity in the handling of the public finances, their general lack of initiative and ability in the administration of the affairs of the State, and their abandonment of the principles of responsible government."

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.40]: Since the leader of the Opposition delivered his speech of accusation against the present Government on Tuesday evening last, I have been endeavouring to find, by perusal of the speech, some grounds of substantiation for the charges contained in the motion which he submitted for the acceptance of the House. Notwithstanding that I have applied my-

self to that task, the whole of the speech, which took two hours to deliver, is, so far as I can see, remarkable for the absence of any substantiation whatsoever of the charges contained in the motion.

Mr. Holman: You have not had a deficit at all?

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman's opening took a considerable time. He employed the first half-hour, I suppose, in reading voluminous extracts from *Hansard* and from other reports of speeches, with which extracts he intended to prove that I had made certain statements that are not in accordance with the policy the present Government have since carried out. I do not want to retract one word of any statement of mine recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr. Green: You have no hope of doing it.

The PREMIER: I am quite prepared to stand by my statements, and, if necessary, to defend every action the Government have taken since as being in accordance with those statements. There was something very evident in the hon. gentleman's opening remarks. I want to deal with a few of the minor statements in his speech before I proceed to the motion itself. There was a frantic endeavour on the part of the hon. gentleman to assure the farmers' and settlers' representatives in this Chamber that Mr. Scaddan was their friend—not Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Green: "Codlin's the friend, not Short."

The PREMIER: For instance, the hon. gentleman occupied considerable time in roundly castigating the Government for having dared to increase railway rates. He quoted the case of Nyabing as an illustration and a substantiation of his charge that the Government had done something unfair in connection with increasing railway rates. He said that we had given the farmer 1s. with one hand, whilst we had increased his charges by no less a sum than 7s. 9d. on the other, thus leaving him 6s. 9d. per ton to the bad. The statement is very ingenious, and it may possibly tickle the ears of ignorant people who accept an assertion of that kind without inquiry into its correct-

ness. But when it is borne in mind that the farmer gets the saving represented by the abolition of the terminal charges on the whole of his crop, and also on a large portion of the goods he utilises—including flour, fertiliser, timber, bags, and other merchandise carried at special class rates—and that he is charged the increased rate of 7s. 9d. per ton in the instance to which the leader of the Opposition has referred on only a small quantity of groceries, oils, and kerosene, it will readily be seen that the balance is largely in the farmer's favour. Thus that accusation falls to the ground. The assertion that the Government have given the settler 1s. in order to take from him 7s. 9d. cannot, therefore, be substantiated; and it is only another instance of the misstatements which the hon. gentleman has excelled in making for the purpose of hoodwinking the representatives of the farmers in this House. The inconsistency of his attitude becomes apparent when I point out that, later in his speech, the leader of the Opposition charged the members of the Country party with putting the Government in a quandary. He charges us with robbery—all members supporting the Government are included in the general charge—because we abolished terminal charges and reduced the fertiliser rates. The truth of this question is so well known that it hardly needs elaborating on this occasion. Hon. members will remember that the leader of the Opposition went to the country protesting against the iniquitous terminal charges and promised to remove them if he was returned to office. He was returned to office and he certainly removed the charges, but it was only for a week or two. He almost immediately broke his word to the electors and reimposed those charges, and at the same time he increased the rate on fertilisers by about treble what was then being charged. Has the hon. gentleman himself nothing to answer for in this action of his? The matter has been ventilated in this Chamber, but he passes it off in his light, way as if it were of no moment, and as if he had to put on these charges again and break his promise to the settlers because of the action of another place in regard to his taxation proposals. We remedied that gross injustice as we promised to do if we were returned to power.

Hon. P. Collier: It was part of the price you paid.

The PREMIER: It was part of the promise we made to turn the Labour Government out of office.

Hon. P. Collier: It was in the contract; it was in the sale notes.

The PREMIER: The force is taken from the charge of the leader of the Opposition by his own words, which were—

On the one hand they have given the farmers a reduction in the charges on our district railway lines, but on the other hand they have increased the freights until, as a matter of fact, they are in a worse position than they were previously.

He was referring of course to the farmers and settlers of this country. It seems to me apparent that a charge of this description is only beating the air, that there is nothing in it and that it is held out merely as a bait for the representatives of the farmers and settlers and to, if possible, create dissension in their ranks. If what he has said be true—and I dispute it—how can he substantiate his charge of robbery which he has hurled against the Government, the representatives in this House of the farmers and settlers, and other members who support the Government. Let me take another instance in passing, of a very weak and misleading argument which the hon. member used. He stated that I had never proposed any super tax and he then proceeded to belabour me because, so he stated, I proposed to increase the income tax, and that I was charging something like 181 per cent. more to the poor man who could least afford to pay taxation of this description. I never proposed any super tax whatever; I did propose an increase in the income tax with decreased exemptions, and this is how the leader of the Opposition twists the proposals which I made to this Chamber some two or three months ago. The hon. member argued that the small man is going to have his income tax increased by 181 per cent. What is the position? He is evidently taking the man earning £250 and he has taken no notice of the reduction of the exemption proposed by myself on this occasion and which was proposed by him on a previous occasion. A

man earning £250 at the present time has a general deduction of £200, so that he pays 4d. in the pound on £50 which equals 16s. 8d. income tax. The same person, if married, under my proposal would have a general deduction of £156, leaving £94 at 6d. in the £, or a tax of £2 7s., which is about 181 per cent. greater than 16s. 8d. which he previously paid. The line of argument which the leader of the Opposition took up is absurd as will be abundantly realised if hon. members will listen to two other examples which I am about to give them. For an income of £201 the tax at the present time is as follows:—Under the present Act, with a £200 exemption, the individual would pay 4d. on £1 and his total income tax would be 4d. Under the Bill which I submitted, with an exemption of £156 he would pay 6d. in the £ on £45, which would bring his tax to 22s. 6d. That represents an increase of 6,650 per cent. So that the hon. gentleman in taking the figures which appeared in a letter in the "West Australian" some months ago, has been led into a trap. He has made a statement which is absurd and he has not gone even to the length that he might have done in exposing the iniquity of myself and the members of my Government. Let me carry the illustration further. For an income of £180 the tax is as follows:—Under the present Act there is nothing to collect, but under the proposed Bill the tax of 6d. will be on £24 and it will yield 12s., and 12s. is greater than nil by infinity per cent. The point I want to make is that the leader of the Opposition is accusing me of doing something in the way of a crime which was simply what he himself proposed to do in his war emergency super income tax. The leader of the Opposition after dilating at some length on this iniquity, entered into a long rigmarole with regard to a 3-inch pipe main at Queen's Park.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Tell us about the man getting £5,000 a year.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition accused my colleagues the Attorney General and the Minister for Works of going out to Queen's Park to bribe the electors there with a promise of a 3-inch pipe instead of a pipe of 1¼ or 1½ inch.

So important was this question that I find it occupies several pages of "Hansard" and is referred to on many occasions throughout the wearisome speech which the hon. member delivered. Then we come to something which perhaps is more important, and which I think requires the serious consideration of this Chamber. He charges us with having made a secret contract with what he called beef buccaneers. He said that we helped our friends by secretly entering into a contract to purchase cattle from Emanuel Bros. What are the facts with regard to this transaction? Not only are the present Government innocent of the charges of making a secret contract, but my friends opposite are guilty of the very action they accused us of carrying out. The Labour Government entered into a secret contract with these very people, the beef buccaneers, in 1916, and in June of that year before we had taken office, the manager who was controlling these matters and who negotiates these contracts, Mr. Lee Steere, approached the late Minister for Lands, Hon. W. D. Johnson, on the subject of the 1917 season. Mr. Lee Steere was given authority to enter into negotiations with Emanuel Bros.—the very same gentlemen who are courteously characterised by the leader of the Opposition as beef buccaneers—in regard to the 1917 season. Those negotiations proceeded from June to the 18th July, 1916, when the attorneys here for Emanuel Bros. sent the following cable to their principals after an interview with Mr. Lee Steere—

Subject to immediate reply Government agreeable to negotiate purchase 1917 cattle similar terms conditions this year; we have asked they lift May to September both inclusive about 14,000 head by "Kwinana" and "Moira" delivery would be made in lots of 750 and 600 respectively, each boat making two trips per month, but they may divert "Kwinana" two or three trips Wyndham if we are able to secure freight Singapore boats if running.

That is the cable message which was sent to these beef buccaneers, as they have been termed by the leader of the Opposition authorised by the then Minister for Lands.

A week later the Government went out of office and we took over.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why did you alter the conditions?

The PREMIER: Rubbish; why did we not alter the conditions? Is that any answer to the secret contract? We altered the price because the market demanded an alteration.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Nonsense.

The PREMIER: We got a price much below the one which the hon. member was considering.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do not explain our deal.

The Attorney General: Let us listen to the story; we do not want to hear you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: For two hours I sat back and listened to the speech of the leader of the Opposition without interjecting.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You went outside.

The PREMIER: I never left the Chamber; for two hours I put up with the duty of listening to the tirade from the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Green: You readily turned your back.

The PREMIER: I do not care about hon. members' interjections because I know that when they squirm my arguments are going home. I hope hon. members will treat me with the same courtesy that I showed them, and that they will give me the opportunity of stating the facts, so that the public may know what they are, and so that hon. members opposite may put on their considering caps. Mr. Lee Steere continued to carry on negotiations even after we had taken office. He was empowered and ordered to carry on by our predecessors in office, and eventually the agreement which now stands was concluded on the 23rd August. The charge is made that the contract was most secret, and there is a further charge that we did not hesitate to enter into such a contract when it meant protecting our friends. I think I have proved conclusively that it was hon. members opposite who were the friends of these beef buccaneers, and that if they required any protection whatever they were going to receive it at the hands of our predecessors, because it was our predecessors who entered into the secret contract in 1915-16. We completed the contract which they

started for this year, and which cannot be characterised as secret, as all the trade knew that the shortage of shipping continued. If it was a charge to be made at all, it was a charge against our predecessors in office. We carried out and completed the negotiations they had started. We entered into the contract openly, and it was no secret, as all the trade knew that the shortage of shipping, which had compelled our predecessors to enter into a contract of this description, still existed, and that the Government would have to purchase cattle to assure the meat supply of the present season. Since we completed that contract we have secured the necessary shipping, and I may say, as I have already announced on previous occasions, that all the tonnage necessary is now available to bring the requisite cattle down to the metropolitan market. Yet the leader of the Opposition hangs so much importance on this charge that he concluded his remarks by saying that this was one of the main things that had prompted the Opposition in moving the no-confidence motion against the Government. I appeal to all fair-minded members to say whether, if it be that this is one of the main charges, not to say the main charge, it has not fallen lamentably to the ground. I will refer only very briefly to the childish attack by the leader of the Opposition on Ministers in regard to Saturday and Sunday work in their offices, and the hours at which they arrive at those offices. Evidently he referred to me, because I am not aware that any other Minister has worked his secretary and his typists on Sunday afternoon. I admit the soft impeachment. I have worked my secretary and typists on Sunday afternoons on occasions, once to complete the Budget speech, and another in respect to the policy speech, at the beginning of the session. I would not care if I had thus worked them a score of times. I also admit that I do not arrive at my office at half-past eight o'clock in the morning; neither did my hon. friend opposite. As a rule I get there when it suits my convenience, and the exigencies of the business of the State demand my attendance. I am going to carry on that system, according to my judgment. I take no exception to the hon. member's reference, except that it appears to be frivolous and contemptible; but

I do take exception to the evident fact that he has still some system of espionage at work throughout the public departments. I should like to know how he found out that enter or leave my office on a Sunday afternoons. No people that I know of see me enter or leave my office of a Sunday afternoon, and therefore I am forced to the conclusion that the hon. gentleman has perpetuated a system of espionage in the Government departments, and has me watched, as a criminal, and my movements reported to him. If I am accusing him unjustly, it is up to him to tell the House where he got his information. There is, however, one aspect of the question to which I would specially draw attention, namely, that if I find the slightest indication of disloyalty, those responsible for that disloyalty shall be immediately dealt with. After a careful perusal of the hon. member's speech, of the general items in his indictment contained in that speech, I have to turn to the motion itself to find out what he wants to get at. I ask hon. members to read that motion and see if I am not right in the conclusion I have come to. In the motion itself there are four grounds of accusation against the Government. I propose to deal with them as they occur. First of all, the hon. member accused the Government of introducing purely party measures during a time of war; secondly, he accused the Government of incapacity in the handling of the finances; thirdly, lack of initiative and ability in administration, and, fourthly, the abandonment of the principles of responsible government. As I have already said, there is not one tittle of substantiation of those charges in his speech, and I defy any hon. member to read that lengthy speech and find any justification for the charges contained in the motion submitted to the House. It seems to me that someone else had a hand in the drafting of the motion, and that the leader of the Opposition forgot to take that into consideration when compiling the matter for his attack. In regard to the first accusation, namely, that we have been introducing purely party measures during a time of war, I have before me a list of Bills which have been introduced since we took office; in all, including a few which have yet to be introduced, there are 47, of which 17 have passed. Not one

of those Bills is a purely party measure. The only one that, by any stretch of the imagination, could be regarded as being of a party nature is the Trading Concerns Bill, and in that there is only one clause which could be termed controversial. Certainly it is not a party clause. I admit at once that any section of the House could make a question a party question, if it was so desired, and I admit that the Opposition took advantage of their position for party ends when dealing with the Trading Concerns Bill the other night. To prove their patriotism they turned the House into a bear garden.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Premier must not reflect on the Chair.

The PREMIER: I am merely reflecting on hon. members opposite. However, I will withdraw. They certainly made the House somewhat disorderly, and certainly they treated me discourteously. Through a long Parliamentary career, I cannot remember any other occasion on which a Premier has been refused the right to report progress when a clause was carried against him. Later on, when the question of dissolution was before the House, and I was making a responsible statement, hon. members opposite received that statement with ribald laughter and jeers. This sort of conduct only convinces the public that those hon. members have lost all sense of decency, and are fast verging on brutality in their political methods. The leader of the Opposition remarked that the whole thing savoured of an amateur farce, of a Charlie Chaplin picture. In keeping with that is the hon. member's attitude on all momentous questions. The night before, when we adjourned at an early hour, he remarked, "This early adjournment will give me time for a game of bowls." That was the hon. member's conception of the responsibility of his duties to the State. On that occasion the State was faced with a grave political crisis, involving an appeal to the people and the turmoil of a general election, notwithstanding which his statesmanship could rise to no higher level than to exult in the fact that it would give him time and opportunity to play bowls.

Mr. Holman: Did not Drake play bowls on a certain historic occasion?

The PREMIER: The indifference of the leader of the Opposition is invariably in evidence when the State is faced with a public crisis. It will be remembered that in January, 1916, when our goldfields were in the throes of a wood-line strike which threatened to paralyse the mining industry, he calmly continued to rusticate at Augusta, sublimely indifferent to the needs of his country, refusing to be dragged into a controversy which might result in embarrassment to himself. Contrast with that the attitude of the present Government when we were threatened by a similar strike directly after we took office, a strike that might have paralysed the great industry, but which was averted by the prompt action of my colleague the Minister for Mines, who was perfectly ready to risk the loss of popularity, a readiness not in evidence on the previous occasion to which I have referred. Then, although it is a distasteful subject, we remember that when the Nevanas question was prominently before the public, and the leader of the Opposition was charged with conduct which reflected against his capacity as an administrator, he loudly proclaimed that he was going to meet his traducers. After the revelations made by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Hon. E. B. Johnston) the then Premier threatened to meet him on his own platform at Narrogin, and, so to speak, wipe the floor with him. But he did not do anything of the sort. He still preferred to remain at Augusta.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the Premier not to refer to the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. Green: No, he is a sacrosanct.

The PREMIER: I do not think the mentioning of a certain member as having taken certain action is out of order.

Hon. P. Collier: If you criticise the action taken by the member for Williams-Narrogin, others may have to do the same.

The PREMIER: I am criticising, not the action of the member for Williams-Narrogin, but that of the leader of the Opposition. If hon. members indulge in any unfair criticism, I have no doubt the Speaker will deal with them in the proper way, according to the Standing Orders. However, if I have transgressed, Mr. Speaker, I apologise.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not wish the attitude of the Speaker to be dragged into a party debate.

The PREMIER: Quite right. I was mentioning you in an impersonal manner.

Hon. T. Walker: It is your bad taste.

The Minister for Works: That comes well from you.

The PREMIER: Bad taste! I like the ex-Attorney General accusing me of bad taste. I will simply conclude by saying that the hon. gentleman, although he is often loud in his protestations, invariably finds discretion the better part of valour. We had a striking example of this in connection with conscription and the national movement. I fully believe that his better nature prompted him to be a conscriptionist, but he allowed his party to overrule him and went to Albany. The same actions on his part are noticed in regard to the national movement.

Mr. Foley: They did not want the present Premier or Sir John Forrest in Albany.

The PREMIER: They do not want the member for Leonora there. Hon. members can have their own opinions; I have mine.

Hon. T. Walker: It is not an opinion; it is abuse.

The PREMIER: And the public have theirs. It is idle for the hon. gentleman to accuse me of all these crimes in which he himself has been so prominent. Regardless of what he says, I claim that no Government has been more mindful of the requirements of the State, first and foremost, than the present occupants of the Treasury bench, or has sought so strenuously to avoid purely party measures as we have.

Mr. Taylor: There is no evidence of that.

The PREMIER: If, however, the Opposition are determined to manufacture party hostility, then hon. gentlemen opposite know that we will not take these things lying down. We are going to resent them and repel them with all the power at our command.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We are game to go to the country; it is more than you are.

