

# Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 11th September, 1915.

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

## PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands (for the Premier): Public Accounts for the year ended 30th June, 1915.

## BILL—GRAIN AND FOODSTUFF.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands (for the Premier) and read a first time.

## BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION.

*Re-committal.*

On motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

*That all words after "person" in line 1 of the definition of "Electoer" be struck out, and "whose name appears on a Commonwealth electoral roll as an elector" inserted in lieu.*

Amendment passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move a further amendment—

*That the interpretation of "Electoral district" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"Electoral sub-division means a sub-division of an electoral division for the election of a member of the House of Representatives."*

Amendment passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the interpretation of "licensed premises" the words "and registered clubs where liquor is sold" were added. These words "where liquor is sold" are unnecessary, and may lead to confusion, and I propose to omit them. I move an amendment—

*That the words "where liquor is sold" be struck out.*

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Will the Minister give us a little more information on the subject?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The only point is that the words are unnecessary. Under the Licensing Act of 1911 registered clubs have to obtain a certificate on a proper form and there may arise an argument if we use the words "where liquor is sold" as to what constitutes an actual sale, and as to whether it is an actual sale to supply members with drink. The liquor belongs to the club before it is supplied to members. Some confusion may arise by leaving in the words, and it is to avoid that that I desire to omit them. The intention of the words "registered clubs" provides all that is necessary for the purposes of the Bill.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

## BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £650,000.

*All stages.*

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) [4.35]: On behalf of the Premier I move—

*That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees*

*of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day.*

Question passed.

#### *Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with this Bill.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

The House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. McDowall in the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [4.50]: On behalf of the Premier I move—

*That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year ending 30th June, 1916, a sum not exceeding £650,000.*

In explanation of the motion, I desire to say that this is the second Supply Bill introduced for the year, and it is contemplated that the amount now sought will finance the State for another couple of months, when the Appropriation Bill will be presented after the passage of the general Estimates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I hope you will present it before two months.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will take two months before the appropriations are through. The Estimates will be presented to the Chamber by the Premier. In the Supply Bill, which was passed by the Chamber earlier in the session, a vote was obtained for £559,300 from the Consolidated Revenue. The expenditure for the two months has been £524,742, leaving a balance on the previous authorisation of supply of £134,558. Under this Bill we are seeking to apply out of Consolidated Revenue the sum of £550,000. If the amounts are totalled the Committee will find that the total will be £684,558 expenditure for the two months. Under the previous Supply Bill from Loan funds £450,000 was obtained. The expenditure for the two months has

been £256,000, leaving a balance of £194,000 available from the previous Supply. We seek under this Bill a sum of £100,000 from Loan funds, which will make available for the two months a sum of £294,000 from Loan funds, consequently the total supply sought under this Bill is £650,000, which will finance the State for the two months which it is anticipated will be required for the introduction of the necessary appropriation, and for the getting out of all the details in connection with the general Estimates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is up to the end of October.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The previous Supply Bill (No. 1) provided for the two months July and August. This supply is required for September and October.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [4.55]: I do not see any reason why we should oppose the granting of supply, but I can only hope that the Government will be able to keep within the figures which have been presented by the Minister for Lands.

The Minister for Lands: We have been doing so with the previous figures.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I see that is so for the two months. I notice that the total appropriation will be £1,290,000 for the period of four months. Hon. members can calculate on that basis, approximately, the rate of expenditure for the whole 12 months. I would point out, however, that it does not always follow that, because the expenditure has been going on at a certain figure for two months or four months, it is going to continue to be at the same rate for the whole of the financial year. That, however, can be better determined when the Estimates are introduced. I understood that the Premier was going to bring down the general Estimates and get them passed fairly rapidly in order to avoid the necessity for appropriation.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I understood that was the promise he gave to the House, at any rate.

The Minister for Lands: That is so, but he now finds it impossible. He therefore desires this supply. The Estimates and the Budget will be introduced to-night and details will be given to the House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The details of the yearly expenditure, I suppose. It is not usual for any Opposition to oppose the Supply. I do, however, want again to remark to my friends opposite that, notwithstanding their persistent promises that the Estimates will be framed early in the financial year, there is again this delay. We should undoubtedly have our Estimates much earlier than they have been presented in the past. The duty of Parliament is to see that any Government, whether Liberal or Labour, have got their Estimates framed and presented to the House not later than August. This, however, is simply going on in the same way. We are a long way on in this financial year, and it is only at the fag-end of the session that our friends opposite ever dream of presenting the Budget.

The Minister for Lands: This is the earliest on record.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is nothing; that is just like the wild statements the Premier is in the habit of making whenever I rise to my feet in this House. He makes assertions which he cannot substantiate. The figures have all been given to the House time and time again. I could turn them up in *Hansard*, and they will show that he is beside the mark altogether. I cannot understand why we do not have our Estimates long before we do get them. We certainly met at the end of July, a month late, but that is no reason why the Estimates should not be prepared. Because Parliament sits a month late in the financial year, there is no reason why the departmental heads should not have been busy for some time previously framing the Estimates and getting the figures ready. I once took charge of the Treasury and had to introduce the Budget a fortnight afterwards.

The Minister for Lands: Did you take charge on the 30th June?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I took charge in August, and yet only a fortnight was given to me in which to lick the matter into shape. It is only a question of making a start.

The Minister for Lands: Did not your predecessor make a start?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No; the departments did, but he did not. Ill-health would not permit him to. If the Minister does not start, then the Treasury does not start, and the departments will not. The Premier took exception to a remark made by me when he asked for his first supply. I said then that the finances were in a parlous condition. I shall not go into any controversy at this stage. I wish merely to remark that I dissent entirely from the Premier's interjection that I was unpatriotic for the reason that I drew attention to the matter. The figures speak for themselves. Anyone with any knowledge of finance can see for himself how we are drifting. It was uncalled for on the part of the Premier to say that I was unpatriotic because I once more in my public capacity drew attention to the drift. That has nothing to do with patriotism. True patriotism to-day in Western Australia would prompt the Treasurer and his colleagues to economise in public expenditure. I shall await with great interest the delivery of the Budget to-night, with a view to endeavouring to arrive at some correct conclusion as regards the exact position financially, bearing in mind especially that we are apparently debarred from going to the world's money market, which is closed to us at the present time. I understand the Premier leaves for the Eastern States on Saturday—I learn that from the Press, of course—to confer with the other Premiers and with the Prime Minister regarding future financial arrangements. That is undoubtedly the proper course to pursue. We must have someone at that conference to look after our interests. Considering that we have a third of the whole continent of Australia to look after although with a small population, naturally our paramount concern so far as this

State is concerned—and I go further and say, as far as the Commonwealth is concerned—is that if we cannot finance we have very bad times ahead of us. I hope we shall be able to get a complete grasp of the financial position to-night. I admit at once that the Treasurer will endeavour to give us that grasp. I trust that when we have the Estimates before us, notwithstanding our having granted this temporary supply we shall be able to get all information, fully and frankly, on the items of expenditure which are proposed in this Bill. I do not wish for a moment to oppose the granting of supply, which is so necessary for carrying on.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [5.3]: I wish to support part of the views voiced by the leader of the Opposition, and that is with regard to the bringing down of the financial statements. I know that when I was Treasurer I realised that if this House was to exercise any financial control, the first business submitted to it should be the financial statement. For this simple reason: It is idle to say that the House as at present constituted has any control over the financial affairs of the State, because we so frequently get the Budget speech delivered some months after the close of the financial year. Further than that, by the time we are prepared to discuss the items it frequently happens that half of the new financial year has gone. The result is a *don't-care feeling*, members thinking that it is not worth while kicking up a row for the balance of the amounts. Almost invariably it has been a complaint of whoever sat in Opposition that the Budget was not brought down earlier. On every Supply Bill that complaint has been voiced. I know that I myself was struck with the idea of bringing the Budget in early and so giving the House control, and I thought that, the financial statement having been delivered, the House could take control after agreeing to the principle. I am not saying that the sin to which I refer is original with the present Government, any more than it was with any other Administration; but it is as well for us to see that the Legislative Assembly shall have some financial con-

trol, which the House has not under present conditions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford—in reply) [5.6]: I do not desire to enter into a discussion on this Supply Bill because the Premier to-night will, I have no doubt, deal effectively with the remarks of both hon. members who have spoken. So far as my recollection goes, however—and I have been a member of this Assembly for a number of years—I do not know of the Estimates ever being introduced before the first quarter of the financial year had expired. I do not think such a case is on record. I shall have the matter looked up, and no doubt the Premier will deal with the point this evening.

(Question put and passed.)

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

#### *Supply Bill introduced, etc.*

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill was brought in for the expenditure of £550,000 from Consolidated Revenue Fund, and £100,000 from General Loan Fund.

Bill passed through all its stages and transmitted to the Council.

#### BILL—VERMIN BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [5.13] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, though a small one, is of considerable importance to the State, dealing as it does with a matter which closely affects the finances, and also dealing with obligations entered into by a representative board with a previous Administration. I have already placed on record the circumstances which led up to the passage of the principal Act and to the establishment of the Gascoyne Vermin Board, but I desire briefly to relate again the circumstances, so that there may be no misunderstanding in regard to the matter. After that, I shall shortly ex-

plain the difficulties facing the Government in regard to this subject.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Is this the same Bill as was introduced last session?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. The previous Bill dealt with other phases of the subject, whilst the present is purely a validating Bill. In 1908 a deputation waited upon the then Premier, Sir Newton Moore, with a request that provision should be made by which the pastoralists in the Gascoyne district might be enabled to erect a fence or take other steps towards the end of protecting themselves against what was then considered an invasion of rabbits. The then Premier promised that something would be done, and in February, 1909, the existing Act was passed. That Act provided that the Government could advance money to properly constituted vermin boards for the purpose of erecting rabbit-proof fences or otherwise for the protection of any portion of the State from vermin. The Bill went further and made provision that in order to recoup the State for the advances made a rate could be struck on the property protected by the rabbit-proof fence to an extent not exceeding 2s. per one hundred acres. After the passage of the Bill a board of five was appointed. The board was nominated by the then member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) and the district was declared. The declaration was by Executive Council Minute, approved by the then Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Mitchell), and the board immediately afterwards proceeded on the business of erecting the fence for the protection of the holdings. In May, 1909, the board started to draw on the advance which had been approved by the Government and up to the time of the abolition of the board a sum of £66,000 had been drawn from the General Loan Fund. When it was agreed that an amount of money would be advanced to the board, it was also decided that they should pay 5 per cent. interest in half-yearly payments for a period of twenty years to recoup the advance made. With the money advanced the board eventually completed

the fence, totalling a distance of 327 miles, and up to the time of their abolition they had paid £9,800 in interest and had paid off the advance to the extent of £4,000. During the six years, roughly speaking, that the board was in existence, very dry seasons were experienced and the pastoralists of that portion of the State were having a particularly bad time. The result was that the board had great difficulty in collecting rates and consequently the payments to the Government got into arrears. Then the board took action to recover some of the rates which were in arrears and when they applied to the court for a verdict to enable them to collect the rates the court which sat at Carnarvon held that there was a deficiency or a flaw in the Act and that it was not clear as to who was liable for the rates and that consequently the action could not stand.

Mr. Robinson: When was that action taken?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In 1909 or 1910 I think it was. The case was heard by Mr. Foss, the then resident magistrate.

Mr. Gilchrist: It was in 1913. I was there until 1914.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: However, it does not matter when the action was heard. The fact remains that the board endeavoured to take action.

Mr. Robinson: I think it does matter, because here is an Act in force for many years and no attempt is made to recover arrears of rates.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will deal with that a little later on. The resident magistrate held that the Act was deficient and that an action could not stand. Then at about that time or in 1913, that is if the case was heard in 1913, Mr. Bath, the then Minister for Lands, pointed out to the board that they must make some effort to pay up their arrears to the Government, and in the course of correspondence, the board pointed out the difficulties which were being experienced by the pastoralists. Mr. Bath agreed to take bills from the

ratepayers for the amounts of rates that were admitted.

Mr. Robinson: Would it not be better to say from certain of the ratepayers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well these bills were taken from some of the ratepayers and they were supposed to be met within eighteen months. When the bills became due they were almost wholly dishonoured. In any case there was very little collected and the Government were unable to get any of the arrears paid up. Last session I introduced a Bill for the purpose of putting right some of the difficulties in connection with the administration of this board, and also to get power to supersede the board, and to get the Government to take over the responsibility of administration, because it was generally conceded, seeing that we had a department already administering the rabbit-proof fence, that that department could do the work of administration more economically. In anticipation of the Government taking over control, certain liabilities were incurred. These liabilities were not incurred in such a way as to render the Government responsible for the general liabilities of the board. Certain actions were taken by the creditors, principally the wages men, against the board, and on verdicts being obtained it was proposed to sell certain goods and chattels of the board. The Government stepped in and bought camels and drays and other things which would be required in connection with the maintenance of the fence. In that way a certain liability was incurred although there were assets to show for it. The Bill was introduced and there was a difficulty in regard to it. Another Chamber took up, as I consider, a most extraordinary attitude, and endeavoured by that Bill to compel the Government to agree to a reduction of 50 per cent. in the rates. This, of course, the Government could not possibly agree to, and a conference was held, but the conference proved abortive and the Bill was lost. However, after the Bill was defeated, the Government by Executive Council Minute abolished the board and the question on which Mr. Foss, as magistrate, had given a decision was submitted

to the Crown Law Department. The officers of the department stated definitely that the ruling of the magistrate was not sound, and that so far as the measure was concerned we could collect all rates. On that point there was no difference of opinion. We superseded the board, and, as Minister for Agriculture, I took over the administration. My first duty was to try and square up the general administration and to try and find out exactly what was owing and generally to get some money in and straighten up things. We got all details from Carnarvon and these were submitted to the Crown Law Department, and the Department proceeded to endeavour to collect the arrears. They had not gone far, however, before they discovered that although the point raised by Mr. Foss was not sound, there was another point that prevented them taking action to recover, and it was due to the fact that the original Executive Council Minute creating the district was incorrect, and was not in accordance with the measure which had been passed and which permitted of the establishment of the board. The Act stated that any road district could be declared a vermin district, but the Order in Council declared a vermin district composed of more than one board and portions of boards. Consequently the district was created contrary to the provisions of the Act and that prevented the Government from recovering the amounts which were due. There is another difficulty. During the term that this fence was under the administration of the board, members did not give that close attention to the matter that the magnitude of the undertaking required, with the result that there were a lot of things done that would possibly conflict with the Act. Under the amending Bill now before members we desire to put matters right in regard to the creation of the district, and also in regard to any deficiency in the administration of the board. It is distinctly unfair and was unfair for any body or any organisation or any branch of the legislature to try in a bill of this description to amend the system of rating, and in regard to this particular

Bill I think it would not be right for members to say that the original Act was not fair, that the method of imposing taxation was not just, and that the representation was not in accordance with what was desired. That, however, has no effect on this Bill. This obligation was taken voluntarily by the Gaseoyne pastoralists, and they undertook it under the measure as it then stood. There was no objection to the repayment and no objection to the amount of rate that could be struck. They knew perfectly well what the Act provided for and they voluntarily accepted the conditions of the measure and pledged themselves to refund the amounts owing to the Government from the rates which they proposed to collect. What will be the future administration of the fence has no bearing on this particular question. We have taken over the general administration of the fence but to try in a measure of this description to get the Government to agree to any special terms in connection with its future administration, will be unfair inasmuch as we are dealing with the past and not with the future, and it would not be right to use the failures or the irregularities of the past to try and squeeze something out of the Government in regard to the future. I want members to realise the seriousness of the question. It is a very serious thing indeed inasmuch as the Government invested £66,000 on the distinct and definite guarantee of honourable men to refund it. To assist any section of the community to use a technical error or a small omission in regard to the creation of a district as a means of avoiding their liability and practically taking from the people of this State a sum of £66,000 would be distinctly unfair.