The PREMIER: The Bill, regarding which the hon. gentleman has accused us of placing party interests first and introducing a party measure, is that dealing with the State enterprises. It is a Bill which was

introduced for the conduct and the putting of these enterprises on a sound footing. It was also a Bill which contained a clause which stated that no State enterprises in future should be established or embarked upon without the consent of Parliament. We were upholding the Constitution, the Parliamentary control of expenditure of all money, and the control of the establishment of industries which had not previously been considered by Parliament. I say without hesitation that it is a crying disgrace to my friends on the Opposition benches that there was one dissenting voice raised against that clause, and that they gave the exhibitions of party hostility which they did on that occasion. Years ago I stated the position in regard to these enterprises. In July, 1912, I was reported in *Hansard* as having said, when the question of these enterprises came up, and also that of the appointment of managers—

I wonder what sort of expert management they are going to have in connection with these big industrial enterprises at salaries of this description. These are salaries which a big firm would only pay to an accountant. The result must of necessity be that, sooner or later, they will have to saddle a big deficiency on the ratepayers in the shape of taxation. The country is committed to a very large expenditure and it is committed to this expenditure without authority from Parliament. Expenditure of this sort is only excusable upon the ground of urgency or when it is pursuant to a policy which Parliament has already endorsed or approved of. Now, urgency cannot be argued so far as this question is concerned, because Parliament was just about to meet; indeed, if it had not met, the Premier would have been quite within his rights in calling Parliament together to sanction the proposed expenditure. It has been said that we have done likewise, and I admit on an occasion expenditure has been authorised both by the Administration of which I was head and other administrations from time to time, but I do not know of a case where expenditure of this nature, committing the country to some hundreds of thousands of pounds in connec-

tion with trading concerns, has been embarked upon by a Government without first having sought the approval of Parliament.

Who is responsible, then, for this clause upon which the leader of the Opposition hinges the accusation that we indulged in party legislation? The Opposition themselves are responsible, for when they were in power there cannot be the slightest doubt that they acted illegally, flouted Parliament, and committed the country to an enormous expenditure without any authority whatsoever. Why did they commit the country on that occasion, and why is it that they fought so strenuously for the elimination of this clause from the State Enterprises Bill? The answer is supplied by the naive contention raised by the leader of the Opposition and the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) that if the clause passed they would never be able to carry out the policy of the Labour party in future. Surely that gives the answer to the reason for their conduct during the last five years, and for the reason why they made a party question of a Bill of this nature, which is certainly not a party measure in any sense of the term. They acted illegally because they were afraid that they would never obtain Parliamentary sanction for their enterprises. So they committed the country first and asked permission afterwards, and they want to go on in that direction in the future should they be, by any freak of circumstances, once more restored to the Government benches. Surely this is an abandonment of the principles of responsible government on their part, and the delinquents are certainly not to be found amongst the present occupants of the Government benches. I will prove my contention. State steamers were embarked upon by our friends opposite. Up to June 30th, 1912, they expended £70,000 out of loan moneys, but did not ask Parliamentary sanction for authorisation until December of the same year. State ferries were authorised in December, 1912, but the money had been expended in the previous year, to June 30th, 1912, namely, six months before the authorisation. It is interesting in pass-

ing to draw the attention of the House to the enterprise upon which they embarked on that occasion without any authority from Parliament. It is well known that the previous owners of these ferries were making a profit of approximately £2,000 a year. For the first 15 months, namely, up to June, 1913, the Government made a profit on what had then become a State enterprise of £1,250, or at the rate of £1,000 per annum, the profit thus having dropped by one-half. For the following year the profit was £1,000. In 1915, not only had the profit entirely disappeared but there was a loss of £396, and at the end of June last there was a loss of £355. A somewhat similar loss is anticipated for the present year. It must not be supposed for a moment that the loss was attributable to the war, because as a matter of fact the number of passengers carried had shown a considerable increase. The conversion of the handsome profit per annum, which the private owners of the ferries had been earning, into a loss was undoubtedly due in a large measure to the purchase of the new ferry steamer at a cost of about £8,000. Soon after the service was taken over by the State considerable difficulty was experienced in the matter of providing a new steamer. Estimates were prepared showing the probable expenditure of about £7,000 in this direction. Then the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Works turned down the proposal with a firm hand, and said that the service would not stand the expense. In March, 1913, approval was, however, given for the calling of tenders for a steamer at a cost of £5,826. Messrs. Denny Bros. put in a tender for £7,420. The tender was accepted, although it was 30 per cent. in excess of the estimate, and of the sum which Ministers had previously declared was excessive. Shortly after the tender was accepted the tenderers claimed an additional £120 for drawings and a further £175 to restore machinery according to specification. Further improvements were also claimed, which resulted altogether at the time of the launching of the vessel, in a total cost of £7,886. On being put into commission the vessel was found to require lavatories, screens, lifebelts, and other additions, which brought

the cost of this unfortunate boat up to upwards of £8,000. The peculiar thing about it is, that I cannot understand how they came to sanction these transactions. In the building of the vessel the contractors were allowed to substitute lower powered engines without any decrease in the cost below that required for the engines specified. There was a suggestion made that £400 should be deducted for failure to reach the guaranteed speed. The suggestion was first of all acted upon and orders were given to deduct this £400 from the price paid to the contractors. This, however, was subsequently waived and they were paid without this reduction. Although the completion of the vessel was delayed for a matter of six months, the whole of the penalties were waived on the ground that the contractors had met the requirements of the Government in every way, and turned out a first class job, giving the Government value for their money. The marvellous thing is this, that the reports we have from the officers who were best qualified to express an opinion on this boat, show that the only method by which the loss in the service can be reduced is to keep this £8,000 steamer tied up to the jetty except on the few holidays in the year when the rush of traffic might justify her employment. This is briefly an outline of one of these marvellous transactions which our friends opposite entered into without due consideration, and completed regardless of the fact that the building of a vessel of that description jeopardised the earning of any profit in the future, and actually turned the profit on the undertaking into a substantial loss. The State Implement Works were started in exactly the same way. The then Government expended from October to December, 1912, a small sum of money only, it is true, and they also appointed a manager. In December of that year they first came to Parliament and asked for the necessary authorisation for the expenditure of £6,000 in order to proceed with their proposed works. Exactly the same thing happened in regard to the State brickworks. From June to December of 1912 the expenditure was £342, a manager was appointed, and in December of that year Parliament was asked to sanction a vote of £5,000. In regard to the State sawmills, an expenditure

of over £12,000 was incurred between June and December of 1912, and in December of that year Parliament was asked to sanction that expenditure and a total vote of £50,000. With regard to the "Kangaroo," a steamer which has been much vaunted by my friends opposite on many occasions, it must be well within the memory of hon. members that negotiations for her purchase were carried on without the knowledge of Parliament, although Parliament was sitting, and the contract for her purchase would have been signed had not the legal advisers for those who were to find the money refused to accept the bond until the authority of Parliament had been produced. The purchase was, therefore, not officially completed until after the Appropriation Bill had been passed, which necessitated a delay of several months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would you not like to have a few more of them?

The PREMIER: The obvious duty of the then Government was to have sought the sanction of Parliament, which was then sitting. But they did not do so, and the reason why they did not is that Ministers feared the rejection of their proposals; and they waited until they could wrap the transaction up in the general Loan Estimates, under the general heading of State Steamers, and so get it passed through another place, whose power only extended to laying aside the Appropriation Bill. If my contention requires any corroboration that those gentlemen acted illegally and are themselves responsible for the insertion of this clause in the Trading Concerns Bill, it is supplied in the words of the present leader of the Opposition himself. Speaking early in 1916 he said this—

If the present Government had gone to the public and told them what they proposed to do we would not now own the new boat "Kangaroo." But they had been told they must not make secret contracts. They wanted oil for the "Kangaroo" and the Wyndham freezing works, and the Colonial Secretary had a quotation which he had submitted to Cabinet, but the Ministry had said no, which meant a difference of £30,000, because the Administration could not be trusted.

Thus we have the whole thing in a nutshell. The gentlemen who concluded all those contracts now have the audacity to accuse me of entering into a secret contract. Now let me turn to the next accusation, "incapacity in the handling of finances." The leader of the Opposition, when speaking in this House in December last, said that in his opinion the question of the finances of the State was one to be approached from a non-party standpoint. I took him at his word and offered to submit the consideration of all taxation proposals to a committee comprising members on all sides of the House. The leader of the Opposition took this matter for an expression of opinion to his party but his party turned the proposals down. I should like to remind the hon. member that it is only a little over two months ago since this House passed Loan and Revenue Estimates and Appropriation Bill. And I submit there is no logic in so short a period after the passing of the Estimates for a year in his now asking the House to support him in moving a motion of no-confidence in a Government who have only been carrying out the legislation authorised. Where has any incapacity been shown? In support of his charge that there has been incapacity in the handling of the finances the leader of the Opposition quoted the deficit for the past seven months ended January, 1917. That is the only substantial support he makes of his charge. I repeat what I have previously stated in this House, and what I have no hesitation whatever in stating, that the responsibility for the present financial position even in the last few months, belongs to the previous Administration. I repeat what I said when introducing the Budget, that the responsibility for the burden placed upon the people is not mine; that burden belongs to my predecessors. And I repeat that statement to-night.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: When are you going to start accepting the responsibility?

The PREMIER: I will deal with figures shortly. The leader of the Opposition, when quoting me, as usual went out of his way to misquote. He had available a copy of my remarks. I did say that the aim of the Government would be to restore confidence and establish sound finance. And, further, I said—

That in our policy would be an earnest endeavour to restore public confidence. The British Empire had been built up on individual enterprise and energy, and Western Australia could not progress in any other way. From the manual labourer to the controller of capital, each must be given an opportunity to assist the State. Labour Trades Hall methods had been tried, and they had failed. The Government could not compete with its own citizens and bring prosperity to this State. That is a quotation from the speech I delivered. And I think members generally, at least all members on this side of the House, will endorse the sentiments therein expressed. On other occasions I have pointed out that it is impossible to rectify in a few months a deficit which has grown up during five years.

Mr. Carpenter: But you have not started.

The PREMIER: Let me point out that in the financial year 1910-11, the last year of the previous Liberal Administration, the revenue was in excess of the expenditure by over £100,000, and had the late Treasurer maintained his revenue and expenditure in similar proportions we should have paid our way, but each year, despite an ever increasing revenue, showed a much larger increased expenditure. For illustration: in 1910-11 the revenue exceeded the expenditure by £116,000, as I have already said. What happened the following year? The expenditure exceeded the revenue by £134,000; in 1912-13 by £190,000; 1913-14, £135,000; 1914-15, £565,000; 1915-16, £348,000, and during the past seven months the expenditure has exceeded the revenue by £615,000. Thus we have the total accumulated deficit of £1,976,000. How was this enormous deficit built up? It has been built up by increased expenditure during the last five years and seven months ended 31st January last under the following items: interest and sinking fund, £726,000; sundry items under special Acts, £39,000; education, £131,000; charities, £51,000; lunacy, £28,000; medical, £48,000; police, £16,000; making a total of £1,040,000. Then we have the loss on trading concerns up to that date amounting to £113,795. We have also the expenditure which I have pointed out as having been incurred prior to the 30th June, 1916, and

debited during the past seven months, being a proportion of the £93,000 referred to in the Deficiency Bill. This item amounts to £43,345. Nearly all the above is dead or non-producing expenditure under special Acts and cannot be cut down, no additional revenue having been raised to meet it. In addition we have the money locked up in stocks and book debts of the trading concerns, amounting to £321,200. Then we have the loss in the running of our railway system ever since our friends took office in 1911. That loss, after providing interest which during the period has amounted to £458,596, makes up the sum total of the accumulated deficit we are carrying to-day. The point is this. The only item which may give relief is the realisation on stocks and book debts of trading concerns. But if these be realised upon we must keep large sums of money locked up in those items. The interest and sinking fund must go on, interest must be provided for by increased revenue and no amount of retrenchment in the public service can possibly adjust this debit balance. If we take the earning propositions which were referred to by my colleague the Colonial Secretary when introducing the Treasury Bonds Deficiency Bill, and which the leader of the Opposition took such strong exception to the other night, we have this significant position. Railways, water supply and sewerage, harbours and other earning propositions, exclusive of State trading concerns, left a cash balance in 1910-11 towards the payment of interest and sinking fund amounting to £856,000. And as our total interest and sinking fund bill for that year was £1,046,000 hon. members will see that only £189,000 had to be found by taxation. Last year the same undertakings left a balance of £897,000, only £40,000 more than 1910-11, to meet the interest and sinking fund bill of £1,664,000. So that £766,000 ought to have been found by increased taxation last year. This, as previously explained, is in the deficit. In other words, our earning propositions, exclusive of the trading concerns, last year provided £40,000 to meet the increased sinking fund liability of £766,000. That is a position which hon. members can fully appreciate. It is a serious position. As I stated when

I went before the electors five months ago, it is a position which will require years to adjust. Notwithstanding the enormous increased deficit during the past seven months of £615,000 there has been actually £80,000 less departmental cash expenditure over which no Treasurer has any control as compared with the corresponding seven months of last year. This is conclusively proved by the figures which I shall now give. The deficit for the seven months of the financial year 1916-17 amounts to £615,000. The deficit for the corresponding months of the financial year 1915-16 was £497,000, a difference of £118,000. There was increased expenditure under special Acts, over which there is no control, of £95,000. There are amounts I have already mentioned as having been paid away in 1915-16, amounting to £43,000. Then there was a shrinkage in revenue of £57,000, making a total of £195,000. So that the actual expenditure in the departments, notwithstanding the serious position of the finances, was nearly £80,000—or, to be accurate, £77,000—less during the past seven months than it was during the corresponding seven months of the previous financial year. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the land policy of the late Government had a considerable effect upon the finances of the State. There was the threat of the Labour Government to do away with freeholds. Hon. members will also recollect the unwise stoppage of transfers, which was responsible for many financial institutions foreclosing on their securities. They ceased their advances. As a result, the land revenue, which ought to have been an item increasing by a considerable amount annually, perhaps by £50,000 or £60,000, immediately began to decline. For 1910-11 the land revenue was £363,000, while for 1915-16 it was only £322,000, or £41,000 less.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Had the drought nothing to do with that?

The PREMIER: This was long before the drought. The policy of the Labour Government affected not only the land revenue, but also the financial results of the Agricultural Bank and of all the other State departments, including the railways. The unwise policy of our predecessors practically stopped im-

migration and land settlement, and thus completed the disaster.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Bunkum!

The PREMIER: I do not expect the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) to approve of what I say; but I am speaking to a very much larger audience, an audience that will be prepared to consider and weigh my words carefully, and will come to a conclusion that the attitude of the past Government was bunkum. Railways showed in 1910-11 a profit of £224,000 after providing interest. That profit was converted into a loss of £25,000 in 1914-15, and of £48,000 in 1915-16. So that all the large business concerns of the State immediately began to go back upon the advent of the Labour Government in 1911. That is the position we have to face, and it is idle for the leader of the Opposition to talk about the financial ship of State having got into breakers and drifting on the rocks under my guidance. All the leeway cannot immediately be stopped. It is true that in July last we took the leader of the Opposition from the bridge and hurled him out; but the leeway and drift were still going on, and this course has to be finished before the ship of State can be steered away from the shoals and rocks. What is the remedy for the present financial position? The remedy cannot be looked for solely from either increased taxation or reduced expenditure. If the Government were to put up the shutters to-morrow and dismiss every civil servant, it would only mean a sum of about £700,000, including Education Department salaries. That method would not wipe out the deficit.

Hon. P. Collier: No one suggested that it would.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Who suggested anything so absurd?

The PREMIER: If it is suggested that we should adopt such measures, we do not intend to do so. The leader of the Opposition treated me with derision the other night when, like my colleague the Colonial Secretary, I stated that we needed increased population and increased production.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Why do not you get on with the job?

The PREMIER: That is just what the hon. member is trying to prevent the Government from doing. The Opposition ask us, "Why have you not done all this? Why have you not waved away all the accumulations of five years with a magician's wand? Why have you not wiped out the deficit?" I ask, what opportunity have we had? We took office on the 27th July last. Ministers went up for re-election, and a bitter contest was fought in the Canning electorate, as the leader of the Opposition knows to his chagrin and annoyance.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The contest was not bitter, though.

The PREMIER: Parliament re-assembled on the 19th September, to adjourn on the 5th October for a period of three weeks to fight the conscription referendum, during which campaign some of our friends opposite were highly conspicuous while others were not. Parliament met again on the 31st October, and adjourned on the 2nd December in order to allow of my attending the Premiers' conference, as was vital in the interests of the State. We met again on the 23rd January, and we have been faced with bitter opposition in this Chambers ever since. Last week's attitude of members opposite on the State Trading Concerns Bill proves my contention up to the hilt. I claim that Ministers are entitled to reasonable time for the re-organisation of their departments and for ascertaining what economies can be introduced without impairing the public service. Are our friends opposite likely to give us that reasonable time? It seems to me that their one idea is to wreck the State Trading Concerns Bill, in order that they may carry out the order which they received, much against their will, at the Labour congress in Kalgoorlie, to put every possible effort into the establishment of further State trading concerns. Controversial legislation has been dropped by the present Government in order that they may devote their attention to re-organisation of the State departments and to the effecting of economies in the public service. Our taxation proposals cannot become effective for the present financial year, and therefore we have said that we will let them stand over

until June. We can then raise such contributions, though not anything like sufficient, as Parliament may think reasonable and right to impose upon the taxpayer by way of doing something towards rectifying the financial position. The Government's scheme for raising increased revenue will be submitted when Parliament re-assembles; and I may say I am satisfied that hon. members opposite have no wish whatever to be forced to face their electors at the present time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Give us a chance.

The PREMIER: I now come to the third charge, that of lack of initiative and ability in administration; and will detain the House only a few moments over it. In the whole of the lengthy speech delivered by the leader of the Opposition there is not one specific charge. There is, however, very considerable evidence of initiative, and also of ability, in the acts of Ministers since taking office. Will any hon. member assert that the Minister for Industries (Hon. J. Mitchell), who spent a considerable time in Melbourne to fix up wheat sales for the present season, showed a lack of ability, or that the results of his efforts are not satisfactory? The fact remains that wheat sales for this year have been satisfactorily effected, and that the guaranteed minimum price for the next wheat harvest has been approved by both Houses of this Parliament. That guarantee is, therefore, an accomplished fact. My own visit to Melbourne, for the purpose of attending the Premiers' conference, resulted in some advantage to this State. At that conference satisfactory financial arrangements were made to enable Western Australia to carry on, at a very reduced rate, but still to carry on successfully, during the current financial year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not so successfully as last year.

The PREMIER: What?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not by a long way.

The PREMIER: Arrangements were made also in regard to finance, and to obtain the necessary funds for the land settlement scheme in connection with returned soldiers belonging to Australia and to the Motherland. And yet the Government have been hectorred and bullied, and delayed in this important work, because, forsooth! our friends opposite have not the generosity to

carry out their oft-made assertion that they only desired the opportunity to assist in this great scheme. The re-organisation of the Industries Assistance Board was no light task in itself. Notwithstanding all that has been done in this direction, much remains to be done.

Hon. P. Collier: Was it not the work of three days?

The PREMIER: Hon. members will recollect that the old board worked without any inspectors, that delays under the old board's administration were numerous, that thousands of letters were never answered at all, that supplies of fertiliser required by applicants were delayed until it was too late for cropping, and that settlers, both men and women, waited in Perth by scores and hundreds for many days, and then could not get any satisfaction. When my colleague took over, the office of the Industries Assistance Board was crowded with angry, neglected clients. On the other hand, men were drawing money and doing no work on their farms. In many cases money was advanced recklessly, as this fact will show: 570 farmers under the board received advances totalling £238,000, and the proceeds of their crops amounted to only £64,000. Where did the balance of the crops go to? It is safe to say that had a proper system obtained and had inspectors been at work in former days, a loss of at least £100,000 would have been saved to the board last year. Do hon. members opposite, by their childish laughter, mean to imply that it did not require a lot of brain work and application to put the affairs of the board in order? Those hon. members allowed the board to drift into a muddle, and it took a business man to straighten out the board and put things on a proper footing. It is all altered now. The work is supervised by inspectors, and security is obtained for advances. Everything is working smoothly, and at no increased cost to the country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What?

The PREMIER: I will give the figures. The average monthly expenditure under the old board was £1,763, and the new board, inclusive of inspectors, costs only £1,733 per month; so that there is actually a slight saving of expenditure. Now I come to the last charge put forward in support of this mo-

tion, "abandonment of the principles of responsible government." Again, this charge cannot be substantiated from the speech of the leader of the Opposition at all. To answer the charge will need but a few words. I do take strong exception, however, to the levity with which the leader of the Opposition treated the Governor's action last week.

Hon. P. Collier: Worthy of censure.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman said that if he was sent for by the Governor, it would be to tender advice, and not to give an assurance.

Hon. J. Scaddan: In reply to my question, you said that the leader of the Country party was sent for to give an assurance.

The PREMIER: I am quoting the hon. member's words from the *Hansard* report. He stated that if he were sent for it would be to tender advice, not to give an assurance.

Hon. J. Scaddan: That had reference to your reply to my question.

The PREMIER: I claim to have as wide a knowledge of what is due from a Premier to a Governor, and from His Excellency the Governor to the Premier, as the leader of the Opposition has, or indeed as any man in this House has. His bombastic statements carry no proof of his charge. His Excellency the Governor is perfectly entitled to seek an assurance from the leader of the Country party, if he so desires, and he was more entitled to get that assurance because of the circumstances of the unfortunate division when several members of the Country party were absent from their places in this House. His Excellency was entitled to know, if he wished, that these members were not absent with a desire to embarrass the Government on that occasion. I decline to discuss in this Chamber the action of the Governor, but I merely want to emphasise the position, because even His Majesty the King himself, on occasions, consults all leaders of political thought in the Motherland and even people outside, if he thinks it desirable to so do. His Majesty's representative in any of the States of the Commonwealth has an equal right to do likewise, if he desires. He could consult the leader of the Opposition and if he wished he could send for that gentleman and confer with him without being reviled

for so doing, or being brought to task in a no-confidence motion of this description.

Hon. J. Scaddan: If it was on a political question, I would not go.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition was perfectly correct when he said that there was nothing strikingly original in his remarks. He never made a truer confession. He attempted to burlesque what took place between the Governor and myself as Premier, and his conduct was certainly undignified, to say the least of it. I have shown that the leader of the Opposition has failed to bring forth any proof of the charges he levelled against the Government, and I have proved that there was no foundation for them. I have shown that the very men who brought those charges are themselves the culprits. I have also shown, I think satisfactorily, that hon. members opposite are themselves obsessed with the party spirit, and that their one determination is to wreck the Bill which they think will legitimately tie their hands in the future, and which will prevent them from carrying out the policy laid down by their masters—I refer to the Trading Concerns Bill. Their object is to prevent Ministers having an opportunity of looking into their departments, let alone the opportunity of reorganising them and effecting reforms wherever they may be necessary. Reorganisation and reform are necessary, and I trust that the House is not going to respond to the appeal of the leader of the Opposition—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not be too sure.

The PREMIER: To put out a Government who have done so much in the few months they have been in office, merely on the flimsy, unfounded and unsubstantiated charges made by that hon. gentleman, and as put forth in the motion he moved. The matter is in the hands of the House. The Government do not want to retain office for one moment if they have not a majority. We know that the majority is small, but we are content to work on that small majority.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Is it solid?

The PREMIER: If my friends opposite can, by bellowing, or by any means in their power, entice one vote from this side of the Chamber, we shall willingly hand in our

resignation to His Excellency the Governor. The work before the Government is of such a nature that it ought to receive generous treatment at the hands of our political opponents, and if they have that spirit of patriotism in their nature, which they claim to possess, if they desire to carry out what the leader of the Opposition promised he was willing to undertake to do, namely, to render willing assistance to the Government to straighten out the affairs of the State, then I submit they will abandon the motion and render that assistance which was so freely offered and which was accepted by me.

Sitting suspended from 6.5 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [7.30]: After the very illuminative address by the Premier this afternoon, it is hardly necessary for me to call attention to the illogical reasoning of the leader of the Opposition when moving his motion. In his attempt to belittle the present Government and the party who are standing solidly behind the Government, the hon. member pointed to the fact that the financial drift has not been stopped during the brief period the Wilson Government have occupied the Treasury bench. Any man in his sane senses, especially one who has filled the position of Treasurer for five years, should know perfectly well that in so short a time it is impossible to effect the reforms necessary to the stopping of the drift. The hon. member forgot that huge sums of money have been spent during the last five years, some of it, according to the Premier, misspent. Yet it will all have to be repaid by the country at some time or other. The leader of the Opposition must realise that the drift cannot be stopped immediately. Then why blame the present Government, who have been but a few months in office, for not having yet stopped it, for not having been able to do what he could not do in so long a time?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why has the drift increased?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Because of the muddling of the late Government. The effect of the new management cannot be felt before bedrock is reached.

Hon. T. Walker: Then we have to bump before we spring up again.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The leader of the Opposition, having recourse to the old simile, said he was blamed for allowing the ship of State to drift on the rocks. She did not drift on the rocks at all. He was at the helm, his crew were on board, and they deliberately steered her on to the rocks. Then a new pilot is put on board, and it is expected of him that he shall handle an unseaworthy old vessel which has been bumping on the rocks for five years past, and steer her safely into the harbour of sane administration.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is it customary to put a pilot on a ship on the rocks? I should think it was a job for a salvage officer.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The work of the Premier to-day is in the nature of that of a salvage officer, owing to the wrecking methods of the late Administration. The leader of the Opposition seemed to be terribly concerned that the present Government should have seen fit to remove the extra railway charges on fertilisers, and the iniquitous terminal charges on spur lines. He considered that the removal of those charges was not warranted, that it was unjust and unfair, in fact that it was a robbery of the people.

Hon. T. Walker: He never said that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: He did, and almost in the same breath he declared that the men occupying distant areas should be given every encouragement and help. It seems to me nothing but an example of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. The hon. member on the one hand said that it was iniquitous to remove a burden of £66,000 from the farmers, and on the other hand he said they should be helped in every possible direction. When we sift the hon. member's remarks we find that what hurts him most is the fact that the burden which was removed affected the farmer alone, and when this reduction of freights is spread over the whole of the country districts, including the goldfields, he takes up the cudgels at once.

Mr. Hudson: Are you setting up the farming industry against that of mining?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Nothing could be further from my intention. The burden in

respect of those two particular items has been removed from the agriculturists and distributed over other sections of the community. I agree with the leader of the Opposition regarding the unfair and inequitable incidence of the railway freights as they are at present, and I trust that the Minister for Railways will look carefully into this question with a view of adjusting the freights.

Mr. Thomas: Why not put pressure on him?

Mr. WILLMOTT: The Minister has sufficient sense to see the necessity for going into this matter without waiting for any pressure to be brought to bear. I feel sure he will see that justice is done in the near future. Hon. members opposite have been in the habit of gulling the farming community for years past, but every day they will find it increasingly harder to gull the farmer, because the farmer now has direct representation in Parliament.

Mr. Foley: A conclusive proof of his gullibility.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The next election will prove that what I say is correct.

Hon. P. Collier: That is why you asked the Governor not to grant a dissolution.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That remark is as inaccurate as, generally speaking, the hon. member's remarks are accurate. In my opinion, an opinion which is rapidly gaining ground, our system of financing the railways is entirely wrong. Our railways are national. Then why should one section of the community be called upon to pay maintenance, working expenses, interest and sinking fund on our railways. Why should the users of the railways be called upon to pay all these charges? Who is going to pay maintenance, working expenses, interest and sinking fund in respect of the trans-Australian railway? If these charges are to be met by the users of that railway, the man who takes a trip from here to Adelaide will have to sell his house or mortgage his farm, as the case may be, to pay his fare. If it is good that the burden of this great railway should be borne by the people as a whole, I say it is equally good that the burden of our State railways should be borne by the general taxpayers. Under the present system, the man who

sends his produce to town pays the freight, and he who takes goods from the town to the back country again pays the freight. He it is who is the mug. Other people, if they use the railways at all, do so on excursion days, when they are allowed to travel at less than cost.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The farmers will not appreciate being called mugs.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The hon. member himself must be a mug if he cannot see that it is not only the farmer, but the timber worker, the gold miner, the wheat grower and the orchardist, who are carrying the burden of the railways on their backs to-day.

Hon. J. Scaddan: How are you going to apply your proposal?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Instead of this party fighting being carried on Ministers should give all the attention they can to the great question of preparing our vacant lands for the large influx of population, which I hope will come pouring into this State at the end of the war.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not vacant lands that is the trouble, but vacant minds.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The South-West ought to occupy the sole attention of Ministers. I think the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) is prepared to support me through thick and thin on this point. We are agreed upon that, and let our party—

Hon. J. Scaddan: Go hang.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes, and the hon. member with it. We are together in this, and are absolutely honest in wanting to see the South-West opened up. We have now the greatest opportunity of opening it up that has ever presented itself up to the present. I have every confidence that the Minister for Lands will, when given time, settle this question in a satisfactory manner. There is this trouble so far as our South-West is concerned, and that is that great care has to be exercised. If a muddle is made of it now, the South-West will be condemned for many years to come.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Would you have a repetition of Denmark?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I would rather not discuss Denmark with the hon. gentleman. I had no responsibility in the matter and do not think any member of the present Min-

istry was responsible. I say this in all sincerity, and in conclusion, that the South-West is the only hope for the unfluctuating prosperity of the State.

Mr. O'Loghlen: You have not mentioned timber yet.

Mr. WILLMOTT: What is the good of talking about timber to-day when we cannot ship it overseas? No one in the House has the interest of the timber industry more at heart than I have, but what is the good of my standing up here and blatherskiting about timber when we know we cannot send it away? Can we cut any more and stack it? It would be an absolute waste of funds to amass large stocks of timber in this way at the present time?

Mr. Foley: Why should it be a waste of money?

Mr. WILLMOTT: We have not sufficient capital behind us to do it. If Millars' combine had unlimited capital, would they not be stacking up hundred of thousands of pounds worth of timber, and would they not be doing so in the hope of being able to sell it at a good price later on?

Mr. Foley: Why did not the Government do it?

Mr. WILLMOTT: No one can say when the war will end. That being the case, it would be a bad business proposition to sink huge sums of money in cutting up our forests into sawn timber. I am going to vote against the motion because I am of opinion that the present occupants of the Treasury bench have the confidence of the Country party, and of the country of Western Australia.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [7.50]: If the speech of the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) was interesting for what it contained, the speech of the Premier was interesting for what it left unsaid. It seemed to me as if the Premier had made up his mind that he had to talk for a given time, and was going to fill it in somehow. In his endeavour to do this he dealt with matters of no particular importance and which had no bearing upon the motion. We know that when the Premier has a defence he is well able to use it, but when we find him as he is to-day using no defence of his Government and his administra-

tion we can only come to the conclusion that he realises that the people of the State recognise that his case is absolutely hopeless. After the manoeuvres of the last few days the people are beginning to understand the position. They realise that the Government are determined to keep hold of the Treasury bench as long as the Constitution will permit. They recognise, too, that despite all these manoeuvres there must ultimately be an appeal to them, and they are thanking God to-day that there is a limit to the life of a Parliament. They recognise, as we do, that the Government are not prepared at the present juncture to face them. The Government are going through hoping that something will turn up to place them in a better position so that they can appeal to the people at a later date and under more favourable conditions. Take the Premier upon the question of finance, of which he is supposed to be such an experienced exponent. He dealt only with the expenditure which could not be avoided, but gave us nothing in regard to what is going on to-day in the way of expenditure over which he has full control. We know full well, and it has often been repeated in the House, that under special Acts we have special expenditure, and that as we develop our country with borrowed money, our interest and sinking fund bill must of necessity increase. There are other classes of expenditure to which the Premier has referred, which cannot be avoided and must be incurred. Over and above all that, we have the expenditure that he has been criticising for the last five years, an expenditure over which Governments have full control, and the people surely expect from the Premier on an occasion of this sort something of what he proposes to do to stop the present drift. It is admitted that the previous Government had a deficiency, but the present Government were put in office to stop the drift, though instead of stopping it they have increased it. As an Opposition we are surely justified in criticising the want of capacity on the part of the Government in that regard, and surely also the people are justified in expecting from the Premier some explanation beyond the statement that we have had from him that "You cannot do

it in seven months." He led the people and the Country party, which gave him their support, to believe that he could do it right away, and that it was only a matter of a change in Government to stop the drift altogether. One can realise that in a short time he has to face his constituents, and also that in the meantime he realises himself that he cannot stop the drift. He now has to turn round, therefore, and begin apologising for his deficiency, and began to do that this afternoon. In this, he is only following the lead of the Colonial Secretary, as shown by the leader of the Opposition in his speech. He began to apologise and explain the deficiency, and to-day we have had the Premier following this up, and this will probably be enlarged upon as time goes on. He will get away from the period of seven months not being sufficient in which to remedy the financial drift, and we shall find the Premier directly saying that it is impossible for him to stop it and making apologies for not doing so. To show that there is an absence of that business acumen and commercial training, of which we have heard so much, and which, we hear, the hon. gentlemen opposite possess to such a large degree, one has only to point to the figures given to-day to demonstrate that there is something wanting in the administration of the country in those two important particulars. The Premier says that on the railways for the last five years there has been a loss of £400,000, and yet, knowing that this loss existed, he immediately sets to work to increase it. That is what they call "business acumen." We know perfectly well that before the Government made any attempt to increase the revenue or improve the general administration in the curtailment of expenditure they immediately wrote off revenue by reducing fertiliser freights and district railway charges, and the charges upon railways under construction. The railways constitute a trading concern, and there has been this loss upon them, and then, in order to improve the present position of affairs, the Premier begins by reducing his revenue from the railways.

Mr. Harrison: Is that not due to the traffic not being so much, and also to the wheat not being carried to the port?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The loss is absolutely due to the fact that during the last six or eight years we built agricultural railways in excess of what this State could carry. The losses to-day upon our railway system are absolutely due to the losses on our agricultural railways.

Mr. Harrison: You were speaking of last year.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I was speaking of the loss during the last five years. The figures quoted by the leader of the Opposition in regard to railway freights are absolutely correct, and were given in reply to a question that he put to the Minister himself. The Minister admitted that on the farmers' requirements there had been an increase, owing to the increased freights on commodities, agricultural machinery, etc., to a place like Nyabing of 7s. 9d. a ton. It is true, as the leader of the Opposition points out, that whilst the Government have reduced the fertiliser freights on the one hand, they have increased the freights on the other, and to a large extent the one freight discounts the rates in the other direction. To arrive at the exact position one would need to get from the farmers the amount of fertiliser and commodities that are carried over the railways to them. It is possible to have farmers whose use of the railway system for the purpose of having fertiliser carried is very small, and on the other hand it is possible to get farmers whose use of the agricultural railways is so great that they will lose considerably by the alterations in freight. I am prepared to admit that, taking it by and large, the increase on farming commodities would not altogether out-balance the reduction made in regard to the newer rates, taking the agricultural industry as a whole. With regard to these manure rates, it is interesting to review the situation as the Government found it when they took office. Many people encourage the belief that the freight rate charged by the Labour Government was excessive, that it was a freight rate upon which large profits were made, and that no effort was made by the Scaddan Government to relieve the farmers by giving them fair freights for their fertilisers, of which they use such a large quantity. But the fact is that the freight rate was a losing one. The rate was what

is known as the M rate, so far as I remember, up to 100 miles; after that it was only one farthing per ton per mile, as it is today. I would point out to the members on the cross benches that after all this is the most fair method of dealing with the question of manure rates. Take the farmer near Northam, for example. Under the old conditions the freight on manure would be 5s. 9d. per ton, taking a minimum lot of five tons. Under the alteration it has been reduced from 5s. 9d. to 1s. 3d. That large decrease is more largely favourable to the farmer in Northam, who uses a considerable amount of super, than to the man out back. Not only does the man out back use less super, but this reduced rate is offering a special bonus to the man who is close to the market. In addition, it has to be remembered that this reduced rate is helping the farmer who got his land at a much lower price than the outback farmer. The farmers around Northam and York got their land cheaper than the out-back man, and they also had the further advantage of a better market, furnished by the gold-fields, while their land was being developed. Surely, then, it is only fair to expect men who are more favourably situated from other points of view to pay more for the carriage of their super in order that the men outback might be relieved. The farmers and settlers' representatives, although posing as the friend of the man outback, have done little or nothing for him as compared with the man who is close to the market. The latter gets a special bonus in the carriage of his 50, 60, or it may be 100 tons of super, which is not available to the man outback, who uses 10 or perhaps 20 tons. The railway freights imposed by the Scaddan Government, I maintain, were equitable, and if the case were put to the men outback in a proper light, it would be realised that the alleged assistance given to the farmers by the present Government has not been so great in their case as it has been in the case of the men more favourably situated. I venture the opinion that if we could get down to bedrock figures of the exact quantities of manure and other commodities used, it would be found that the men farming under great difficulties in the remote districts have not had that consideration from

the present Government which the Country Party would lead them to believe. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) raised the point that the Premier had quoted figures showing the losses over and above the losses in the trading concerns. It is interesting at this stage to note that until to-night the Premier when dealing with the question of losses always attributed them to the trading concerns. But he has not done that to-night. He realises now that his difficulties in so far as finance are concerned are being assisted to a very large extent by the operation of those very trading concerns which he so roundly condemned previously.