Mr. Robinson: I think not a single one of those squatters wants to avoid his liability. These men are willing to pay as has been stated here and in another place on several occasions. I do not know why the Minister wants to repeat that statement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am making a special appeal and I want not only those members who are acquainted

with the question but all members to realise what it means.

Mr. Robinson: Do not support an appeal with mis-statements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not making mis-statements. We have the experience of the past and we did try—

Mr. Robinson: Has a single squatter repudiated his responsibility? Not one.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not going to make any accusations against the squatters.

Mr. Robinson: But you have.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I want the Chamber to understand that the Government did make an honest attempt to put the affairs of this board in order and to get the powers which we thought we possessed and which the Government who advanced the money thought they had provided, to recover the amount due and action was taken in another place which prevented that from being done. I trust this will not happen on the present occasion. I do not want to labour the question but I am astounded to think that so little was said by hon. members in regard to our previous experience in connection with this matter. I want to point out where the Government would land if we permitted this sort of thing to continue. If we on this occasion say that, because of a technicality, we are not going to take the opportunity to collect the just dues to the State, it would be unsafe for the Government in future to advance any money to any board or organisation.

Mr. Robinson: No one will object to that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Again I would point out that members on the one hand are urging, and justly urging, that the amount of money due to the Government for the purchase of our agricultural conditional purchase leases should be reduced. We cannot possibly go on reducing in connection with our agricultural lands if we cannot obtain our just payments due by the pastoralists. We cannot go on chucking money away with both hands. Consequently the Bill, although a small one, deals with a very great principle. It is a matter of

the utmost importance to the finances of the State, and I want members to take the Bill and judge its importance not by the clause, but by the magnitude of the question involved, and to assist the Government to put this matter on a fair basis. I quite recognise the difficulty of these pastoralists. I am prepared to admit that they are honourable men and that possibly the rating has not been on a fair basis and that the burden, comparative to the seasons, has been very heavy indeed.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Some of them paid for years but found that others were not paying.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I admit that and the Government are prepared to consider any reasonable proposition which will be submitted to relieve them in future, but we cannot do so in regard to the past and we do not want the past to be used as a lever against us in the future. We want to square up the past and, having squared it up, I will be prepared to meet a deputation to discuss the best means of providing fairer conditions for the future. I hope the Bill will receive the favourable consideration of the House and I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Mr. Gilchrist: Will the Minister agree to the debate being adjourned for a fortnight?

The Minister for Lands: No, not a fortnight.

Mr. Gilchrist: I shall have no opportunity to communicate with Carnarvon before that because the place is isolated.

The Minister for Lands: I cannot agree to that; most of the facts are here.

Mr. Gilchrist: It will be impossible to get the facts earlier.

Mr. Hudson: The Pastoralists' Association are acquainted with the position.

Mr. Gilchrist: They are not sufficiently acquainted with the facts.

On motion by Mr. Gilchrist debate adjourned.

## BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 9th September.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sus-ex) [5.37]: I should like to say at once that I appreciate the fact that the Minister has endeavoured, to some very large extent, to eliminate from this Bill the controversial aspect of previous Mines Regulation Bills which we have considered in this House. Notwithstanding that, I must say I am still opposed to legislation which will appoint inspectors from the ranks of members of the unions concerned and give them the full powers of Government inspectors. I have on all previous occasions ventilated my opposition to this principle, and it is not necessary to dwell on the matter at great length now. I would not for a moment attempt to answer all the arguments the Minister put forth because I have not had an opportunity to study his remarks or the authorities he quoted, but I do say there are objections and very serious objections at the present juncture to proposing legislation which will, to a degree, affect an industry of such vital importance to the State as the mining industry. We recognise what the mining industry has been to Western Australia. This point has been emphasised by members on both sides of the House, including Ministers, on many occasions. Nevertheless, we are now in a position when it is advisable to leave our industrial propositions as they stand until we can get clear of the more pressing requirements of the Empire in connection with the unfortunate and terrible war which is raging. I think the Minister would have been well advised had he left this Bill until some future occasion when the whole of his proposals could once more have been considered. It would appear—I do not know whether I am right in suggesting such a thing—that pressure has been brought to bear upon him.

Mr. Green: Upon the hon. member.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Pressure has been brought to bear upon the Minister and his colleagues by those unions of workers, of which the hon. member for Kalgoorlie is a shining light, in order that he should introduce this legislation, a mere section of what he maintains and what the hon. member for Kalgoorlie also maintains is desired.

Mr. Green: You refer to the Chamber of Mines?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, to the member for Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Hudson: Is the member for Kalgoorlie influenced by the Chamber of Mines?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I daresay he has been influenced on occasions by that august body, a body which has for one of its vice presidents, I believe, the Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: I was not aware of that.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They write in very glowing terms of the Minister now.

Mr. Taylor: It is a sort of free and easy concern.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Without unduly dwelling on the matter, I would point out that we are now being asked once more—which makes the third time of asking—to assent to the principle that a body of workers shall elect inspectors who shall have powers practically equal to those of the inspectors appointed by the Government. Is it reasonable? Would it be reasonable that the employers themselves, the owners of the mines, should appoint inspectors and that the Government should pay for them?

Mr. Munsie: Do the owners of the mines work in the mines?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Undoubtedly they do.

Mr. Munsie: Very few of them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Undoubtedly they do; the hon. member ought to know it, and they work considerably harder than the hon. member ever worked in the mines.

Mr. Munsie: Do you think so?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member's record is very well known and

he ought to be careful how he interjects. It would be just as reasonable that the owners themselves should appoint inspectors or that the Chamber of Mines should appoint inspectors and that the Government should pay for them.

Mr. Harrison: Is not the underground manager an inspector for the mine owners?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No.

Mr. Harrison: What is he?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He is there to see that production is obtained from the mine; he is there to act in the interests of the owners managing the property. He is not inspecting the mine.

Mr. Foley: He is acting for a section of the public.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He has no powers under the Act. He cannot issue a summons or compel men to go before him and answer for anything which he might see occur in the mine.

The Attorney General: He has an influence over the men.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He cannot compel any superior officer—

Mr. Munsie: He can compel some of the men.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But here we are asked to authorise inspectors, appointed by the election of the men working in the mines—

Hon. J. D. Connolly: No, by the men in the unions.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, including those working in the mines.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Only the union men.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I believe there are none other than union men working in the mines.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Yes there are.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Very few. I understand the unions have excluded all others and that a free man cannot now work in the mines.

Mr. Munsie: They have done so absolutely in the Welsh coal mines even during the present time of stress.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member ought to be ashamed to say so.

Mr. Munsie: The men have agreed to join the Coal Miners' Federation.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Agreed to join under compulsion; we know what that means, "Get out and starve, or join our union." That is the attitude they take. To return to the Bill, I maintain that it is not right in any industry in which men are engaged to hand over to the men the right of appointing inspectors who will have the full powers of Government inspectors. It is not right that the Government should thus delegate its responsibilities in seeing that the law is obeyed. The inspectors whom it is proposed to appoint are men working on the mines. The responsibility belongs to the Government, but here we have a proposition to allow that responsibility to be handed over to anyone, to be appointed for any length of time.

Mr. Heitmann: They must have been mining for five years.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The point is that it is proposed to appoint men as inspectors with full powers of prosecuting under the Act, without even the necessity for reference to the district inspector or to the Government. We know full well that a large percentage of the accidents and fatalities which have occurred in our mines has been due to the neglect of the workmen in the mine.

Mr. Heitmann interjected.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is beyond question. Even the hon. member will admit that a large percentage of the accidents and fatalities has been due to men becoming over-confident, and neglecting to take the ordinary precautions against accident. Can you expect for one moment that these inspectors, seeing that they are subject to election by their fellow-workmen, are likely to prosecute those by whom they are elected to their positions?

Mr. Munsie: Certainly they will.

Member: Men are constantly ordered to undertake hazardous work. How otherwise are you going to have those responsible prosecuted?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why do not Government inspectors prosecute if that is the state of affairs?