Hon. P. Collier: Especially the steamships.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. He gave us figures excluding the trading concerns; but he forgot to point out that the £776,000 shortage has been built up largely, as I have already said, by the huge expenditure the State has undertaken in connection with railway construction. It is useless now to blame any Government for the expenditure in that regard. Every Government has to bow to the desires and wishes of the people as expressed through Parliament. On the advent of the Scaddan Government there were agitations from all quarters asking the Scaddan Government to fulfil the promises of their predecessors, who had failed to carry out their pledges, although they had had years in which to do so. Appeals were made by farmers suffering under all sorts of disabilities that the Government should come to their rescue and go in for a vigorous policy of agricultural railway construction. We agreed that in those cases where railways had been promised to settlers as inducements to go outback and take up agricultural land, the undertaking should be carried out, that we would go in for a vigorous railway construction policy. But the farmers were told it was useless the Scaddan Government promising anything of the sort, because it was impossible for them to borrow money, that being a Labour Government they were opposed to borrowing, and that even if they wanted to borrow money the market would not be available to them, simply because they were a Labour Government. That argument has been exploded now. We responded to the desire as expressed from the constit-

encies that their disabilities should be immediately attended to, and I venture the opinion that in so far as railways and water supplies are concerned no Government has ever more loyally carried out its pledges than the Scaddan Government. In doing that it must be remembered the expenditure was abnormal. The Wilson Government, just before appealing to the constituencies in 1911, passed through Parliament railway Bills running into something like 600 miles. Those Bills should have been passed long before. The settlers had been promised the railways, and had even been supplied with maps showing the railways as an encouragement to them to take up land. Those 600 miles of railway had to be built, and the Scaddan Government had to add to that other railways just as urgently required. The result was we had a heavy railway construction to face, and we faced it boldly. Because we did that, we are told to-day that the interest and sinking fund bill is enormous, is too much for the people to carry. It must be remembered, however, that the Country party, when the Labour Government was in office, day in and day out urged the Government to expedite railway construction. It is useless now crying over spilt milk. We realise that we have difficulties with us to-day which are due to the policy of railway construction, and that those difficulties have to be overcome. But in our effort to make the farmers more prosperous we should be careful not to place a burden on the general taxpayer.

Mr. Harrison: The general taxpayer gets the benefit of those railways, does he not?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It cannot be said to-day that he does; the general taxpayer has not got any direct result. I am prepared to admit, and I shall not argue against the proposition, that agricultural development is the best development which can be undertaken in any country, that agriculture must be the salvation of Western Australia. If we cannot push Western Australia ahead as a result of agricultural development, the State is never going to be pushed ahead. But the point I am making is that we have gone in for agricultural railways construction rather faster than the population justifies, that our population is

not large enough to carry all the agricultural railways already constructed. It is because of that we have to-day such a huge interest and sinking fund to face. But that charge has been imposed upon the State by Parliament, the policy has been endorsed by Parliament. There has never been any difference of opinion as to the policy of railway construction. It is useless, therefore, the Premier trying to excuse himself in regard to the financial position by quoting the increased interest and sinking fund charges. He must face that difficulty. He asked the present Opposition when in office to face and overcome the same difficulty by economising in respect of those matters under their control. But he has not attempted to-night to explain how he proposes doing this. He dealt with trading concerns and took up a good deal of time going into the details of expenditure. He pointed out that a portion of the expenditure had been incurred between the 30th June, the end of the financial year, and the introduction of the Estimates which authorised the payments of liabilities in connection with those concerns. No one ever disputed that. We candidly admit it. Not only in connection with trading concerns but in every other Government activity, it is essential, provided the Government policy has been endorsed by the people, that the Government should go ahead and carry out its policy as quickly as possible, coming afterwards to Parliament for the necessary authorisation. It is not the practice to do otherwise, and the present Premier never took any other course in the past.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have built up £400,000 for us this year.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It has been the custom in all Parliaments for the Government, immediately its policy is endorsed by the country, to put that policy into operation, and having started it to bring down their Estimates in due course to Parliament so as to get the money to carry the policy on. The very fact that a Treasurer's Advance is provided, a lump sum on which he may operate to carry on regarding matters which might arise during the term between the passing of one year's Estimates and the next, is evidence that provision is made in that regard. We do not dispute that the

Labour Government went into trading concerns; but the Premier should remember that when we entered into the policy of establishing trading concerns we did so as the result of a direct appeal to the people—and no Government in Western Australia ever got a majority equal to that we were given on that policy. It was a complete endorsement of our policy, and we would have been unfaithful to the trust placed in us by the people had we not gone on with it. But the differences between the present Government and the present Opposition have arisen mainly because the Trading Concerns Bill was a deliberate attempt to prevent the will of the people being put into operation in the future. It is useless the Premier saying we raised the party cry, that the Bill as introduced was purely a machinery measure to give the Government greater control. The reply to that is conclusive. It is that we did not interfere with the machinery clause. As a matter of fact, some of the clauses should have been amended and the necessary notice was given, but out of consideration for the Government's desire to introduce amendments for the purpose of the better management of the concerns, we allowed the machinery clauses to pass and did not interfere with them. Accordingly, we gave the Government all those clauses of the Bill which they said they needed for better control of the undertakings, and we denied them only that part of the Bill which contained a clause deliberately introduced for the purpose of rendering it absolutely impossible for any future Government, no matter what majority they might have at the polls, and no matter what the wishes of the people might be, to establish further State trading concerns for the public benefit. The Premier, when dealing with the Bill, denied this; but later, in his eloquence, the hon. gentleman forgot himself and admitted that the effect of the clause would be to prevent any Government from establishing State trading concerns on the lines of the existing concerns, without first obtaining Parliamentary authority. I have already pointed out that the consent of the Legislative Council cannot be obtained to the establishment of State trading concerns, seeing that members of that Chamber re-

present interests with which the Government enterprises would come into conflict. Trusts and combinations operating to the detriment of the people are directly and specially represented in the Legislative Council. How on earth, then, can the will of the people be given effect to if one has to appeal to the very persons one proposes to fight? The Bill was introduced as a deliberate reversal of the late Government's policy, which had been endorsed by the people. We would be disloyal to our constituents if we did not protest against the Bill. Had the present Government been elected with a mandate from the people for the introduction of such a measure as this, we could not have objected. Knowing, however, that the Government deliberately avoided an appeal to the people on one or two occasions, when the opportunity for such an appeal presented itself, we are justified in opposing a Government who flout the people's wishes to such an extent. The Premier dealt with a number of trading concerns. I will deal with only one, as an illustration. The ferries, according to the Premier, when under private ownership returned a profit of £2,000 per year. The figure is not correct. After the purchase of the ferries had been finally settled up, Mr. Copley told me that he had been making a profit of £1,200 per year. The Government made a profit at something like the same rate.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): For how long?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Not for long, I will admit. But the point is that the late Government, on taking over the ferries, reduced the fares. We did not continue to charge the fares which Mr. Copley had been charging. It was because that gentleman charged exorbitant fares that the public outcry arose.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Moreover, we gave a better service.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Quite so. After all, the Government are not justified in attempting to make huge profits out of such a proposition. The very fact of our making a profit at the rate of £1,200 per annum—

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): For a week, was it not?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: For seven months, I think. We can all work on a seven-months basis now. The fact that we made profits at that rate was in itself a justification for reduction of fares. The Government were not justified in making such profits out of the development of an isolated locality like South Perth, which cannot advance unless it has the best service at the minimum cost. So long as the Government clear themselves, they should not look for more in such circumstances. The Government have, in fact, cleared themselves. As regards the purchase of a new boat, surely the people of South Perth, who, though living in one of the best residential districts of the metropolitan area, laboured under the great disability of isolation, were justified in expecting the Government to provide them with an up-to-date boat. There is just as much justification for the expenditure in the purchase of that steamer as there is for the construction of an agricultural railway. The people of South Perth have the same claim as residents of an agricultural district: though I do not say they have more. The Government could not say, "We will do everything for people in the remoter areas, but we will do nothing for people residing close to Parliament House." The Government were amply justified in responding to the public agitation for the removal of private enterprise from the operation of the ferries. The people concerned were sufficiently numerous to justify the course which the late Government adopted. One other matter to which the Premier referred is one of those which he continually rakes up: the reduction in land revenue. The hon. gentleman has made use of that point ever since 1911, alleging that the revenue declined because of the transfer regulation introduced by the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Bath. In point of fact, that regulation had no bearing whatever on the land revenue. The argument has been trotted out time and again, but from actual experience we know that the fact is otherwise. I admit that the land revenue fell off to a great extent, but that falling off was due to the fact that in 1908, 1909, and 1910 there was a very large amount of land selection. Huge numbers of immigrants

were then coming in from overseas, and large numbers of goldfields residents were taking up agricultural lands. Those people were induced to settle on the land by the pictures which the then Minister for Lands (Hon. J. Mitchell) drew of the glorious future of the agricultural industry and the huge profits awaiting settlers on agricultural land. The people rushed in, and as they rushed in they were paying application fees and the first half-year's rent. By 1911 they had experienced a drought, and had realised that what had been represented to them as a sound investment, justifying them in sacrificing their homes on the goldfields and in other parts of the world to establish new homes for their wives and families in our agricultural areas, was, in fact, not so. They realised that the picture which had been drawn was absolutely incorrect. They realised that they had been deceived, and they simply refused to pay any more land rents, with the result that the land revenue went down very considerably. With a view to covering up the maladministration of the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) as Minister for Lands, it has always been contended by hon. members opposite that the fall in land revenue was due to the issue of the transfer regulation. But the fall was due simply to the awakening of the farmers, who realised that the conditions of land settlement had been misrepresented to them, and who refused to continue to pay rent in respect of land which they had been induced to take up by gross misrepresentation. The regulation I referred to was introduced for a definite purpose, and it achieved the object for which it was introduced. Undoubtedly, at that time land sharking and land speculation were rife: and the regulation served to stop that kind of thing—served to stop it, I hope, once for all in Western Australia. The leader of the Country party, as might be expected, dealt mainly with the agricultural industry. It is because of my concern for the future of that industry under the present Administration, that I propose to devote a little attention to one or two matters which have a direct bearing upon the development of agriculture. I have already said that I realise agricultural development to be the future of

Western Australia. While we have a huge area to develop, we have a difficult country to handle. Unless it is handled carefully, our edifice of agricultural development may come about our ears like a house of cards. I appeal to the Country party to realise whither they are allowing Western Australia to drift. The Lands and Agricultural portfolios have become an absolute sinecure. The administration of affairs which have a direct bearing on the development of agriculture has been removed from those portfolios. For the life of me, I fail to understand how the Minister for Lands fills in his time. All the special activities of his office have been taken from him and placed under the control of the Minister holding what is known as the Industries portfolio. The operations of the Minister for Industries are extending at an alarming rate. Of course, as the operations of one Minister go up, those of the other go down. Yet, while the activities of the Lands and Agricultural departments have diminished, there has been no reduction in the cost of their administration. No doubt this is a matter which Ministers will explain. But I urge, if activities are removed from the Lands and Agricultural departments, surely the expenditure of those departments should decrease. There has, however, been no such reduction in those departments. On the other hand, there has been increased expenditure owing to the creation of the Industries portfolio. No doubt the Minister for Industries, according to his wont, will refuse to admit that there has been an increase in the cost of administration. The hon. gentleman created a huge burden for the State in the shape of increased cost of the Lands and Agricultural departments. Even while the Estimates are before the House and the Minister is being shown that the departmental figures establish an increase, he refuses to acknowledge the facts. I do not expect him to-night to admit the increased cost of administration to which I am now calling attention. We know that the portfolio of Industries has been created. It is useless to argue that the very fact of that creation does not lead to increased expenditure. The Minister for Lands had his clerk, and that clerk is still there. The Minister for Agri-

culture had his clerk, and he is still there. The Minister for Industries has to have a clerk. Consequently, instead of the Lands and Agricultural departments doing as much work as before with the same staff, part of that work is being done by the new clerk who has been appointed in the office of the Minister for Industries. And that continues right through—in the records, the accounts, and so forth. The new portfolio involves the appointment of new officers, and consequently increased expenditure.

The Minister for Railways: There is the same number of Ministers.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am prepared to admit that the hon. gentleman is an absolute expert in covering up expenditure. It takes a good while to discover his expenditure, even with the Estimates before one. Although we all know the expenditure is there, I defy any hon. member to absolutely put his finger on it. One cannot gather from the Estimates exactly what the different activities cost. The Industries portfolio now covers the Industries Assistance Board, the Agricultural Bank, and, to a certain extent, the wheat pool as well. The expenditure, however, is so divided up, and the officers overlap so much, that it will take the country some time to wake up to the increase. The trend of affairs causes one to reflect, and in view of the importance of the agricultural industry one is justified in going back a little for the purpose of realising the change in the administration of Lands and Agricultural affairs as compared with a few years ago. At that period every member of this Chamber felt that the agricultural industry was a growing one and an important one, and every member took an active and intelligent interest in the development of agriculture generally. If hon. members on the Government cross benches will refer to *Hansard*, they will find that at this time goldfields members took an active interest, and indeed an active part, in the discussion of the Agricultural Estimates. Each member vied with the other in the endeavour to render justice to the industry. I am prepared to admit that we could not prevent the chaotic results that sprang from the administration of the member for Northam—an administration that broke up thousands

of homes, and broke many hearts, and ruined hundreds financially—although we knew what was going on. We could not stop it. The fact remains that there was active interest taken with a view of trying to guide the Minister along a reasonable and sound road towards agricultural development. But the scene is changed to-day. We find that in the last year or two we have had in Parliament direct representation for the agricultural industry, and it is claimed by those who represent the industry that theirs is the responsibility for looking after it. The industry is in the hands of the Country party, and the result is that instead of Parliament taking an active interest in it there is only one section which is looking after its welfare. And how are they doing it? Let us see how the Country party are allowing affairs to drift. There is no doubt that the leader and the deputy leader of that party are Liberals in the full sense. The speech of the deputy leader this evening is one which would have been expected from any Liberal. The leader and deputy leader of the party undoubtedly are more in sympathy with the Liberal party than the other members of the Country party. But I am not prepared to say that those other members of the Country party are not absorbed and absolutely overshadowed by the Liberal Administration. It is true that they had a voice in the creation of the Government, but since then they have had nothing to do except to swallow the Liberal policy. When Mr. Wilson was given the portfolio of Premier and allowed to form a Government, the Country party made certain financial arrangements with him in regard to roads, which arrangements have not been fulfilled. The Country party will wake up some of these days to find that all the promises which were made will never be fulfilled. And then it will be realised that the Liberals were too clever for them, and that they gave all the consideration to those who were close to the market and sacrificed the unfortunate outback man. It is true they reduced the fertiliser freights, but they increased others. Then the Country party imposed as one condition that a Royal Commission should be appointed to investigate the parlous condition of the agricultural industry, more par-

ticularly as applying to the wheat belt. But they made a blunder there in that they did not take the trouble to declare that they should have a say in the personnel of the Commission. The result was that a Commission was appointed which has not done the work that the Country party expected of them. There is no question that the scope of the Commission is sufficiently wide to enable them to make inquiries in every direction, but the Commission are not doing that. This is the fault of the personnel of the Commission: it is wanting. The members of it have not had experience in that part of the industry where all the difficulties exist to-day, and consequently they view the position of the industry more from the knowledge that they themselves possess than anything else. Up to date the Commission have only gone into those questions which have been before Parliament over and over again: they have not dealt with anything new. The question of the water rates and the need for reviewing them has been investigated, but past Governments have realised that what is wanted cannot be done. As a matter of fact the water rate in the agricultural districts is more favourable than the goldfields rate; the goldfields people pay a higher price than the agriculturists, and if the rate in the agricultural areas is reduced we shall have to reduce it on the goldfields as well, in which case we shall be making the whole concern, which is now losing up to £100,000 annually, an absolute burden on the State. It might be possible to get a Government to make a change for a time, and limit that change to the settlers inside the wheat belt. But the agitation against them would be so great that another Government would come along and undo it. And when action of this kind is taken greater harm than ever is inflicted.