Mr. Munsie: They do when they find out.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The men have a right, and the Government have a right to appoint inspectors at any time.

Mr. Munsie: They have not, and you know it.

Member: You know that if men object to do it they would get their walking ticket.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know absolutely to the contrary, that the men have a perfect right at stated intervals to appoint inspectors.

Mr. Munsie: And get the sack next day.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No fear.

Mr. Green: Do they ever do it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They have never done it.

Mr. Green: Why not?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know.

Mr. Green: Because they would get the sack.

Mr. Foley: There are honest men among the workers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Under the Bill it is proposed that these inspectors shall be appointed for two years, and shall then go up for re-election—by the unions, mark you. Their re-election is not subject even to the approval of the Minister.

Mr. Munsie: You have not read the Bill; the Minister's approval is necessary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But the Minister himself is a member of the union and can be called to book every time. He is bound to appoint these inspectors when elected by the union. Under this Bill the men have the full power to appoint inspectors, and when appointed the inspectors are subject only to being re-elected. They have absolutely the same power as Government inspectors, and I say it is neither right nor fair that this should be so. The Government can appoint as many inspectors as they like; but when they appoint these men, they are appointing men beyond their control. Inspectors should not be subject to control either by the unions on the one hand, or the Chamber of Mines on the other.

Their duty should be carried out subject in no way to the influence of either the workers or the companies. If this legislation passes, those men would have full power, equal with the power exercised by Government inspectors. Let me suggest that if this measure should become law there should be some qualification other than that provided, purely election by the union.

Mr. Munsie: So long as the man is a competent miner, that is all that is necessary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But he may not have passed any examination proving his competency. Engine-drivers have to pass examinations to show that they are competent and why should not these men be called upon to show that they have the requisite knowledge, and that their sole recommendation for the position is not membership of any union?

Mr. Munsie: Would you suggest that they should have a practical knowledge of mining?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly.

Mr. Munsie: Will you agree then?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I hope members will consider that aspect of the question, and even that they will go further, and see that the powers of these inspectors, if they are appointed, will be restricted to the giving of information to the district inspector.

Mr. Munsie: The Bill provides for that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That they shall not have power to prosecute of themselves, but shall act through the district inspectors every time. That is my argument. As I said before, I intend to vote against the Bill.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [5.56]: The leader of the Opposition has expressed himself strongly on this measure. The Bill may have all the faults which he seems to find in it, but personally I cannot find the same objection to the measure as a whole as he does. There has been for years and years an inclination on the part of Governments throughout the world, where mining is carried on, for the appointment of workers as inspectors in some shape or form. In this Bill it is proposed that the workers shall

have power to appoint men for two years to report on the mine. There are many objections to this. I think it is only fair to make the appointment of these workers' inspectors more in the nature of a permanent or semi-permanent appointment, so as to fit them for the position, and also to place them under the authority of the Minister. Take the case of the great fire at the Mt. Lyell mine, which followed immediately on an inspection of the mine by two workmen. There was some strong language used in connection with that fire. The mine manager was called a murderer, if I remember aright. Every form of epithet was heaped on everyone connected with this management. A Royal Commission was appointed to make searching inquiry. With what result? With the result it was found that a report had been sent in by two worker inspectors. Did those worker inspectors point out that the mine was in danger from fire? No; they did not. The fact that those worker inspectors had been enabled to put in that report exonerated the management from any blame attachable to the accident. Every member of this Chamber agrees that men's lives should be protected: that, I think, is beyond question.

Mr. Foley: There has been a lot of antagonism shown to proposals for the protection of men's lives.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think that miners would feel greater confidence in worker inspectors than in anyone else; that they would have greater confidence in their own men.

Mr. Munsie: So they would.

Mr. WILLMOTT: In my view, the district inspectors are at the present time looked upon more as managers. Complaints are rarely made to the district inspectors by the men working in the mines. The workers would be more inclined to point out to workers' inspectors any dangers which they may think exist. The proposal to appoint workers' inspectors is not by any means such an absolute novelty as some hon. members seem to think it. The British Royal Commission on mining recommended various grades

of inspectors drawn from the ranks of the workers. These inspectors will, of course, be directly under the district inspectors. It seems to me that the leader of the Opposition had an idea that under this measure the workers' inspectors would be free to harass the mine manager, to haul him before the court, and to do what they liked with him. I say that nothing of the sort is possible. The business of the workers' inspectors, I take it, will be to report anything they discover to the district inspectors, who in turn will, subject to authorisation by their head office, take what action they consider necessary. That is how I view the position to be created by this Bill. At the present time do the district inspectors haul the mine manager or the mine owner to court, or do they first of all lay the cause of complaint before their superior officers?

The Minister for Mines: As a matter of fact, our own inspectors now have no power to prosecute without first obtaining authority from the head office.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Exactly. And are these workers' inspectors, sub-inspectors as I may call them, to have greater authority than the district inspectors?

The Minister for Mines: That is the point.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes. I say again, according to my reading of the Bill the workers' inspectors will be absolutely under the control of the district inspectors, and will have to report to the district inspectors, who in their turn will report to the Mines Department before taking the step of bringing a mine manager or a mine owner before the court.

The Minister for Mines: We are not likely to give the workers' inspectors greater power than we have given the district inspectors.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That is my idea, and I feel I can speak with some authority on this phase of the question. As a district forest ranger for years I had many rangers under me, and those men did not harass the sawmill managers. If they found anything wrong they reported to me, as district forest ranger. It ap-

pears to me that the workers' inspectors to be appointed under this Bill will follow exactly the same course. In France workers' inspectors report to the workers themselves, which in my opinion is absolutely wrong, because under such conditions the natural result is to initiate straight away a fight between the workers and the management. The object of this measure, I take it, is not to do anything of that sort, but just the opposite. At all events, that is how I read the Bill. Belgium has workers' inspectors. A German commission of inquiry into this subject preferred the Belgian law to the French. The Belgian Act, which, so far as I have been able to learn from a study of it, is similar to ours, was recommended by the British Royal Commission. We all know that in many industries there is danger. The timber industry is a dangerous industry, and so is mining. But I contend that miners know the calling which they have adopted to be a more or less dangerous calling. They enter into it with their eyes open. It was never intended that the appointment of workers' inspectors should convert the mining industry into a kid-glove industry. I think the miners themselves would be the first to repudiate any such intention. They adopt their means of livelihood with a full appreciation of the fact that there is more or less danger in mining. But it is our duty to minimise the danger, as far as possible. After all said and done, it boils down to this, that we have a definite set of regulations governing mining. Have those regulations, up to the present, been administered with common sense? I take it that whoever may be appointed workers' inspectors, no matter how many of them may be appointed, the regulations will still have to be administered with common sense, because any regulations would be utterly useless and unworkable unless so administered. It must not be forgotten, either, that in the general rules there is one which provides that the application of the rules shall be so far as is reasonably practicable. The inclusion of the words "reasonably practicable" affords an absolute safeguard to mine managers and mine owners, because

if they are brought to court and can prove that any demand of a district inspector is not reasonably practicable they must win their case. Those words constitute a complete safeguard against the harassing of owners and managers. After all, it is the Minister and his staff who will be responsible. The State Mining Engineer himself and all the district inspectors will be responsible for any action taken by the workers' inspectors. There is another phase of the question. In outlying districts the workers' inspectors would not be occupied for perhaps more than one or two days in a week. I am speaking now of districts which the district inspector may visit only twice a year. Inspection only twice a year, I contend, is absolutely farcical inspection.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Are there gold mines which are inspected only twice a year?

Mr. WILLMOTT: There are at the present time, to my knowledge, in outlying districts mines which are inspected only twice a year, because the district inspectors cannot possibly get over the large area of country which they have to cover. The appointment of workers' inspectors would result in more or less continuous inspection, which, I take it, is what we desire. Personally I should like to see a slight amendment to provide that the workers' inspectors must have had five years' underground experience immediately prior to their appointment. I should be sorry to see workers' inspectors appointed from among men who have been out of mining for some years. We all know that the man who drops out of an industry gets behind the times. In conclusion, I wish to express the opinion that there is every chance of this Bill being administered with common sense, because the workers' inspectors will have no more power to harass mine owners and mine managers than the district inspectors have to-day. In fact, if I may be excused an Irishism, the workers' inspectors will have even less power to harass than have the district inspectors, who have none at all. Is it to be supposed that the district inspectors will suddenly give way to the workers' inspectors, as

has been suggested? I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

*Sitting suspended from 6.12 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [7.30]: In supporting the second reading of the Mines Regulation Bill I am rather sorry that the Minister did not submit a bigger measure for the consideration of the House, but I am pleased to know that he has gone a long way towards keeping the promise he made at the beginning of the session that no legislation of a contentious nature should be brought forward. When I listened to the speech of the leader of the Opposition, I thought that if that speech was in any way to be taken as the nature of the opposition that was going to be given to the measure, I had never heard a more feeble effort against any Bill on the part of the hon. member. In the course of his remarks the hon. member said he was going to oppose the Bill, and usually when he opposes a measure he endeavours to give to the House some reason for that opposition. On this occasion however he gave none at all. He said that it was very hard to reply to the arguments used by the Minister for Mines. In that I agree with him. It is exceedingly hard to find any arguments against the reasonableness of the measure. The hon. member asked whether it was reasonable to appoint men from the ranks of unionism to say what should be the conditions under which men should work in a mine, and then he went on to point out as he usually does when he speaks of unions, that the members of those unions were imbued with the worst possible motives, just as if those men had no brains or no thought for anything else except the benefit that would accrue to them. In replying to that argument I can only say it is most reasonable to expect that from the ranks of unions we can get men well enough versed in mining to give to the present Government inspectors much of that assistance which will enable them as Government inspectors to carry out the wishes of the Ministry in power. Then, again, if from the ranks of the unions which the

leader of the Opposition criticises, there cannot be got men who are well versed in mining, men who are sufficiently intelligent and honest to assist the inspectors in the way that the Bill desires that they shall be assisted, I would like to ask the hon. member where the present managers of the mines, the present underground managers and the present shift bosses engaged in mining in this State all came from. Were they originally bank clerks in the City or did they come from the ranks of carpenters and joiners or tinsmiths? No. The mining companies which wanted to work their mines under the best possible system and from the view-point of profit and good working, went to the only place from which it was possible to draw the best men, namely, the ranks of the men. When we speak of the rank and file of miners in this State I am glad to say that 99 per cent. of our miners are connected with the unions, and it is interesting to know that these men have not been forced into the unions. I hope that the day will never come when men will be forced to become unionists, and I trust that they will always join voluntarily, recognising that they will have the opportunity of bettering the conditions of their labour which is the only capital they possess. When the leader of the Opposition was speaking against the measure he said that the present Act gave to the men the right to make periodical inspections. Interjections came freely from this side of the House and they were made because of the fact that most of the members sitting on this side represent mining constituencies and because also they have had at one time or another the opportunity of knowing how that particular provision works. I have a lively recollection of what took place when I took some action against the conditions which existed in a mine that I was working in and which I considered were not as they should be. I did not do as my friend thinks all unions do, that is to raise an argument and bring all the men out on strike and so stop the industry. In a constitutional way I brought the matter under the

notice of the manager and when the manager took no heed of the claims of the individual men, then it was brought before the union, and under a certain section of the existing Act an inspection of the mine was made. That inspection was made at 4 o'clock one day and when I went to work at midnight I was politely told that there would be no more candles for me on that mine, nor would there be on any other if that particular manager could help it. Next day I went to an adjoining mine and the underground manager for whom I had worked previously told me that if I could get a party of men together he would give me a job. I got that party together, but as soon as I took them to the mine I found there was nothing there for me to do. I went to that mine for eight shifts and at last the underground manager told me that it would be as well for me to look for a job somewhere else because I could not get one there. That was only because I took advantage of the existing Act and in a constitutional way attempted to get redressed what I considered was a wrong. If this instance is not definite enough for the hon. member I do not know the meaning of definiteness. Once a month there is the opportunity of an inspection being made, and I venture to assert that in regard to many mines in this State which are inspected, an adverse report in regard to them, made by any man who may be appointed to carry out the inspection, will make it difficult for that man to keep his job. It will mean that that man on losing his job will have to tramp perhaps a couple of hundred miles in search of another. He would be compelled to leave his house for which perhaps he might have paid a few pounds, and a small house is as much to a man earning small wages as a mansion might be to a man possessed of great means. He would have to endeavour to get a job somewhere else and in many instances before that man arrived at the next town word would have gone along to say that he was an undesirable person to give work to. There are hon. members in this Chamber who

have been associated with cases—there is an hon. member on either side of me at the present time—who can bear me out in this regard. The member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) and the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) both appeared in a case in regard to which the men who gave evidence were not in employment on the particular mine two months after the conclusion of the proceedings. The leader of the Opposition said that men on the goldfields have to risk nothing. I can assure him that they have to risk a great deal and a good deal more than men on the coastal districts. So far as my knowledge of men engaged in the goldmining industry goes, their association with unionism has forced them to the conclusion that it is better to sacrifice something in the interests of all. If I thought for a moment that a section in the present Act gave the men a sense of security in the event of their bringing a case before the mine owners, I would not ask for the appointment of check inspectors. But I know that if the present Bill becomes law check inspectors are not going to harass the mine managers, nor do I think their appointment will impose an extra one penny burden on the mining industry. I can assure hon. members that we who represent mining constituencies are just as anxious that the mining industry shall go ahead, for; should the mining district wane at all we will wane with it. Check inspectors are going to give the present inspectors a better opportunity of doing their work. We all know that this is a country of great distances. I consider that in Western Australia we have some of the brightest and best and thoroughly honest mine inspectors, in fact the best that Australia can boast of, but the facilities afforded them to do their work are not there. Even if the State engaged the services of five more inspectors, under the same conditions the work could not be done as well as would be the case if check inspectors were appointed in certain districts. What to a Government inspector on a casual visit would appear to be unsafe ground, a check inspector with

an intimate knowledge of the mine would definitely recognise to be safe, and would so report to the Government inspector, who could then use his discretion. The advantage of this sound local knowledge lies in the fact that it would very often prevent hardship in regard both to the men working in the mine and the proprietors of the property. Again, who is in a better position to judge of the conditions in respect to ventilation and dust than would be the workmen's inspector? When the Government inspector makes a periodical visit there may be at the moment a complete absence of either firing or boring, and in these circumstances that inspector would probably get a wrong impression of the conditions of the mine. In this regard again the check inspector, with his knowledge of the conditions that usually obtain, would be able to guide the Government officer to a truer conclusion as to precautions required against dust. So, too, in regard to ventilation, the man who puts in the whole of his time going round a circumscribed area is in a much better position to know what is required. The maintenance of our sanatorium is going to involve an enormous amount of money, and we want check inspectors, with their personal and immediate knowledge of a district and the local conditions in any mine, to help us keep our miners out of the sanatorium. If my friends who have not followed mining would but take these matters into consideration and have regard to the wonderful unanimity existing among all classes of mining workers in respect to these questions, they would at least modify their opposition to the Bill. We who represent the mining industry have been put here to fight for this principle. It is a principle well worth fighting for, and if the leader of the Opposition indulges in the taunt that we are doing it at the behest of the unions, I say more power to the unions for having this matter so much at heart. If unions were formed for that purpose alone they have not been formed in vain. Why should we not have workmen's inspectors in mining, seeing that in the farming districts there obtains a system of inspection by fellow

workers? For instance, when a farmer requires an advance from the Agricultural Bank, he has to furnish a certificate signed by his neighbour and showing that certain conditions laid down by the bank have been complied with. On those certificates the Agricultural Bank will advance money or, it may be, purchase stock costing hundreds of pounds.

Mr. Thomson: The farmer pays for it.