Mr. Harrison: Suppose the production of stock were increased if the price of the water were reduced.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If there is increased production of course the condition of the settlers is improved, but the Commission have not gone into that aspect of the question; they have merely taken evidence from farmers who have declared that the rate is too high. They have also taken

evidence in favour of the land being held by the occupants free for five years, and also in advocacy of more liberal advances being granted by the Agricultural Bank. All these things have been considered by Parliament year in and year out; all these are things, too, that our experts are capable of advising on. The Commission have never dealt with permanent reforms at all, and those after all are the big difficulties which the farmers cannot deal with themselves. We can find plenty of farmers who will go into the question of the water rates, but farmers cannot make an investigation in regard to the supply of superphosphates, which after all are just as necessary for the advancement of agriculture as water. We expect the Commission to investigate matters such as this, and to see whether we are getting the supply of superphosphates at a reasonable rate, and to see also whether the quality is up to the standard required by the land. This is an important question which has not been touched. Take the reply to the question which was given to the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) in regard to insurance rates. We find that the farmers under the Industries Assistance Board paid £20,000 to the insurance companies, and got back a matter of £2,000. That is not an isolated case; it is the sort of thing that applies generally. Surely there ought to be means to relieve farmers of a burden of that description. We can relieve them of the burden in so far as super is concerned, and we are not transferring that burden to another section of the community; it is merely a question of reducing the dividends of a few individuals. We can also provide relief for the farmer without imposing a burden on the people generally by attending to their wants in regard to insurance, jute goods, and wire netting, from which the middleman is deriving huge profits because of the development of agriculture. These are matters which are being left religiously alone by the Commission. The Commission are investigating matters that we know everything about. Therefore I claim that the appointment of the Commission has been an absolute failure.

Mr. Harrison: We have not had their report yet.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Their report can only be on the evidence which they have collected, and we can judge what the nature of that report will be by the evidence taken. The members of the Commission are not big enough; they do not know enough to go into questions which a big industry like that of agriculture demands shall be investigated. Then, again, it is proposed to send this Royal Commission to the Eastern States. I have no hesitation in saying that if that is done, the action will amount to wilful waste of public funds, and if the Country party endorse it they will have to carry the responsibility of it. We know perfectly well that at the present time we have in this State a number of agricultural experts, men who have been brought from the Eastern States, who have served their apprenticeship in the various branches of agriculture, and who have gained all their experience in the Eastern States. These experts will tell us that Western Australia is a special country, in which farming must be carried on under special conditions, and that the value of the methods adopted in the Eastern States is of no importance whatever to us. What, therefore, is the use of sending men to the Eastern States, squandering public funds to make inquiries into matters which can be of no value. We have a big agricultural country, and we have grave difficulties to face, difficulties which are limited to Western Australia, and we have to find a solution for those difficulties in Western Australia, and not search the Eastern States for it. The Country party were responsible for the establishment of this Commission, and I trust they will protect the public purse by refusing to endorse the expense of sending the Commission to the Eastern States. Then there was the appointment of the Esperance Lands Commission, which represents another wilful waste of money. The Commission was established on the bogey put up by Mr. Mann, who was talking about something he did not understand, who said there was too much salt in the soil and that in consequence it would not grow cereals. That theory has been entirely exploded. It would have been a simple matter for the Government to go to the expert, Professor Paterson, who has given a life study to the subject, and who is everywhere regarded

as an authority. From him they could have got the true facts of the case without appointing any royal commission at all. After taking evidence, the Commission found that Mr. Mann's theory was groundless, that his conclusions were arrived at from a false conception of the position. That was all the Commission was appointed for, yet now we are told that it is going to the Eastern States. What is the use of squandering money in this way? The Commission is doing no good, yet it is to be sent to the Eastern States. To send the Esperance Lands Commission to the Eastern States is almost worse than sending the Agricultural Commission there. The money wasted on these Commissions represents a burden on the general taxpayer, but we have another scandalous expenditure representing a direct burden on the wheat growers. I propose to review the wheat scheme, of which, it will be admitted, I have some practical knowledge. From the time of its inception I regarded it as one of the finest schemes ever introduced for the relief of the agriculturist. I took a keen and active interest in it, because I realised the possibility of its becoming a permanent factor in relieving the burdens of the farmer. The scheme brought home to the farmer the immense cost of marketing his produce, the huge sum he had to pay to the middleman for placing his produce on the market. Previously we had no conception of what we were paying and, as in any attempt at computing the profits of the superphosphate manufacturers, we had no means of arriving at a reliable estimate. We knew that certain people had become millionaires as the result of operating as agents for the sale of wheat, but that was all we did know. By the aid of the scheme we quickly learnt exactly what the cost was. Last year throughout Australia there were put into the pool 161 million bushels of wheat. That was acquired on behalf of the scheme by half a dozen wheat agents, the same firms operating throughout the various States. Admitting that they were not justified in looking for as large profits in war time as they had been making previously, those agents agreed to do the work for a reduced price. So, for acquiring the wheat they have been paid by the farmers

over two millions of money. All they did was to acquire the wheat, put it into the stack at the siding, and supervise its shipping at the port. If we deduct from the 161 million bushels approximately 31 million bushels for local consumption, we have left 130 million bushels for overseas. To place that wheat on the various markets of the world, three firms are getting three-eighths per cent commission. Reckoning that on the f.o.b. basis, and accepting the price at 4s. 4d., as laid down by the Prime Minister in to-day's paper, those three firms receive from the farmers £105,000 for simply arranging the sales of wheat, the major number of which were negotiated by the Prime Minister himself. So we pay two millions to six firms for acquiring the wheat, and £105,000 to three firms for selling it.

The Minister for Railways: You were one of the Ministers who arranged that London thing?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, and the original arrangement was one per cent., but as the result of a little more experience I raised the question at the Melbourne conference, and in consequence the agents agreed to reduce the price to three-eighths per cent.

Mr. Thomson: You put up a good fight to give the brokers 1¼ per cent.?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, and even that was a reduction on what they had previously charged. As I have said, from the outset this scheme presented wonderful possibilities, and we could utilise the knowledge gained in one year to improve the conditions in the following year. Let us consider what was proposed to be done in Western Australia, which, to a large extent pioneered this scheme, or portions of it, owing to the fact that we had a highly competent advisory committee, controlled by one of the best authorities of wheat in Australia, namely, Mr. Sutton, to the value of whose services the Australian conference paid a special tribute. Thus advantaged, we in Western Australia were able to go ahead more rapidly than could any of the other States. The first agreement in regard to the purchase of wheat was made in Western Australia, and Victoria and New South

Wales took that agreement as the basis on which to frame their own. But to-day we find the Government, instead of utilising the scheme for the purpose of improving the position of the farmer, have made his position worse than it was before. It was definitely my intention to do away with the agents this year.

The Minister for Railways: Why did not you prepare for it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Because the time had not arrived for making preparations when the hon. member took over. It was understood that if I remained in office we were to make an effort to work the scheme ourselves so that the handling profits would go into the pockets of the farmers. Having secured a capable secretary and fully initiated him into the scheme, we were perfectly ready to undertake all responsibility on the business side of the project. The Commissioner of Railways had officers who could supervise the stacking and weighing of the wheat. The transport of the wheat is done by the Commissioner of Railways to-day. Down at the port the agents certainly did some work, but the main part of the work had to be done by the Harbour Trust, who could do it on behalf of the farmers, just as last year they did it for the agents. So it was the simplest thing in the world to bring the scheme entirely under Government control, and by cutting out the middleman increase the profits to the farmers. But instead of doing this, instead of restricting vested interests, the present Minister has increased them. He has removed Mr. Sutton, one of the most valuable men in Australia on all questions concerning wheat, and has put in his place a personal friend of his own, who is not required at all, and to whom the settlers have now to pay £1,000 a year.

The Minister for Railways: He is saving very many thousands.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Saving your grandmother! The Minister always says his projects are saving thousands. If he did not say that, he would have no justification whatever in the present instance. He would say anything to cover up his misdeeds. How can Mr. Sibbald save anything in regard to the scheme? The Minister is casting reflections on

the advisory committee, who, with Mr. Sutton, have more ability and greater knowledge of the scheme than has the Minister himself. What justification has the Minister got for saying that Mr. Sibbald is going to save thousands a year? Does he not know that in saying this he is casting a reflection upon Mr. Field, the manager for Elder, Shenton, upon Mr. Gosse, the manager for George Wills & Co., upon Mr. Dean Hammond, one of the most respected farmers in the State, and a gross reflection upon the administrative capacity of Mr. Sutton? The Minister ought to be ashamed of himself for making a statement of that description which he knows to be absolutely incorrect.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): He did not make the statement; you did.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If Mr. Sibbald is indeed going to save thousands of pounds, then that money must have been wasted under the previous administration and the statement is a reflection upon it. I give an emphatic denial to the statement that the previous administration was responsible for any loss which can be made good in this way.

The Minister for Railways: I did not say that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister is not game to say it in so many words. The cost under the previous administration was easily 50 per cent. less than under the present regime. The Minister will say that Mr. Sibbald is there to protect the farmer against loss. As a matter of fact, if there was any loss last year the agents carried it and not the farmers. So that the Minister cannot quibble in the matter, let me say that it is not what the public think, namely, that it is a matter of £20,000 put up by the agents to guarantee the farmers against loss, but it is a matter of each individual agent putting up £20,000 as a guarantee that he will carry out the contract entered into in the agreement. The agreement says distinctly that he has to sell at the other end—the market end—the same quantity of wheat that he purchases. If he fails to do this he has to make up the difference. We have this guarantee of £20,000 that each agent will carry out his compact.

Mr. Harrison: Have you that assurance against the two million pounds you spoke of two months ago?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They have got that, and we had to pay 3¼d. for the acquiring of the wheat. This is a guarantee that the agents will take the responsibility of loss, outside plagues of mice or flooding from underneath. The Minister will say that Mr. Sibbald will see that there is improvement in the stacking. That was seen to by the previous committee. We know that the stacking was not all that could be desired. We had agreements to cover this, and we told them that the stacking was defective and that there was grave danger of loss. No one would have been faithful to his trust so far as the agricultural industry was concerned unless he had tried to improve the stacking. The committee on account of this loss were desirous of making arrangements for improving the stacking to the extent of getting the agents, in conjunction with the sub-agents, to take such action as would ensure that this year the stacking would be an improvement over that of last year. It is a reflection upon the State that we should have the disgraceful stacks that we had last year. The Minister cannot say that Mr. Sibbald did this, for it was all done before. In no sense will Mr. Sibbald improve the administration, because the committee were already seized of the position, and had taken action in regard to it, besides being capable of dealing with it without the assistance of Mr. Sibbald at all. It may be said that Mr. Sutton was required for other purposes. That is mere moonshine. If Mr. Sutton had devoted all his time to the wheat scheme, and none of his time to the State farms and to the wheat industry generally, there might have been some justification for such a statement. This is another bogey raised for the purpose of justifying the appointment of this friend of the Minister. Mr. Sutton did not neglect the breeding of new wheats. Since he has been connected with the wheat scheme and other matters to which the previous Governments appointed him he has been successful in breeding three new kinds of wheat. It is idle to say

that we brought Mr. Sutton into the State for the purpose of going on some experimental farms and there growing wheat. We brought him into the country to assist in the development of the wheat belt. What better way could we utilise his services than in assisting the farmer to successfully market that which he grew? We know that there are difficulties in connection with the growing of wheat and the marketing of wheat, and we wanted the best advice we could get to assist us.

The Minister for Works: What experience had Mr. Sutton in that respect?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: At the conference in Melbourne he was admitted to be the best man to give advice we had there.

The Minister for Works: The best man in regard to the growing of wheat, but nothing more.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is a matter of opinion. We know that the Minister is an authority upon all matters. I am not prepared to say that Mr. Sutton has been removed from the wheat scheme because his services are required in another direction. That is contradicted by the Ministers themselves inasmuch as they have appointed Mr. Sutton to the Railway Advisory Board. He cannot be of any special value to the Railway Advisory Board, because he has no special qualifications in that regard. If his time was so precious in the matter of the growing of wheat why was he put on that board? The fact is evidence that he had time for other things. The scheme that he should have been retained upon and for the establishment of which he was largely responsible as well as for its administration, was the wheat scheme which he conducted so successfully, assisted by an honorary committee of advisers; and he should not have been removed for the purpose of giving another man a position at £1,000 a year and so increasing the burden upon the farmers, and at the same time casting a reflection upon the committee and upon Mr. Sutton in particular. The Minister will no doubt tell the House that he has not increased the cost of the administration of the scheme. But he has already admitted that he is paying Mr. Sibbald £1,000 a year. No one else was

getting paid upon this committee. Mr. Sutton was doing the work in his ordinary capacity. Mr. Hammond was the only member receiving any fees, and he was getting a travelling allowance plus a free railway pass. To-day we have a manager drawing £1,000 a year. Then again the offices were situated in the Agricultural Department. Ample room was available there and the offices were given free, and were occupied by those who were appointed to assist in the administration of the scheme. We now find that the Minister not only increases the burden upon the farmers to the extent of £1,000 a year, but that he has taken a suite of offices in the A.M.P. buildings. At one time we used to have the Palace Hotel making governments. It seems to me we now have the A.M.P. buildings housing governments, because slowly but surely the Government are absorbing all the flats in the building.

The Minister for Railways: You took the department there yourself.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Not the wheat scheme. The previous offices were free, but to-day the farmers are paying for the rent of offices in the A.M.P. buildings. Again, the Minister has stated in reply to a question that the staff has not been increased. That is incorrect, for it has been increased to a great extent. We find that the administration generally has gone up 100 per cent. This is a direct burden upon the farmers who have to pay the whole of it. The Country party are the people who are assisting the Minister to place this burden upon the shoulders of the farmers. The time has arrived for them to speak up in regard to the scheme. It is too big a thing to trifle with and to be ruined by the administration of the Minister. It is too big a scheme to have spoils to the victors introduced in connection with it, and the special friends of the Minister put into special jobs.

The Minister for Works: Go on.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The members of the Country party should see that this reflection upon Mr. Sutton does not go unchallenged. They should make an attempt to see that Mr. Sutton is put back into the place where he can protect the interests of

those they represent. Mr. Sibbald is not as capable of protecting the farmers' interests as Mr. Sutton is. Mr. Sutton has the whole thing at his finger's ends, and should be there to protect the farmers. He has, however, been removed, and in his place we have a comparatively inexperienced man to deal with agreements which will involve a very large sum of money.

Mr. Hickmott: Has Mr. Hammond been removed?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. I understand, however, that he is very dissatisfied, and complains that they are not being consulted in the way that it was customary to consult them. Under the previous administration the Minister attended all committee meetings. The Advisory Committee was there, and at every meeting reports were presented for perusal by every member. The board was in possession of all details connected with the stacks, the quantity of wheat at Fremantle, and the marketing of the produce, and every member was posted upon everything connected with the working of the scheme, and in this way possessed a full knowledge of what was being done and at what cost.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We knew every day how things stood.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: To-day, so far as the committee are concerned, this does not apply. Another feature about the previous administration was that everything was dealt with immediately. We considered every question as it came up, and if the majority of the committee was against the Minister, he bowed to the decision and immediately a decision was arrived at effect was given to it. The Minister took the advice of the committee on all occasions and this gave them confidence, and when the Minister was away they thought they knew just what his desires were in regard to the scheme, with a result that things were done on the spot and there was absolute confidence between the committee and the Minister. This does not apply to-day. The Administration is costly and unsatisfactory. Take the agreements, for instance. We do not know what we are paying for acquiring our wheat. Under the agreements arrived at upon the inauguration of the scheme, we

knew exactly what we would have to pay. Previous to that, of course, there was nothing to assist the committee or the Minister. To-day wheat is acquired by the agents and we do not know what we have to pay for it. There are no agreements in existence. The administration is scandalous, and instead of the scheme becoming permanent and constituting for all time a remedy for many evils and something which will make for the removal of a number of middlemen who have been a burden upon the shoulders of the farmer, we shall be going back to the old order of things. It is a shame, and the Country party should wake up if they have any consideration for the wheat grower. They should protect a scheme which is being ruined by the Minister, who does not seem to care what becomes of it so long as he gets through this season. Any failure in this regard must fall upon the shoulders of the Country party who are responsible for the Minister being where he is.

Mr. Green: What do they care? After them the deluge.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is another thing which has a direct bearing upon the welfare of the industry, and more particularly the wheat farmer, and that is the question of bulk handling. I remember when sitting on the Government benches and the Country party were sitting on the Opposition cross benches, that they were ever inquiring into and being active concerning the inauguration of the bulk handling system. But they have gone silent on it. As a matter of fact, the proposal was well forward when we handed over the control of affairs to the present Government. The members on the cross benches must take the responsibility of having done nothing in regard to this matter. They have not kept the Government up to their promise, and the farmers, as a consequence, are being sacrificed because of the Government's inactivity on the question of bulk handling.

The Minister for Railways: Do you think it is the right thing?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I say distinctly, it is the right thing.

The Minister for Works: The other States are beginning to get doubtful on the point.

Mr. Taylor: There is a difference of opinion.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: As showing it to be the right thing, we have only to realise that the bags for last year's harvest cost the farmers of this country over two millions of money. The farmers of Western Australia alone had to pay £200,000 for the bags for their wheat. Then again, handling charges which run into, roughly, 8d., would be reduced by the adoption of bulk handling. There can be no doubt that the reduced cost of handling, and the cheapening of marketing which would follow on its adoption, justify the establishment of bulk handling. It is useless the Government urging that funds will not permit, seeing that they were prepared to find the money for a proposed bridge at Melbourne-road, which is not an urgent matter and in respect of which there has been no agitation, and also the money necessary for an extension of the Busselton jetty, which cannot be described as an urgent public work. Such works as these can be proceeded with, but the interests of the farmers must be overlooked. The Government have given the farmer some consideration by way of reduced manure freights, but they have forgotten to give him relief in the more urgent matter of the handling of his harvest. It is certainly time something was done in regard to bulk handling. The members on the cross benches should wake up, because very shortly the farmers will ask what is being done on this question. In the Eastern States it is a national operation. They are building there to-day, which is an evidence that the farmers in the East are alive to the situation. Western Australia investigated this question before the people of the East. We had a board appointed before them. A scheme was outlined and an agreement drafted in connection with the plans when we left office, but the present Government would not sign that agreement.

The Minister for Railways: You would not sign it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did no refuse to sign the agreement. It was ready, and I was prepared to sign it but Cabinet decided, seeing that we were shortly going out of office, that the agreement should be left to our successors to complete. But

Cabinet left also an intimation that they approved the agreement. The Minister himself admits that he dropped the scheme, and for that the Government must take a share of the responsibility; but the main responsibility must rest on the shoulders of the members on the cross benches. We have heard a good deal from the Premier on the matter of the administration of the Industries Assistance Board. I am not in a position to-night to dispute his assertions, or to pass an opinion on the advantages or disadvantages of the new administration. But that it is more costly I am prepared to assert; the Estimates show that. It is useless the Premier saying the cost has been reduced when the Estimates refute the statement. While the cost of administration has increased, it is possible, owing to the various activities under this control, for the Minister to cover up the expenditure for a time. But the hen will come home to roost sooner or later, and we will then realise what the extra cost has been. We heard some criticism previously because of the discrimination exercised by the previous board in the claims of various farmers. One farmer would get a little less than his neighbour and would then make complaints that he was not getting equal consideration. Others whose claims were refused, rushed off to the Press, and the Press was always ready to listen to any tale with regard to the administration of the Industries Assistance Board. There are no complaints to-day, because everybody is getting what he wants. Why should people complain when we have inspectors going round holding a pay day every month?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are complaints from all over the place.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But there are not complaints to anything like the extent there were previously, and the reason is that to-day we have inspectors going round with cash or a pay order, who advise the farmer that they will be on his farm at a given time, and they then hand the farmer his wages. When everybody is getting wages regularly we are not likely to have complaints; but there must be a reckoning some day, and when that day of reckoning arrives it will be found that the agricultural industry has not benefited as the re-

sult of the present Administration. They are having a good time now, but there is a bad time coming, and when the reason for that bad time is investigated, it will reflect on the members of the Country party, who are responsible for keeping the present Minister in power and assisting him in his policy of reckless expenditure in connection with the Industries Assistance Board. I shall not take up more of the time of the House. I have endeavoured to limit myself to matters affecting the agricultural industry, because I am concerned as to the future of that industry. The industry is too big to be tampered and tinkered with; it is too big for us to allow the Minister to tinker with it as he did previous to 1911. The overwhelming support the Labour party secured in 1911 was, to a large extent, the result of the maladministration of the member for Northam. Throughout the country the people were sick and tired of that Minister. The Farmers' and Settlers' Association was established mainly for the purpose of protecting the farmer against the member for Northam. It was the maladministration of that Minister which enabled the Country party to come into existence. At the outset of their career those members did try to protect the industry against the Minister, but they have since failed. The Premier was too clever for them. The time has arrived for them to do something, and they can do it under this motion and thereby stop the Minister's administration once and for all. If they will vote for the motion, Parliament will go back to the constituencies, and if that happens the constituencies will deal with the member for Northam as they did on a previous occasion.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzie) [9.22]: In rising to support the motion moved by the leader of the Opposition I desire to express the hope that your occupancy of the high position you now hold—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will sit down; he is not in order. My occupancy of this position is not the subject of the motion.

Point of Order.

Hon. P. Collier: I submit that the hon. member is in order, or rather that it is

impossible for you, Sir, to know whether or not he is in order. It may be that he wishes to congratulate you; and that you should rule the hon. member out of order before he has had an opportunity of expressing himself, I contend is not in order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has already had an opportunity of offering congratulations. That time has passed, and this is not the time to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: On that point of order, I submit, you are entirely mistaken. It has been the common practice for members, even for every member of the House, to avail himself of the opportunity of congratulating any member who has been elected to the position of Speaker. And the hon. member (Mr. Mullany) has not had an opportunity as a private member of this House, he not being a leader, of offering any remarks of a congratulatory nature prior to rising to address himself to the motion now before the House.

Mr. Mullany: I desire to take the same attitude and to claim the same privilege as the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) has claimed for all members. I have been a member of this Assembly for some three years, and upon the occasion of the election of the previous Speaker, and again upon his re-election when his first term had expired, the opportunity was taken by every member on the occasion of his first addressing the Chair after the election of the Speaker to make a few remarks relative to the election of a Speaker of this Chamber. If I am not to be allowed to do so on this occasion, I must bow to the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will resume his speech.

Mr. Mullany: I desire to express the hope that your occupancy of the high position you now hold will reflect an equal measure of credit on yourself as the appointment has already done on those who have gone before you. I prefer to say, however, that your record, both—

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing my record. He must confine himself to the motion before the House.

Mr. Mullany: I desire to make a few remarks leading up to the acts of administration of the present Government. This motion of no-confidence has been moved against the Government owing to their actions, and I submit I have a perfect right to—

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is at liberty to discuss the actions of the Government to the fullest extent possible, but he is not entitled to discuss the Chair.

Mr. Mullany: I have no desire to discuss the Chair, but as you have ruled I have the right to discuss the administrative actions of the Government, and the nomination by the Government of a Speaker of this Chamber—

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must discontinue speaking when I call "Order," and must resume his seat. The election of a Speaker was a vote of the House and the hon. member is not entitled to discuss an action taken by the House during the current session. The appointment of a Speaker was not an act of the Government, it was an act of the House, and I would thank the hon. gentleman not to refer to the matter again.

Mr. Mullany: I bow to your ruling, but I trust you will grant me this privilege of saying that I regret I have not been permitted to offer the few remarks I have in mind. I ask your ruling on this point: Seeing that this is a motion of no-confidence in the Government, and that one of the points of attack is the inability of the Government to properly administer the affairs of this State, whether the nomination of a Speaker by the Government is not an act of the Government?

Mr. Speaker: My ruling is that it was a vote of the House, and that the election of Speaker cannot be discussed on this motion.

Mr. Mullany: I have no desire to discuss the election of the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member knows what the motion is, and I will thank him to confine his remarks to the motion.

Mr. Taylor: No vote of the House was taken on that motion, Sir. As there was only one nomination, there was no vote of the House.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Mt. Margaret knows there was a decision of the House.

Mr. Mullany: Whilst regretting to have to say so, I feel I am quite within my rights on the wording of the motion in discussing—

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must, when I call "Order," sit down and discontinue his remarks. I do not intend to permit the hon. member to discuss the election of the Speaker in connection with this motion. The hon. member can take that as final.

Mr. Taylor: I wish to ask, Mr. Speaker, whether it would be competent for an hon. member to discuss the motives of the Government in that particular? Under this motion the motives of the Government are attacked, and that is one reason why this side of the House believes that the Government have not the confidence of the country. If we cannot discuss motives, where are we?

Mr. Speaker: The election of the Speaker cannot be discussed in any form at all.

Mr. Taylor: I will try to discuss it later on, Sir.

Mr. Foley: I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, under what Standing Order you gave the ruling that we may not discuss the election of the Speaker. By right of being a member of this Chamber—

Mr. Speaker: The member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) may proceed.

Mr. Foley: On a point of order. A question has been asked regarding a ruling which has been given.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The member for Menzies has my ear. Unless the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) raises a point of order, and states what the point is, which he has not done, he has no right to—

Mr. Foley: With all due deference, Sir, I said that I rose to a point of order. A question had been asked you, and you had given a certain ruling. I am asking under what Standing Order you gave the ruling which you have just given to the member for Mt. Margaret.

The Minister for Works: Put it in writing.

Mr. Foley: I know my duty, and I do not require the Minister for Works to instruct me.

Mr. Speaker: I have ruled that the member for Menzies must confine his remarks to the motion, and that the election of the Speaker is entirely outside the terms of the motion. That is final.

Mr. Foley: Still, I submit—

Mr. Speaker: Order! I cannot hear the hon. member on that point. I have given my decision on it. The member for Menzies may proceed.

Mr. Foley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The member for Leonora will resume his seat.

Mr. Foley: On a point of order, Sir. As a member of this Chamber, I wish to know under what Standing Order you gave the ruling which you gave just now. I am asking a question.

Mr. Speaker: I have given my ruling under Standing Order 126, which says that no member shall reflect upon any vote of the House except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded. The election of the Speaker was a vote of the House, and any discussion on it is outside the present motion.

Mr. Taylor: It cannot be discussed without reflections.

Mr. Mullany: I quite agree with your ruling, Sir, if it is confined to the Standing Order you have just quoted, which provides that no member shall reflect upon the election of the Speaker. I do not think any of my remarks could possibly have been construed as a reflection.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The member for Mt. Margaret will withdraw that remark.

Mr. Taylor: What remark was that, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: The remark the hon. member made, that the subject of the election of the Speaker could not be touched without reflections.

Mr. Taylor: I did not mention the Speaker, Sir. You were dealing with subjects. I said this subject could not be touched without a reflection. If you take that remark to yourself, Sir, I will with-

draw it, and I apologise to the House if I have offended.

Mr. MULLANY: I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I have no desire to reflect on anyone; but, for my own protection, I do not like to be ruled out of order under a Standing Order which says—

Mr. Speaker: Order! I am not going to hear any more on this point. I have given my ruling, and I do not intend to have it questioned any further. If the hon. member thinks my ruling wrong, he has a course to pursue. But I will not let the discussion go on in this way.

Debate resumed.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [9.35]: I regret that I am not allowed to make the few remarks which I had proposed to offer. I had no intention of reflecting on the election of the Speaker.

Mr. Taylor: Do not you realise the difficulty?

Mr. MULLANY: That difficulty is confronting me now, in speaking to the motion. Very little appears to be left to say after the speeches of the leader of the Opposition and the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson). It must be apparent to every member that the present state of affairs needs to be altered, and the present drift stopped, by some means. Although I am a member of a party directly opposed to the Government, I personally was prepared, when they took possession of the Treasury benches, to afford them every opportunity to do that which they claimed to be able to do—set the finances of the State in order. They claimed that it was only necessary to apply their business ability—their much vaunted business ability—to Government departments in order to set them straight. They claimed that if only their policy were put into operation instead of the Labour policy, all Western Australia's troubles would disappear. What is the position to-day? The deficit, the rapidly and continuously increasing deficit, is answer enough upon the administrative side, at least, of the capabilities of present Ministers. We know that in seven months they have gone further behind than the Scaddan Government, their

predecessors, did in any twelve months. We know that from the *Monthly Statistical Abstract*. We were told that the present Government would introduce economies in public departments, in which, it was said, there was extravagance. I have no desire to enter into many details of administration. Just one item will do to quote. We were told that under the previous Government there was extravagance in all departments, including the Education Department. One of the first actions of the present Minister for Education was to close down the old Education office at the corner of George Street and Hay Street, a building good enough to hold the office staff of the Education Department for many years past. So far as I know, no serious complaint was ever made as to the accommodation. However, that office was closed down five or six months ago, and still remains unoccupied. Meantime the Government of economy are paying no less than £500 per annum for the accommodation of the Education officials. This is economy. There is another aspect of the matter, in connection with which I would not like to suggest anything in the nature of spoils to the victors, because that phrase has been heard so frequently from hon. members now on the other side of the Chamber that I feel it would be something like sacrilege for me to use it. We find Mr. A. E. Morgans, the eminent Liberal leader of this State, collecting £11 per week rent from the Government whilst the Government's own premises are standing empty and going to ruin. On the other side, I had occasion a few weeks ago to request some renovation of the Menzies school, which had become dilapidated, as have almost all goldfields schools. The department's reply acknowledged the need of renovation but regretted that there was no money available for the purpose. The £550 per annum paid to Mr. A. E. Morgans by the Government would effect a considerable amount of renovation in country schools; and those members who travel about the country know that urgent necessity exists for renovation and repairs. The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) dealt with the subject of the appointment of boards and Royal Commissions. Though that hon. member has probably worn the subject threadbare, I

still would like to ask why this State is paying agricultural experts. During the last few years some half dozen experts have been imported to give advice to our farmers. And yet the present Government appoint an Agricultural Commission to go all over the State taking evidence as to what is wrong with the wheat-growing lands and with the farmer. Now, to cap all, the Commission are being sent to the Eastern States. I believe they are also to visit Canada, from which country some of our imported experts originally came. Is that economy? Again, of what practical benefit is any knowledge gained by members of the Commission in travelling round Australia, or round the world, likely to be to the farmers of this State? We know perfectly well that a man may have knowledge without the faculty of imparting that knowledge to others. Yet we have the farce of these gentlemen being sent all over the world to discover what will benefit the Western Australian agriculturist. The Esperance lands Royal Commission undoubtedly represents another scandal. We have been told that the Commission were appointed because it was found that salt existed in the Esperance soil. Perhaps the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) knows of some better reason for the appointment of the Royal Commission and for the delay in the construction of the Esperance railway. That hon. member for many years, as a goldfields representative, was a foremost member of the Esperance Railway League and in another place cast, on every possible occasion, his vote in favour of the construction of the railway, until the very last occasion, when his vote would have carried the project. Then, however, the hon. member deliberately cast his vote against the convictions which he had expressed for years as to the necessity for the railway, and voted against its construction.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): I was never a member of the Esperance Railway League.

Mr. MULLANY: Fortunately, a Bill for the construction of a section of the Esperance railway was eventually passed. Here again, however, the member for Perth is found joining a Ministry merely for the purpose of again preventing the construc-

tion of the Esperance railway. That is fair administration. A man who, as a goldfields member, for years advocates the construction of a railway, opposes it when he becomes the representative of a metropolitan constituency. Undoubtedly the hon. gentleman has used his influence in the Ministry to prevent the construction of the Esperance railway. And then we are told by the metropolitan Press that it is waste of time to move a motion of want of confidence against the Government. It is indeed a waste of time. Bad, even awful, as the administration of the Government has been, it cannot compete with the Government's legislative record. Undoubtedly Ministers have been put in rather an awkward corner as regards legislation. They have had to submit to the dictation of the Country party. The members of that party, in their turn, have to submit to the dictation of the executive of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association. Messrs. McGibbon and Stanistreet appear to me to be the real rulers of Western Australia to-day. The present Government, in their desire to hang on to office, have done almost everything they have been requested by the Farmers' and Settlers' Association to do. The great Cabinet of business men who were going to rehabilitate the finances of the State as one of their first legislative actions, set about the work of moral reform. They were going to marshal the moral forces of this State and incidentally get in increased revenue. What happened? They introduced a Totalisator Amendment Bill, and also a Betting Suppression Bill. In regard to the latter, unfortunately for them, one of their own members in the Legislative Council was instrumental in defeating one of the main objects of the Bill, and the Government had to submit to it. The Totalisator Bill met with the disapproval of the Rev. Mr. Cox and it was promptly withdrawn. The Government next promised to introduce legislation to deal with the sale of liquor, but they evaded their responsibility and put up the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) to move the measure for them, and in that way released them of the responsibility which should have been theirs. No doubt many members on the Government side were pleased when that Bill was defeated in this House. Again, we had the Electoral Dis-

tricts Bill, and when it was first introduced the Government had to submit to the humiliation of the adjournment of the debate being carried in opposition to them. Yet they determined to hang on to it. They brought it along afterwards in an amended form, but even then it was not satisfactory to the Country party, and now we find that it has been withdrawn. Then we get the master-piece submitted by the great I Am, the Minister for Works, in the form of the Trading Concerns Bill, the most bitter and controversial piece of legislation which could have been introduced into this Chamber at such a time. This was introduced too after the Government had professed that they had no desire to go on with party politics. The Bill was introduced by the Minister for Works, and although the Government were prepared to put aside measures which might have had some effect in the straightening of the finances of the State, they persevered with that particular one. The Minister for Works admitted that he knew nothing about the main clauses of the Bill because the departmental officers were responsible for having drafted them. The main clauses of the Bill provided that in the future, no matter if all parties desired to carry on the policy of State enterprises, it would be impossible to establish even a single enterprise without the sanction of both Houses of Parliament. Here we have a Government nearing their end desiring to hamper the operations of future Governments by declaring "If you want permission to establish enterprises you will have to appeal to another place." And is it likely that the people would appeal to another place where the representatives are those whose interests are against the establishment of State enterprises? Just fancy an appeal being made to the beef buccaneers, as the leader of the Opposition called them, upon the establishment of a shipping enterprise to bring cattle down the coast. Just fancy appealing to the big firms in Western Australia whose businesses are merely branches of headquarters in the Eastern States, and asking their opinion on the establishment of, say, implement works or superphosphate works. What sort of an answer would we be likely to get? This is the only Bill that a spineless Government has stuck to, a Bill which has a

decidedly party bearing. The introduction of this Bill is sufficient for me to support the motion of no-confidence. We have heard many hon. members say that they will be quite prepared to go to the people. Every member on this side of the House will declare that they think the people should decide. Why should the Government, who during seven months of office, have shown no inclination to grapple with the problems facing them, ask to be allowed to go into recess at the present time, and face the electors in October with a record of having done nothing at all, and then put forward a programme and say, "This is what we intend to do"? In six months from now the Government propose to face the electors and say, "While we have not done anything, we made a great outcry when the Scaddan Government were in power, but this is now what we propose to do." Why did they not come out with a policy and put it into operation or endeavour to do so and stand or fall by it? They did not dare to do this. This team of absolute incapables have found that they cannot administer the affairs of the State. We are told that the present Premier, when he moved a no-confidence motion against the Scaddan Government some months ago, did so in a manner which effectually stifled discussion, and he declared then his desire was to get to the country as soon as he could. Was he borne out that assertion? Other members also said that was their desire. It is now our desire, and we are asking members to support the motion which has been moved by the leader of the Opposition. I desire to refer briefly to the mining industry. What, may I ask, has been done for the furtherance of this industry during the regime of the present Administration? We were told that the present Minister for Mines did not know anything about mining, but that he had administrative and business capacity, and that he would apply both in the Mines Department, and in a short time we would see a great alteration. The Minister also stated that he was going to call a conference. I wonder what has become of that conference. Why has it not been called? I believe the Minister will say that he is waiting until Parliament closes down. Is it necessary that he should attend all the meetings of the conference? If the confer-

ence is to do any good, it should be called without any delay. The Minister for Mines said that the general administration of the Scaddan Government had not been beneficial to the mining industry.