Mr. FOLEY: Yes, but the point is that before his request for assistance is granted he must show a check by his neighbour. I contend that the necessity for check inspection in mining is far greater than it is in the agricultural industry. Check inspectors are to be found in some coal mines, and in those mines it is necessary for every face to be examined before the men go to work. We are asking nothing like that in regard to the gold mines, in the biggest of which the faces are so far distant from the main shaft that a man going on at eight o'clock has sometimes an hour's walk in front of him before reaching his face. The conditions as between gold mines and coal mines are altogether different, but very often the necessity for inspection is greater in the former than in the latter. Notwithstanding the proposed appointment of these workmen inspectors, the district inspectors will still have control. That is specially provided for. On the subject of the five years' experience, I think the Bill provides a reasonable means of appointment. A man does not lose his knowledge of mining when he leaves a mine. According to my friends opposing the Bill, a man who is out of mining for six months would be debarred from inspectorship, notwithstanding that he might be the most competent man obtainable. But it must be remembered that when we have a man appointed by an organised body of men, he has not only to satisfy the union as to his qualifications but, if in the execution of his duty he is unduly harsh, either to the company or to the men, we may rest assured that those men will have something effectual to say. I am quite sure that the men appointed would have sufficient courage to deal impartially with unionist or non-

unionist, worker or employer. The leader of the Opposition declared there never had been a case of an inspector bringing men to book. As a matter of fact every week in the year we find men are being summonsed, and frequently fined or punished in other ways, for some little technical breach of the Mines Regulation Act. For the slightest breach under the Mines Regulation Act the inspectors have to get the consent of the Minister before prosecuting. That being so, is it likely that the Minister would give to the workmen's inspectors greater powers than he gives to his own inspectors? I say no. The workmen's inspectors, by their superior knowledge of local conditions, would be able to materially assist the district inspectors in the discharge of their duties. If we can secure this class of inspection the lives of our miners will be lengthened and the conditions under which they work underground will be considerably improved. Yet the Bill will not impose one penny extra impost on the mining industry. I trust the measure will be carried through both Houses.

On motion by Mr. O'Loughlen debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1915-16 and recommending appropriation.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1915-16.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply for receiving the annual financial statement, Mr. McDowall in the Chair,

The PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [S.2] said: Once again it has fallen to my lot to deliver the annual Budget, the fifth which I have laid before the House and the 26th financial statement in the history

of the government of Western Australia. When introducing my last Budget I reminded the House that we were assembled in the shadow of a great national crisis, the like of which had never been known in the history of mankind, and that coupled with this great calamity, we were experiencing at the same time within our borders a drought of unique severity. It was intimated then that our circumstances called for plain and straight treatment, and that while every economy must be exercised yet, on the other hand, the utmost would be done to conserve the foodstuffs and supplies of our country and provide work for our people. Nearly a year has elapsed since then, probably the most momentous year we have ever experienced. One of our great difficulties, that of the drought, is practically solved, and we are looking forward with confident expectation to a wheat yield of approximately 20 million bushels. Coupled with this there is increased activity in mining. As a result of the copious rains on the goldfields, feed and water for stock are plentiful and many localities, long believed to contain payable ores which could not be exploited through adverse natural conditions, are now being tested with encouraging results. So far as the State's internal resources are concerned and apart from the effect that a restricted borrowing policy, coupled with the advent of the war will have upon the further development of our industries, our condition may be stated to be generally satisfactory, chiefly wrought by the exceedingly good season with which we are now being blessed.

#### *The European War.*

The other calamity referred to, which after all might be a blessing in disguise, has passed from the crisis stage into a settled condition, the outcome of which it is impossible at present to foresee. The great European war has now run its course for over one year, leaving ruin and desolation in its train. Into the world's arena the Empire is pouring its men and its money in the

hope of stemming the onslaughts of German barbarism and winning for the nations a permanent peace. Into the fight Australia generally has thrown itself whole-heartedly and Western Australia particularly has done its share in sending to the front the flower of its manhood and maintaining its numbers there. Up to Thursday, the 2nd September, we had sent away 174 officers and 7,367 men, while at the same time there were in camp another 28 officers and 3,657 men, the grand total being 202 officers and 11,024 of other ranks, or an aggregate of 11,226 men. This, I claim, is a very creditable condition of affairs, and although we are sacrificing on the altar of Empire much of what we expected would in future form the mainstay of our nation, yet on the other hand we are building a monument of imperishable fame and one that will fittingly mark our entrance into nationhood.

#### *Loan Flotation Prospects.*

It is to the war, therefore, that we owe most of our present difficulties. Unquestionably the drought has seriously embarrassed us, but the country's natural resources are so buoyant that we might easily have set a period to this condition had not it been complicated by the advent of the war, and a consequent limitation of our financial supplies from the Mother country, and a dislocation of trade conditions. When the loan markets of the old land were closed against the States, we had to open negotiations with the Federal Government to secure necessary funds with which to carry on, and as a result it will be remembered that out of a total loan to the States of £18,000,000 we in Western Australia were fortunate enough to secure £3,100,000, on which our developmental works are proceeding at the present time, but which are only sufficient to carry us on till approximately the end of November. As to what arrangements will be made to carry on when our present supplies are exhausted, it is as yet premature to speak. In connection with the present Budget, I am introducing it earlier than any simi-

lar statement which has been presented to the House during the last 14 years at least. That remark is for the benefit of the leader of the Opposition, who made some complaint this afternoon. Moreover, our future policy in relation to loan borrowing will not be quite determined until after the State Treasurers and the Federal Prime Minister have conferred on the matter early next week in Melbourne, whither I shall proceed on Saturday next. This much however is clear, that money is primarily needed for the successful prosecution of our Empire's cause, and whatever is available to us must be made to last as long as possible, and to yield the very best value for every penny expended.

#### *Need for Economy.*

Economy, therefore, will be the dominant note of my deliverance this evening, not the economy of fanaticism which might bring chaos and unnecessary suffering in its train, but rather an economy, having due regard to efficiency and the maintenance of the various activities of the State at a proper standard; this in the sure and certain belief that we in common with the rest of the Empire shall shortly emerge from the present trying difficulties which, in view of the resources of the State, might be regarded as only temporary. For this reason, therefore, an economy which would mean a reckless cutting down of any of our State services or public utilities is to be deprecated, as it would create a degree of distress and exhaustion through unemployment which would not be justified in such a State as this and the bad effects of which we might feel for years after the immediate cause had been removed. Therefore while every economy must be exercised, it must be done in such a way as will provide the greatest good for the greatest number until the principal factors of our present distress have been removed, and the State's recuperative powers have restored our economic conditions to their former equilibrium.

#### *Financial Considerations.*

As in the case of last year's Budget, I on this occasion propose to be briefer than usual, and to confine my remarks principally to the financial considerations, leaving the work of the various departments to the respective Ministers to deal with in detail. I claim that at no time in the history of the State has any Colonial Treasurer been faced with greater difficulties than those which present themselves at the present juncture. Since the war broke out just over 12 months ago, the London money market has been practically closed to State borrowing, and the prospects of raising money on the Australian money market to-day are far from bright, especially in view of the recent Australian war loan, and the prospect of a further war loan, which will absorb some millions of surplus money. I mention this matter, not merely to show the difficulty in obtaining loan funds, but, in the case of the Australian war loan, to emphasise the future possibilities as affecting our revenue earnings, this of course being common to all the States. I fully appreciate the fact that our first consideration must be the finding of ways and means to provide our quota for the defence of the Empire, and the raising of the men and equipment necessary will mean a tremendous demand on the people of Australia. I am not mentioning this as a criticism of the war loan raised by the Federal authorities, but on the contrary I agree that this was a necessary and wise and proper course to pursue. But the withdrawing of this money must necessarily affect the financial position of the States. The Commonwealth was not previously a competitor on the Australian money market, and its entry into the market will now mean that so much less cash will be available to the States to carry on their public works. Over and above this effect, it must be recognised that a proportion of this money will be withdrawn from other forms of investment and this will undoubtedly affect the revenue earnings of our State activities, such as railways, etc.