The Attorney General: I said nothing of the kind. I rise to a point of order. The hon. member has made a remark which is untrue, and I ask that it be withdrawn. I never reflected against the Scaddan Government nor against my predecessor. Mr. Collier.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Menzies is bound to accept the denial of the Attorney General. I will ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. MULLANY: I was going to say that I had seen such a report in the public Press.

The Attorney General: No such statement was ever made by me, and no such statement has ever appeared in the public Press. The hon. member is wrong in every particular, and he should withdraw and apologise.

Mr. MULLANY: I take strong exception to the Attorney General saying that I made a statement which was untrue. It is against the Standing Orders for an hon. member to use such an expression. I ask that he be requested to withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Attorney General accept the statement of the member for Menzies that the words he used were those he had seen in a Press report?

The Attorney General: The hon. member said I made a statement which was a reflection on the previous Administration. I never cast such a reflection at any time. I have spoken in the kindest terms of the administration of Mr. Collier, who is a friend of mine. Such a statement, therefore, could not have got into the Press.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Menzies is bound to accept the assurance of the Attorney General that he did not make the statement attributed to him. I ask the member for Menzies to withdraw.

Mr. MULLANY: I am prepared to withdraw, but I take strong exception to the Attorney General declaring that I made a statement which was untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Menzies has withdrawn the statement, but I am not prepared to ask the Attorney General

to withdraw what he said. The member for Menzies may proceed.

Mr. MULLANY: Is the Attorney General entitled to say that an hon. member made an untrue statement?

Hon. T. Walker: That is distinctly disorderly.

Mr. SPEAKER: The statement has been admitted to be untrue by the member for Menzies.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Very well, then, that is established. If we can use the term, it is all right.

Mr. MULLANY: I think the Attorney General used words unbecoming a gentleman by declaring what I said was untrue, and I again ask that he should be requested to withdraw.

Mr. Taylor: It has been the custom that when a member takes exception to a statement made by another hon. member as being offensive and he asks for a withdrawal, that withdrawal has always been forthcoming. The member who has been offended is the judge.

The Attorney General: Personally I have no wish to reflect on the member for Menzies and if any remark of mine was taken by him as a reflection, I shall be very glad to withdraw it.

Mr. Taylor: And apologise to the House.

The Attorney General: What I did say and what brought me to my feet was, that the member for Menzies said that I had made some statement reflecting on the late Administration; that meant reflecting on the late Minister for Mines. That has been withdrawn. That was the statement which I said was untrue.

Mr. Taylor: That word is unparliamentary.

The Attorney General: I may say, then, that the statement was incorrect. The hon. member then excuses himself by saying he saw it in print.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You cannot make a second reading speech.

The Attorney General: Very well.

Mr. MULLANY: I can assure the Minister for Mines I meant no reflection on him. I certainly was under the impression that he had made the statement attributed to him, namely that the general administration of the Scaddan Government had not been bene-

ficial to the mining or any other industry. However, the Attorney General having given an assurance that he did not make that statement, I am pleased to accept it.

The Attorney General: You have the assurance only in regard to the Mines Department. I have attacked the Scaddan Government wholesale.

Mr. MULLANY: Before the Government get into recess I would like some definite assurance from the Minister for Mines as to when the conference will be held. I do not think the fact of Parliament sitting should debar the conference from being held. Surely it is not absolutely necessary for the Minister or the mining representatives in Parliament to attend the conference at all times. The only proposition the Minister has put forward thus far is the intention to call a conference. The mining industry is of paramount importance to the State, yet in seven months' administration of the mining department all that the Minister has been able to do is to promise to call a conference. I would like a definite assurance from the Minister as to when that conference will be called, and I would like that assurance before the Government get into recess.

Mr. Taylor: Or out of office.

Mr. MULLANY: If they go out of office, the probability is that we shall have a Minister for Mines capable of administering the affairs of the department, in which case there will be no need for the conference. The general lack of action on the part of the Government, their lack of administrative ability, much more their evident desire not to go on with any policy whatever, their desire to keep possession of the Treasury bench as long as they can and to do nothing but fly observation balloons which shall be promptly pulled down when any section of their supporters raise an objection—any or all of these things should earn for the Government the unanimous condemnation of all sections of the community. The present state of affairs is unsatisfactory in the extreme, and no man with any spark of democracy in his composition would be content to sit behind the Treasury bench under such conditions. When parties are so evenly balanced as they are to-day, the people and the people alone can decide between them.

Had the Government shown any desire whatever to deal with the big problems before them, I myself would have been prepared to assist them. But they have signally failed to make any attempt to do this, and so I am going to support the motion. I believe members on both sides will support it with a view of allowing the people to say who are to represent them.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.5]: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the motion:—“And further, the Government's motives in nominating the member for Williams-Narrogin as Speaker are deserving of the censure of this House.”

Mr. SPEAKER: The proposed amendment is absolutely out of order. If the hon. member will refer to Standing Order 126, he will see that no member shall reflect on any vote of the House, except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded. Also it is not open to the hon. member to reflect on the motives of the Government. My ruling is that the proposed amendment is out of order.

Mr. LAMBERT: I desire to show that I in no way wish to reflect on the decision of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that the proposed amendment is out of order. Consequently the hon. member cannot proceed to discuss it.

Dissent from Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Lambert: Most respectfully I move—

That the House disagrees with the ruling of Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order! Is there any second to the motion.

Mr. Carpenter: I second it.

Mr. Speaker: Then, the question is, that my ruling that the proposed amendment is out of order, be dissented from.

Mr. Lambert: May I proceed?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. gentleman may do so.

Mr. Lambert: Standing Order 126 says—

No member shall reflect upon any vote of the House except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded. It is not my intention or desire to comment in the slightest degree on the decision ar-

rived at by this House. My desire in moving the amendment is clearly to show that the actions of the Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order! There are no actions of the Government involved. The House elected the Speaker.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I did not; I had nothing to do with it; I repudiate it.

Mr. Lambert: I am proceeding to show why you, Sir, should admit the amendment, and, incidentally, why your ruling should be disagreed with. I think I am quite in order in making reference to the actions of the Government.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Lambert: May I proceed?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. gentleman may proceed as long as he confines his remarks to the motion. He was not doing so when I called him to order.

Mr. Lambert: I wish, Sir, you would become familiar with the wording of the amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Lambert: I do not desire to stray from the wording of the amendment which is in very clear and express terms.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): What amendment?

Mr. Speaker: There is no amendment before the House. There is a motion before the House.

Mr. Lambert: Incidentally, I have to refer to the amendment to show what justification—

Mr. Speaker: There is no amendment. There is a motion before the House.

Mr. Lambert: I do not know exactly upon what lines you desire me to proceed, if you will not allow me to refer to the amendment.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is under a misapprehension. The question before the House is a motion that my ruling that the proposed amendment is out of order should be dissented from.

Mr. Lambert: I must surely show reasons why your ruling should be dissented from.

Mr. Speaker: Certainly.

Mr. Lambert: Then I must make some reference to the proposed amendment.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot permit the hon. member to discuss the proposed amend-

ment which I have ruled out of order, unless this House dissents from my ruling.

Mr. Lambert: The position seems to be peculiar. I desire in the most respectful manner possible to point out why the proposed amendment should be permitted and your ruling dissented from. Unless I am allowed to proceed on these lines it is useless for me to say anything further. I contend that your ruling under Standing Order 126 is absolutely wrong. The proposed amendment only makes reference to the motives which prompted the Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the motives of the Government.

Hon. T. Walker: He is in order in stating the terms of his amendment.

Hon. P. Collier: It is ridiculous and childish.

Member: That is a reflection on the Chair.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not care if it is; it is true.

Mr. Carpenter: Mr. Speaker, would you read to the House the proposed amendment and the hon. member's reasons for dissenting from your ruling?

Mr. Speaker: I am waiting to hear the hon. member's reasons.

Mr. Carpenter: I understand that the hon. member has put his reasons in writing, and that the usual practice is to read such reasons to the House.

Mr. Speaker: That is not required under the Standing Orders. The hon. member has sent me up a memorandum, which I thought was his amendment. That is what I was asked for.

Mr. Carpenter: The motion is that your ruling be disagreed with, and the hon. member has given his reasons.

Mr. Speaker: No, he has an opportunity now of giving his reasons to the House.

Mr. Carpenter: I understand you will not read his reasons to the House.

Mr. Speaker: That is so.

The Premier: Mr. Speaker has read the motion.

Mr. Taylor: You have ruled the amendment out of order, Sir, and your ruling is being dissented from. When the ruling of

the Speaker is being dissented from the member dissenting puts his dissent in writing. Has that been submitted to you? If so, the House should be in possession of it.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Mt. Margaret is not correct as to the procedure. The Standing Orders do not require a member who is dissenting to put his reasons in writing. The House decides the question, and I am waiting for the hon. member to give his reasons.

Mr. Lambert: I should like to have a copy of my amendment supplied to me. The proposed amendment reads—

And, further, the Government's motives in nominating the member for Williams-Narrogin as Speaker are deserving of the censure of this House.

I see nothing whatever in Standing Order 126 that could not permit of this proposed amendment. It in no way reflects upon any decision of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the motion before the Chair.

Mr. Carpenter: Is he not doing so?

Mr. Speaker: No; he was discussing the amendment that he wished to move.

Hon. T. Walker: Which you ruled out of order. You are wrong in ruling him out of order.

Mr. Holman: What can we discuss?

Mr. Lambert: I do not think it is your desire, or design, that the merits of your decision should not be discussed, but if you will not allow me to make any reference whatever to the proposed amendment, I cannot see how I can show justification for the motion I have just tabled. I contend that there is nothing in the proposed amendment which reflects upon any decision of this House. The matter upon which I desire to touch is one expressly questioning the motives of the Government. The motives of the Government do not constitute a decision of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must not discuss the motives of the Government.

Hon. J. Seaddan: You can discuss their actions.

Mr. Lambert: With your permission, Sir, I will alter the word "motives" to "actions."

Mr. Speaker: Order! I cannot give the hon. member permission to do that. I have ruled a definite amendment out of order, and the question now before the Chair is that my action in moving the amendment out of order should be dissented from. I am not going to consent to any alteration to an amendment upon which I have given a decision.

Mr. Lambert: I contend that any motion or amendment questioning the action of the Government in any way whatever is admissible, and I fail to see how by inference or understanding or in any other way, you, Mr. Speaker, can read into Standing Order 126 the meaning which you apparently have given to it. Therefore, as I desire the House to discuss this matter, I shall content myself by moving that your ruling be disagreed with.

Mr. Taylor: I second the motion.

Hon. T. Walker: I submit, Mr. Speaker, that if you go no further than ruling the amendment out under the Standing Order quoted, you have not strictly interpreted the amendment by the member for Coolgardie. There is a vast difference between debating an act committed by the House in the passing of any resolution and discussing events antecedent to that resolution. Anything done by the House would not be open to question, but there may be behind that honourable decision of the House antecedents which may well be questioned and which are matters that go to make up the history of the Government. This is a vote of censure on the Government, and it is a recognised principle that in discussing a vote of censure or a no-confidence motion the very widest latitude is allowed from the Chair. I know of no departure from that ruling anywhere.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I ask the member for Kanowna to confine his remarks to the motion before the Chair.

Hon. T. Walker: May I, with all due deference and respect to the Chair, request that you give me time to connect my remarks with the motion, and not to interrupt me too speedily, lest, Sir, you yourself will be out

of order. I submit that the amendment by the hon. member is in order, and therefore that you are ruling wrongly because in a motion of no-confidence every act of the Government, as a Government, and every act of every member of the Government is open to debate, open to question, open to censure, open to daylight.

Mr. Taylor: That is what we want.

Hon. T. Walker: Open to the public investigation, without at all questioning what the House does. The House takes the responsibility of having elected you, Sir, to the Chair, but this amendment at present at all events, does not go back to that. Every step taken by the Government which led up to the election is open now for discussion. Therefore under Standing Order 126, I venture to say with all due deference your ruling is inaccurate and not in accordance with precedent.

The Premier: I rise to support your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I am satisfied that it is in accordance with Parliamentary usage, and that, notwithstanding the eloquence of the member for Kanowna, Parliamentary usage and practice deprecate amendments of this description. And the amendment is contrary to the truth. It is contrary to the good taste of the House that any member should table a motion or amendment which reflects, not only on the vote of the House, but reflects also on the character of His Honour the Speaker, and imputes motives to myself, who moved the motion upon which you were elected to the Chair. What right has the hon. member (Mr. Lambert) to impute motives to the Government, and by what right had the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) the audacity to say that this House has a right to have daylight let in on the motives of the Government?

Mr. Munsie: He is quite right too.

The Premier: It is a figment of the member's imagination that there is any motive.

Mr. Munsie: To cling to office and get you to England, that is their motive.

The Premier: There you are, manufacturing motives.

Mr. Munsie: That is your motive anyhow.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The member for Hannans will withdraw. He has no right to impute motives to the Premier.

Mr. Munsie: I withdraw.

The Premier: The hon. member has been put up to move this amendment by the members on the cross benches.

Mr. Munsie: On a point of order I ask that that statement by the Premier be withdrawn. He has imputed motives to members on these (Opposition) cross benches.

The Premier: I withdraw. The hon. member has justified my argument. If I am not permitted to impute motives to members on the cross benches, he is not justified in imputing motives to me. I submit, Mr. Speaker, your ruling is perfectly in order.

Member: Give us a reason.

The Premier: Because it is a reflection upon me, who moved the resolution, it is a reflection on the Government, and a reflection on the House which has carried the motion.

Mr. Lambert: I desire to say, Mr. Speaker, that I have no wish to reflect in any way on the Premier. It is to his action that I take objection.

Hon. J. Scaddan: One anticipates that the Premier, as leader of the House, naturally would support a ruling by the Speaker. I speak now from experience. Right or wrong, the leader of the House should support the Speaker, but I do not want the House to be misled into believing that the position taken up by the Premier is taken seriously. The Speaker always rules according to the Standing Orders or to *May*, or some other established authority. But in this case the amendment does not suggest any motive, does not suggest that the House was wrong in the decision arrived at in the election of a Speaker. It does not even touch the question of the election of Speaker. I submit that on a motion of no-confidence it is competent for members of this House to discuss the actions of the Government from A to Z, whether of a legislative nature or administrative nature, or any other action which affects the life of the Government.

The Minister for Works: Even of a private nature?

Mr. Speaker: Order! I must ask the leader of the Opposition to confine his remarks to the motion before the Chair.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Under your ruling, Sir, the only thing I can do is to ask the member for Coolgardie to hand me the amendment, and I will keep reading it awhile. There is nothing else left for me. I am trying to show that the amendment, in our opinion, is in order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is endeavouring to discuss the proposed amendment instead of the motion before the Chair.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Not at all. You, in your capacity as Speaker of the House, have no more right to impute motives to me, than I have to impute motives to you.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. gentleman will withdraw that statement.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Withdraw what statement? That you have no right to impute motives to me?

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What is wrong with it?

Ministerial Members: Chair!

Hon. J. Scaddan: I respectfully point out that I did not discuss the amendment, and that I did not intend to discuss the amendment; and you have no right to assert that I intended to do something that I did not do.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I understand the hon. member to be discussing the proposed amendment.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What sort of an absurd position are we finding ourselves in? The question before the House, Sir, is your ruling; and your ruling is that this amendment is not open to discussion.

Mr. Speaker: That is so.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I am trying to show that your ruling is against the Standing Orders, and against all precedent, in view of the fact that every action of a Government is open to discussion on a want of confidence motion.

The Premier: That is imputing motives.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You have not ruled the amendment out of order, Sir, because it imputed motives. You ruled it out of order under Standing Order 126, which requires a definite motion to rescind any action of the House. There is no suggestion of anything of that kind in the amendment of the member for Coolgardie.

The Premier: Why do you not move that?

The Minister for Works: That would be the more manly course.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I do not need to be instructed by the Minister for Works. The object of a no-confidence motion is to enable members of the House to discuss Governmental actions of any description. Why, we can go back five years and—

Mr. Speaker: Order! Is the hon. member discussing the want of confidence motion?

Hon. J. Scaddan: Am I discussing what?

Mr. Speaker: The want of confidence motion?

Hon. J. Scaddan: I did not think I was.

Mr. Speaker: I did.

The Premier: It sounded like it.

Hon. T. Walker: This is an amendment to a want of confidence motion.

The Attorney General: It is nothing of the kind. The question is whether the Speaker is right or wrong in his ruling.

Hon. J. Scaddan: His ruling on what? What is the ruling on? The ruling is that the amendment is not in order and cannot be discussed. Well, what can be discussed? As I asserted previously, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion every action of the Government leading up to the very election of the Speaker, though not the decision of the House in electing the Speaker, is open for discussion, without the amendment, absolutely open. On a motion of want of confidence, are we not entitled to discuss what transpired within the precincts of the House prior to the position of Speaker being filled, before members of this House in fact knew that Mr. Troy had resigned the Speakership? That is not reflecting on a decision of the House. Whatever may have transpired up to the stage when the Clerk of the House informed the House that the position of Speaker was vacant, is open to discussion on a want of confidence motion if the Government are concerned in any action arising out of the matter. And yet we are told that an amendment which does not touch upon the question of the election of the Speaker at all, is out of order. For the life of me, I cannot follow it. I have not yet heard any authority quoted. The Premier was very careful not to quote any authority. As a

matter of fact, there is no authority that can be quoted. If the Premier quotes *May*, he will find *May* says that the action of the Government in selecting some member outside their party is open to severe criticism. How can one criticise if one is not allowed to speak?

The Premier: Quote that. It is not in *May*.

Hon. J. Scaddan: If it is not in *May*, perhaps it is in June.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. J. Scaddan: I do not desire to press the point any further, except to say that, whether the amendment is acceptable or not, in my opinion the question arising out of the action of the Government up to the point of the nomination of any member to fill the position of Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order! I am not going to allow the hon. gentleman to discuss the election of the Speaker.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I am not discussing the election of the Speaker. I distinctly used the word "nomination." Any action of the Government up to the point of nomination is open to discussion.

Mr. Taylor: We would be safe in discussing anything that happened up to a quarter past four on that afternoon.

Hon. J. Scaddan: No, no. They rushed away. They had not finished the business when the bells started ringing.

Hon. T. Walker: You must not go beyond the ringing of the bells on that day.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The trouble is that the bell is ringing all the time now—ringing me off. I do suggest to the House that the business of the House might be kept in something like order by permitting on a want of confidence motion the freest possible discussion, irrespective of what one's feelings might be with regard to any action of the Government. Any action of the Government, from the public point of view, is open for discussion.

Hon. T. Walker: The public want to know.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The leader of the Country party says any subject under the sun is open for discussion on this motion.

Hon. J. Scaddan: If the Premier knew of the vacancy the previous day, he would

probably take action with regard to filling it. Are we not entitled to discuss any action he may have taken on Monday and Tuesday?

The Minister for Works: Did you have your spies on his track even then?

Hon. J. Scaddan: Oh, no.

Hon. T. Walker: The Minister has bees in his bonnet.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The amendment only touches that, saying, "And further the Government's action in nominating the member for Williams-Narrogin is deserving of the censure of the House."

The Attorney General: "Motives, motives."

Hon. J. Scaddan: I am prepared to agree with the Attorney General that one cannot impute motives. The Speaker is shifting his ground. The Speaker never used the word "motives."

Mr. Speaker: The leader of the Opposition is mistaken. I have sent for the *Hansard* report of my ruling and I find that I said, "The proposed amendment is absolutely out of order. If the hon. member will refer to Standing Order 126, he will see that no member shall reflect on any vote of the House except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded. Also it is not open to the hon. member to reflect on the motives of the Government. My ruling is that the proposed amendment is out of order." I hope the leader of the Opposition will withdraw the inaccurate statement he made just now.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Which inaccurate statement?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member said that in my ruling I did not refer to the motives of the Government. I have just read the ruling I gave and it distinctly showed that I did. I ask the leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I will withdraw. The point we have arrived at now is that the member for Coolgardie unfortunately used the word "motive" instead of "action," and my view is that the hon. member is entitled to discuss the "action" of the Government instead of their "motives."

Mr. Hickmott: Let the amendment drop and discuss their actions.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The indictment against the Government need only have been in the brief words "That the Government do not possess the confidence of the House," when any and every matter could have been discussed.

Mr. Hickmott: The amendment has been ruled out of order; why persist?

Hon. J. Scaddan: The hon. member does not appreciate the fact that the amendment has been ruled out of order and that Standing Order 126 has been quoted as one of the grounds for so doing, and that at the same time the matter arising out of this amendment cannot be discussed on the original motion. I do not want a ruling of that description to stand and thus baulk discussion on a no-confidence motion which should be of the widest possible scope. If the matter can be settled by the member for Coolgardie substituting the word "action" for "motive" the whole difficulty can be overcome.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Accept the ruling and move another amendment.

Mr. Lambert: I would be very pleased to do that.

The Attorney General: I venture to remark—

Mr. Foley: The member for Coolgardie desires to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Speaker: I did not hear him express that desire.

Mr. Lambert: Yes, I desire to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. Lambert: I have withdrawn it conditionally.

Mr. Speaker: There can be no conditions.

Debate resumed.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [11.0]: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—"That the action of the Government prior to the nomination of a Speaker to fill the vacant seat is open to censure."

Mr. SPEAKER: The amendment is entirely out of order.

Mr. LAMBERT: On what ground?

Mr. SPEAKER: On the ground that it is a thinly disguised attempt to reflect on the vote of the House; Standing Order 126.

Dissent from Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Lambert: Then I respectfully move—

That the ruling of Mr. Speaker be disagreed with.

Mr. Carpenter: I second that.

Mr. Holman: I think your ruling, Sir, is against free discussion in the Chamber. The position is this: on Thursday last a no-confidence motion was launched. After that the late Speaker resigned his position.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the motion before the House. He is trying to discuss the amendment, which I have refused to accept. He cannot do that.

Mr. Holman: I am discussing the reasons why your ruling should be dissented from. The late Speaker, as I said, retired from his position. After public statements had been made certain action was taken by the Government side which may, or may not, have an influence on the issue of the debate on the original question before the House. If the no-confidence motion is carried, the people of the country will have an opportunity of speaking on one of the gravest political questions ever put before them. The action taken by the Government will probably prevent that question going to the people.

The Premier: What is all this to show?

Mr. Holman: It shows why I disagree with the Speaker's ruling. The action of the Government taken since the motion of no-confidence was lodged, may have a bearing upon the vote, and therefore we have a perfect right to discuss that action. The vote which placed His Honour in the position he holds to-day cannot be discussed, or reflected on, but the action of the Government in disposing of support that might have been used against them in the division can be discussed to the fullest.

The Premier: On a point of order. The hon. member is attributing motives.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. Holman: No motives are being imputed.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I have ruled that the hon. member was out of order on that point.

Mr. Holman: I accept that ruling, but anything that took place prior to certain

action being taken in this Chamber can be discussed now. The action of the Government prior to the vote being taken can be discussed from every point of view. It is not in the best interests of the State that discussion should be burked on so important a question, which may have a bearing on the vote to be taken on the no-confidence motion.

Mr. Taylor: In supporting the motion I do not wish to make any personal remarks. You, Sir, have ruled the proposed amendment out of order. In my opinion that amendment is strictly in order. However, you have ruled otherwise, and we are discussing your ruling. In my opinion we would be perfectly in order in discussing any action of the Government in respect to the no-confidence motion, as, for instance, if it came to my notice that the Government were sitting in caucus discussing the disposal of a high position, and that any action determined upon in that caucus meeting was against the best interests of the country.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is out of order in discussing any action of the Government in regard to this matter. He must confine his remarks to the motion before the Chair.

Mr. Taylor: I am discussing the question of a dissent from your ruling, Sir, and I must be permitted to discuss what led up to the motion. Had there been no no-confidence motion against the Government there would have been no necessity for the amendment of the member for Coolgardie, or for your ruling on the point. I must be allowed to refer to the original motion as the amendment is connected with it, and also to discuss how it relates to the amendment.

Mr. Speaker: If the House carries the motion now before the Chair the hon. member will have the opportunity he desires; but not beforehand.

Mr. Taylor: If I thought your ruling was actuated by some malice would I not be in order in discussing it? If I thought that you gave a ruling not in accordance with the Standing Orders or with the customs of this House or any other Parliament in any other country, and I thought there were base motives connected with it, would I not be allowed to discuss them? I am not saying anything in that direc-

tion, but merely put a suppositious case. When I make a statement to the House that is contrary to the forms of it there is no member of the House who will bow more quickly to the ruling of the Chair and be more ready to uphold the decorum of the Chamber. We are in opposition. We are not in the proud position of having a majority to carry our voices. The Government have a majority behind them. All that we have is argument, and in the amendment of the member for Coolgardie, which you have ruled out of order, I claim that we have justice behind us, together with argument.

The Attorney General: Is the hon. member speaking on the merits of the amendment?

Mr. Taylor: It is the merits of the amendment which I am discussing. I am justifying the necessity for the amendment which has been ruled out of order. I am also supporting the motion dissenting from the ruling. I could not really do that unless I satisfied myself that the amendment was in order. The amendment was only dealing with a certain action on the part of the Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Taylor: Which took place before the House met on Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I must ask the hon. member not to discuss the amendment, which I have ruled out of order.

Mr. Taylor: I am not discussing the amendment at all. I am discussing the motion and merely refer to the amendment as justification for my argument. I can see, with all due respect, that you have got your bristles up, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I must ask the hon. member to withdraw and apologise.

Mr. Taylor: If I have offended I withdraw and apologise to the House. I hope I will not receive—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's remark is grossly disorderly, but it has been withdrawn. The hon. member may now proceed.

Mr. Taylor: I do not know on what lines I may be allowed to proceed. Under the new order of things in the House one will not be able to discuss anything. I assume from knowledge gained that the Government

were dealing with a certain question before this House met on Tuesday—

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is trying to discuss the proposed amendment. I have told him that it is out of order and ask him to confine his remarks to the motion. If he is not prepared to do so I shall have to take further action.

Mr. Taylor: Then I have nothing more to say.

The Attorney General: Members seem to have a difficulty in differentiating between discussing the merits of the amendment and discussing the ruling of His Honour. The motion before the House is whether—

Mr. Taylor: See how much latitude you get.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

The Attorney General: I do not require any latitude. The motion is as to whether the decision of the Speaker is right or wrong, and whether we dissent from it or agree with it. The amendment has been read, and has been ruled to reflect upon the vote of the House under Standing Order 126, and also to reflect upon the Government. In addition to the reasons which you, Sir, have given I submit that there are several others which may be added to show that the amendment is out of order, and that Your Honour is quite right.

Hon. T. Walker: "Your Honour" is wrong. It is an incorrect expression. It should be "Mr. Speaker," or "The Honourable the Speaker" if you will, but not His Honour.

The Attorney General: Standing Order 123—

Mr. Speaker: There are too many interjections. I ask hon. members to listen to the Attorney General in silence.

The Attorney General: Provides that—

No member shall allude to any debate of the same Session, upon a Question or Bill not then being under discussion, except by the indulgence of the House for personal explanations.

It was for this House to say who should be elected to the position of Speaker, and I submit that if there was no other reason Standing Order 123 would preclude this House from in any way questioning or dis-

cussing actions or motives in relation to the election of Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Taylor: I did not get nearly as far as that.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on the Chair.

The Attorney General: Moreover, I find that Standing Order 132 says that—

No member shall digress from the subject matter of any Question under discussion.

Mr. Taylor: You had better sit down at once, then.

The Attorney General: The Standing Order continues—

And all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections on members, shall be considered highly disorderly.

There is no question but that the amendment reflects on the vote of the House, and that it reflects on Mr. Speaker himself. It imputes improper motives to the mover of the resolution. It imputes improper motives to those members of the House who voted, and it imputes improper motives to and casts a reflection upon you, Sir, as Speaker. The amendment, therefore, is from every point of view—and there are half-a-dozen of them—irregular; and you, Sir, were right in rejecting it.

Mr. Taylor: The last word has been said.

Hon. T. Walker: First, I have to cover some of the ground I covered before.

Mr. Speaker: Order! Has the member for Kanowna spoken on this question?

Hon. T. Walker: No; not on this question; on the previous question. I take it that your ruling, Sir, confines this matter to Standing Order 126.

Mr. Speaker: No.

The Attorney General: That is one of the reasons.

Hon. T. Walker: I understood that that was the only reason the Speaker gave this time.

Mr. Speaker: I ruled the motion out of order.

Mr. Hudson: The Speaker is embracing the Attorney General's reason now—Standing Order 132.

Hon. T. Walker: I submit we are to be guided by our Standing Orders. Now, Standing Order 126 does not apply here, be-

cause it distinctly deals with any motion proposed by any member affecting or reflecting upon any resolution passed by this Chamber. This amendment does not go so far. It does not, in point of time, reach the passing of any resolution by this Chamber.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): What about Standing Order 123?

Hon. T. Walker: I will deal with that. Standing Order 126 precludes us from dealing with a resolution passed by the House. The amendment proposed by the member for Coolgardie deals with matters, and is inclusive of matters, only prior to any resolution being passed by this House—prior. Therefore that Standing Order does not touch the amendment of the member for Coolgardie. I am within my rights in showing that, without any reflection on the Chair or any reflection on the House itself in passing a resolution, there may be conduct of the Government, not in relation to you, Sir, but in relation to other candidates for the Speakership—

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. T. Walker: Which may not be in perfect order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must not proceed on those lines. He is out of order. He is referring to the proposed amendment, and not to the motion.

Hon. T. Walker: The amendment itself, to the extent whether it is in order or out of order, is under discussion. To the extent that it is involved in your ruling, the amendment is now a matter for the debate of this Chamber. One cannot leave it out. This discussion is the play of *Hamlet* without *Hamlet* unless one refers to the amendment. I submit that one cannot possibly argue whether your ruling is right or wrong unless one refers to the amendment proposed, on which you have ruled. The amendment must come under discussion.

Mr. Hudson: Besides, the question is one for members to determine, and they should have the full facts before they give a decision.

Hon. T. Walker: Undoubtedly; and I am showing why that amendment may be in order, without reflecting upon any vote of the House or reflecting even upon the occupant of the Chair, inasmuch as the amendment refers to the conduct of the Govern-

ment prior to the nomination of the member for Williams-Narrogin, which is part of the conduct and life of the Government.

The Attorney General: Then, you wish to reflect on the Government?

Hon. P. Collier: Of course.

The Attorney General: Very well. Then you are out of order.

Hon. T. Walker: It is the Government who are under discussion.

Hon. P. Collier: A want of confidence motion is under discussion.

The Attorney General: Surely. Talk about the want of confidence motion until to-morrow morning, if you like, in accordance with the Speaker's ruling.

Hon. T. Walker: The whole question is involved in the relevancy of an amendment to a motion which brings the whole conduct of the Government under review. I submit there are a hundred points in which the Government may have been wrong prior to your nomination, Mr. Speaker. Your nomination may be right, the vote of the House may be right—I am not questioning it. But what the Government did before—which you may not know of—is open for discussion.

Mr. Speaker: Only the motion before the Chair is open for discussion.

Hon. T. Walker: And I am only discussing the motion before the Chair. Now, let me glance at the ingenious interpretations of others of our Standing Orders. The Attorney General, with his youthful inexperience in Parliamentary matters, has drawn our attention to No. 123, which reads—

No member shall allude to any debate of the same session, upon a question or Bill not being then under discussion, except by the indulgence of the House for personal explanation.

Where, in the name of goodness, is the connection of that Standing Order with the amendment? The amendment has no relationship to any question previously debated in this House, and has no relationship to any Bill previously before this House.

The Attorney General: I did not think I could make you see it.

Hon. T. Walker: No; nor any other member who has a clear intellect.

The Attorney General: Put it to the vote.

Hon. T. Walker: Put it to the vote—put it to the brutal majority. Majorities are not always right. I think Standing Order 123 has no bearing. I think you, yourself, Sir, will admit that. This amendment in no way deals with any previous Bill or any question previously before the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member is again referring to the amendment.

Hon. T. Walker: I must refer to it. It is the amendment that is in order or out of order. You rule it out of order, and I say it is not out of order, and I have a right to show it is in order. Only one other Standing Order has been referred to, No. 132, which provides—

No member shall digress from the subject matter of any question under discussion; and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections on members, shall be considered highly disorderly.

There is no digression in the amendment. It is the conduct of the Government that is under discussion.

The Attorney General: It is the Speaker's ruling that is under discussion.

Hon. T. Walker: It is the ruling on the question under discussion that we are debating.

The Attorney General: Get back to it, then.

Hon. T. Walker: That is what I am at. The Government, of course, need discussing, need it very much, and the Attorney General as much as anybody. The remainder of the Standing Order has not any bearing upon this matter either. When a want of confidence motion, or a censure motion, is proposed, the whole public conduct of the Government is under discussion. Whether or not it reflects to their credit, is not to be considered. Whatever they have done is open for analysis and observation, and, if necessary, for censure. It is an imputation of motives to suggest that the amendment will reflect improper motives upon anybody. Until the debate developed we did not know, and it is time enough to stop people from imputing motives when they are actually doing so. The amendment is simply an addition to

the motion of no-confidence, and it brings the conduct of the Government under discussion right up to the time of the nomination of the member for Williams-Narrogin as Speaker of this House.

Mr. Carpenter: I should not be just to myself if I did not voice my protest against the Speaker's ruling which I consider to be highly dangerous for the rights and privileges of members of this House. I need not attempt in any way to lecture you, Mr. Speaker, as to your duty, but I may be pardoned for reminding you that for the time being you are the custodian of our rights and privileges, and that the right of every member to express himself on any subject which affects his constituents, himself, or the country generally, is a matter which should be jealously guarded by yourself, and I feel that in giving the ruling you have done you are not guarding those rights and privileges. I can only hope that the ruling will not be regarded as a precedent on future occasions when similar questions may arise.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	20
				—
A tie	..	..	..	0
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munle
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loghlin
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Varyard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Hardwick
	(Teller.)

Mr. Speaker: I give my casting vote with the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Debate resumed.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [11.38]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

The Attorney General: You cannot do that, you have already spoken.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [11.39]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 20th February, 1917.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Audited Accounts and Balance Sheets for year ended 30th June, 1916, of (a) Government Refrigerating Works, (b) Albany Cold Stores, (c) Perth City Markets, (d) Metropolitan Abattoirs and Sale Yards, (e) Kalgoorlie Abattoirs. 2, Abattoirs Act Amendment, Regulations. 3, Health Act 1911/15 Amendment of Regulations. 4, Municipal Corporations Act, additional by-law for the regulation of motor and other traffic.

QUESTION NOT ASKED.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I intend to let the question standing in my name lapse. I find that the preparation would entail a considerable amount of time and trouble and involve expenditure, and the reply would not be ready within two or three weeks, so I understand.

QUESTION—POLICE DUTY AT HAY AND KING STREETS.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Colonial Secretary: Whether he will instruct the Commissioner of Police to station a constable on point duty at the intersection of Hay and King-streets as a safeguard to the public, seeing that in consequence of the two streets being partly blocked for traffic by reason of the construction of the Government tramway's line, alterations to the telephones by the Commonwealth Government, and by the laying down of new cables by the city council, there is now only 13 feet available for traffic in Hay-street and nine feet in King-street at its northern intersection with Hay-street?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: It is not the duty of the police to provide an officer to control traffic at the intersection of Hay and King-streets, as it is the business of the civic administration to meet such requirements. However, as the cause of the present obstruction is mainly due to the work of construction of the Government tramway line, a constable will be placed on duty temporarily to regulate the traffic at the point mentioned.

BILL—APPRENTICES.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.37]: In view of the fact that a certain motion is still undecided in another place, I do not propose to ask members to proceed with further