*Urgent Requirements.*

It is well known in commercial circles that many trading and other concerns have had to cease or restrict operations as a result of the war and the restrictions placed on the money market. On top of these difficulties, demands for financial assistance have been received by the Government from sources outside the ordinary channels of State requirements. How we can continue to meet these demands and provide for the urgent requirements of the State I am, I regret to say, unable at the present juncture to see. The balance of the Commonwealth loan receivable up to the 15th October next will, in all probability, carry the State on until about the end of November. On Saturday next, I shall leave for Melbourne for the purpose of attending the conference of Treasurers to consider ways and means of financing the individual States and to meet the present situation. Until then this problem must remain unsolved. With a view to encouraging our own people to assist the State in the directions indicated, we recently agreed to increase the rate of interest on Savings Bank deposits from 3 per cent. to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and to pay 4 per cent. on deposits fixed for 12 months or over, and also to issue Treasury bills for two years and upwards carrying  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest, payable half-yearly. These terms and bills are now available to the people and I strongly urge that they be taken up if the people wish to maintain the development of their own State and continue the industries and facilities so essential to its progress and stability.

*Financial Transactions, 1914-15.*

I would now draw the attention of hon. members to the statement of revenue and expenditure for the last financial year. It will, of course, be recognised that a reliable forecast of the year's revenue and expenditure was more than usually difficult owing to the uncertainty of seasonal conditions. The war also was an important factor, and one which could not be overlooked in its probable affect on the finances of the State. I estimated a total

revenue of £5,307,782, whereas the actual amount received, as set out in the returns placed before hon. members, was £5,140,725. Therefore, I over-estimated the revenue by £167,057. The variations between the individual estimates of revenue and the actual receipts are detailed in the return No. 1. It will be seen that the principal item over-estimated was Railways £154,238, and this I attribute mainly to the complete failure of the harvest and the partial cessation of the timber export industry. There was also a loss of Commonwealth revenue of £9,213, due to the estimated population on the 31st December last not being realised. The decrease of £34,911 under reimbursements was due to a shortage of £21,419 in recoup of interest by the Agricultural Bank, which amount is still due by that institution to revenue; also £6,013 under payment by the Commonwealth for police services rendered, the balance being made up of items of a general nature as detailed in the Public Accounts. Might I interpolate that for the purpose of this expenditure on the police we have been called upon, on account of the war, to provide for services for which no payment is expected. In the Railway Department alone last year it meant something between £14,000 and £15,000 that we had to provide in the way of assistance to the military authorities. Over and above that, in dues and charges in connection with transports, when calling at our various ports, we have lost something between £11,000 and £12,000 a year. Generally speaking, this State has undertaken its share of the duty in providing facilities, which are at our hands, for the Federal authorities to the tune of between £30,000 and £40,000 during last year.

*Underestimates for 1914-15.*

Amongst the underestimates of revenue the principal items are probate duty, £10,156, which is always an impossible item to properly fix, stamp duty £4,398, land revenue £49,609, harbour dues £17,234, and State steamers £23,919. On the expenditure side of the account I estimated to spend £5,647,075, but the ac-

tual disbursements were £5,706,542, or £59,467 more than I anticipated. The gross excess expenditure under the Ministerial heads totalled £124,900, and the expenditure below the estimate was £65,433. The principal item appears in the return of "Works and Industries £107,051." I think this is in Return No. 1. In looking into the details of this, I find that it was accounted for by the additional expenditure of £110,044 on the State sawmills, £1,388 on State quarries, £30,432 on the State implement works, less £30,320 upon various works and building items.

#### *Overestimates for 1914-15.*

The overestimates total £65,433, which is represented by savings in the various departments. The final results of the year's operations show an excess of expenditure over revenue to the extent of £565,817, which added to the deficit of £469,265 of the previous financial year makes a total deficit of £1,012,742 on June 30th last, being £226,523 more than I had estimated. The excess of £226,523 more than I had estimated and the deficit of the year £565,817 are due to the decline in the following revenue items, when compared with the expenditure of the previous financial year—land tax £9,768 decline, income tax £1,345 decline, stamp duty £12,654 decline, land revenue £2,720 decline, mining revenue £4,798 decline, railway revenue £215,523 decline, tramway revenue £2,708 decline, State batteries £13,146 decline, water supply £11,103 decline, harbour dues £32,253 decline, and for other public works, fees of offices, etc., £41,518, or a total loss of revenue in comparison with the previous year of £347,536. We received under the financial agreement with the Commonwealth £6,707 less than I had estimated. We also lost interest on transferred properties of £2,970, making a grand total of loss of revenue which we should have received of £357,213; less increases on probate and dividend duty over and above that previously received of £10,843, or a net shortage of £346,370.

#### *Increased Expenditure for 1914-15.*

On the expenditure side however, the following items show, when compared with the previous year's figures, increases as follow—special Acts (Interest and Sinking Fund) £164,555, Land Improvement Loan Fund £25,000 (that is, the payment from revenue to loan for the purpose of recouping expenditure from loan on services in connection with the land taken up and paid for to the Lands Department, which funds cannot be operated upon, and in connection with which the Government of the day made provision for its establishment, but afforded no means of operating on it), Education £8,074, charities £22,083, and Police Department £7,631, making a grand total of £227,343 increase under this heading. I want to repeat the headings. They are interest and sinking fund charges, land improvement loan fund (which is practically transferred from revenue to loan), education, charities, and police department, making a total of £227,343 additional expenditure which had to be met last year. Added to these latter figures, £227,343 and £346,000 as a decline in general revenue, the total is arrived at of £573,713, which represents approximately the gross deficit on general revenue for the financial year, these figures being exclusive of those in trading concerns.

#### *Revenue Statement for 1914-15.*

Reference to the detailed revenue statement for the year 1914-15 will show that departmental votes as a whole, exclusive of trading concerns, and omitting items totalling £227,343, show a saving as follows. I want this to be marked, for a saving has been effected, notwithstanding the continual statements that no economies have been introduced into the public departments. The Colonial Treasurer is responsible for a saving of £28,319, the Minister for Works for £13,983, the Minister for Agriculture for £14,055, the Minister for Mines for £18,249, the Minister for Railways for £69,272, the Attorney General for £29.

Mr. George: Is that all; how did he manage it?

The PREMIER: The Minister for Works and Water Supply was responsible for a saving of £79,439, and the Colonial Secretary for £36,652, making a grand total of saving introduced to the departments by the Ministers of no less a sum than £259,998. I hope we shall hear no further of the assertions which have been made that economies have not been introduced into the departments.

#### *Deficit for 1914-15.*

If we deduct this from the gross total of £573,713 a net deficit will be shown of £313,715, which I claim is, in reality, in comparison with previous years the actual amount we went to the bad last year owing to the loss of revenue, over which we had no control, and also to the increased expenditure under special Acts in particular, and in other directions in which increased expenditure was absolutely necessary.

#### *Cash Expenditure on Trading Concerns for 1914-15.*

Hon. members will be interested to hear particulars in regard to the cash expenditure in connection with trading concerns. This cash expenditure was about £756,859 for the year, and the cash receipts total £577,030, leaving a cash shortage of £179,829, which forms a part naturally of the year's deficit of £565,817. The cash shortage of £179,829 on trading concerns is more than covered by the stock in hand to the 30th June last. This is valued at £184,516. I will give further details in connection with the position of trading concerns later on. I merely want to impress on members that the stock held on the 30th June last by the trading concerns was more than sufficient in value to make up for the actual shortage in cash received by the Treasury to date. I am speaking of the financial year which closed on the 30th June.

Mr. George: That is why we want to see the balance sheets.

The Minister for Works: We made a profit of £25,000 on the sawmills.

The PREMIER: A careful review of the figures I have quoted will reveal that whilst the ordinary revenue of the State declined by £346,370, and the expenditure on certain statutory and essential items had increased by £227,343, the Government were able partly to meet that provision by effecting economies in the various departments to the tune of £259,998, or in round figures £260,000.

#### *Introduction of 44 hour week.*

It will be remembered that in consequence of the difficulties created by the failure of our harvest, and partial or total closing down of several of our industries, together with our failure to obtain additional funds by means of taxation, thus causing financial stress during the previous year, the necessity arose for curtailing public expenditure in every possible direction; and with a desire to prevent any further unemployment the 44 hour week was introduced throughout the Government service, and the earnings of the salaried staff and the wage earners were likewise reduced by approximately 7.89 per cent. This innovation was established in pursuance of a genuine desire on the part of the Government to make its funds go as far as possible in providing employment for all, the alternative being a policy of retrenchment, and this innovation was effected with the concurrence of a majority of those concerned. It was estimated that approximately £75,000 per annum would be made available by this means. That is to say, we should be saving an expenditure of £75,000 if the arrangement were continued for the full year, and this £75,000 could be made available for expenditure in other directions, and in finding employment for those who were less fortunate than others who had permanent positions in the Government service. Since the change, however, the Government have been bombarded with continual requests from various sections of the civil service for a reversion to the old conditions. These requests were so re-

peated and persistent that we have agreed to revert to the old conditions as desired. As to what bearing this will have on the Government's attitude in future in regard to retrenchment, which was laid down as the accompanying condition to full time service, has not yet been determined by the Government. We have not yet determined upon retrenchment in any of our public services by reason of our reversion to the full time. But the condition of too many men and too little work, due to the closing down, wholly in some cases, and in part in others, of many of our industries is not now so acute as it was in the early stages of the war, for even though money is scarce and may possibly become scarcer, the problem of unemployment has been considerably relieved by the activity resulting from the prospects of a good season, which activity is not confined to the agricultural districts, but also extends to the mining areas, where prospecting has received a fillip by reason of the bounteous rains.

#### *Government Retrenchment Policy.*

The fact that a large number of vacancies in our public service have been created through the enlistment of so many men has enabled the readjustment of offices and officers to be made, and rendered possible the utilisation of the services of many who would otherwise have been superfluous, and been available for transfer or retrenchment. Notwithstanding this consideration, however, the fact remains that if we find any of our services overmanned, or no work available through what is really necessary being completed, or funds running short, a policy of retrenchment will undoubtedly have to be faced. Speaking of retrenchment, during the last financial year we have been engaged in amalgamating and consolidating the departments of the service, and at the same time putting the finances wherever possible on a more satisfactory basis. In this direction, part of the Savings Bank investments which had resulted in a considerable loss annually have been considerably altered, with the result that, instead of a loss of £7,500 a year, a profit of

£1,000 per annum is now being made. Many of the Savings Bank agencies held by the associated banks at principal towns have been transferred to departmental officers, with the result that a considerable saving in expenditure has been effected. There are also other economies, which need not be referred to just now, in this connection. Branches of the Savings Bank have been opened at Geraldton, Northam, Narrogin, Katanning, and Albany, and at these centres the work of the service has been consolidated by transferring the work of the out-stations, with the exception of that performed by clerks of courts, to the Treasury; and here again a considerable annual saving has been effected. During last year the pay offices of the Agricultural, Lands, Audit, and Mines Departments have been closed, and the work transferred to the Treasury; which resulted in certain officers being made available for transfer.

#### *Public Service.*

Fortunately it was possible to place these officers in vacant positions, by reason of many civil servants going to the war, otherwise those officers would have been retrenched. The present seems to be an opportune time for continuing the policy of amalgamating and consolidating the financial branches of the service, in view of the number of vacancies caused by enlistment, and thus avoiding wholesale retrenchment which would occur under other conditions; and therefore this policy will be continued. The method of rendition and payment of creditors' accounts has been considerably altered, both for the benefit of the State and that of the creditors themselves. One account is now sent in to each department for the whole of the goods supplied monthly, in lieu of the old practice of submitting an account for each requisition. This has resulted in a very large reduction of the number of accounts passed for payment, and during the present year it is our intention to further consolidate the work by, if possible, taking over the payment of accounts from some other departments. This, however, will largely depend on our being able to provide the necessary

accommodation in the Treasury offices. As the result of these alterations a saving of something like £18,000 per annum has been effected.

#### *Financial Results of Trading Concerns.*

To revert for a moment to trading concerns accounts. I have mentioned several times—and I think hon. members are aware of it—that the cash basis cannot be accepted as evidence of the financial results of trading concerns. The profit and loss statement is the only thing to be relied on for the disclosure of the correct position. It is well known that many private companies and firms in this State are working on fairly large overdrafts, and yet are making good profits. If any one were to analyse the cash transactions of those concerns, taking into consideration the bank overdraft but leaving out the assets representing the overdraft, they would show that such business concerns were bankrupt. But such persons would be laughed at, naturally; and what applies to those businesses applies also to the State trading concerns. The following items of the State trading concerns have been paid out of Consolidated Revenue and no cash return has yet been received for them:—Stock on hand £184,516—

Hon. J. Mitchell: What is that?

The PREMIER: Timber held by the State sawmills and stocks held by the State Implement Works and other State trading concerns. There is also sundry debtors £76,004. These two items total £260,520; and, as I mentioned before, the cost of these has been paid from Consolidated Revenue. If these stocks and sundry debtors accounts had been debited to capital account, or else to stores suspense account, somewhat after the manner suggested last session by the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner), the deficit on Consolidated Revenue account would have been reduced as at the 30th June, 1915, by £260,520. From the standpoint of the State, this would not have made any difference. The same amount of cash would have been required to carry on our operations. The only difference resulting would have been to

directly charge these items temporarily against loan in the form of suspense account, instead of their being charged against Consolidated Revenue and added to the deficit and by that means drawn from loan account. After all, a deficit on consolidated revenue account is financed by loan. It would have meant that our deficit for the year would have been reduced by £260,520. At the same time, the conditions are such that it does not seem advisable at the present juncture to make the alteration which was suggested by the member for Irwin. I personally feel that it would be desirable to introduce first of all an amendment, on a somewhat comprehensive scale, of our Audit Act, and there make provision for the proper financing and auditing of our trading concerns, apart altogether from our other businesses.

#### *Form of Estimates.*

In submitting the Revenue and Expenditure Estimates for the financial year 1915-16, I have paid some attention to the form of the Estimates, with a view to showing on the revenue side under separate headings the receipts from departments, business undertakings, and trading concerns. On referring to the Estimates, hon. members will find those matters set out on pages 8 and 9. On the expenditure side all departmental expenditure is separate and distinct from that of trading concerns, my desire in this direction being to give the House, now and in the future, the fullest information possible, and to enable me to prepare comparative statements with some degree of accuracy in the future. I have also adjusted the sub-headings so as to make them correspond, in order that hon. members may readily compare cash receipts and expenditure in each case. I want to emphasise the word "cash," as only payments made and cash actually received are accounted for. Stocks held by and bills due to such concerns are not taken into account in Treasury concerns. The Estimates as now presented, by the separating of Governmental receipts and expenditure, business undertakings, and State trading concerns

in the form I have presented them, will permit members to readily see the cash receipts each month, and at the close of each financial year the cash receipts under each of the sub-heads set out—the sub-heads corresponding on the revenue as well as on the expenditure side.

#### *Estimated Revenue, 1915-16.*

I estimate a gross revenue of £5,504,259, leaving an estimated deficit for the year of £241,887. If this result is realised we shall have met all current expenditure less payment to sinking fund £258,792, leaving a credit balance on that basis of £16,905. It is well to note this point, because frequently comparisons are made between the position of this State and that of others in the Commonwealth which make little or no provision for payments to sinking fund for redemption of debt. I want to emphasise that point, because payment into a sinking fund for redemption of debt during war time, or during times of stress such as the present, is held by the best financial authorities to be absurd. However, we have statutory provision for it, and it must be done. If it were not for that payment during the current financial year on account of redemption of debt, then, if my estimate proved to be correct, we should at the close of the year have paid our way and shown a surplus of something over £16,000. On reference to the general summary of revenue, on page 7 of the Estimates, it will be seen that the gross revenue for the last year was £5,140,725, as against an estimated gross revenue for this year of £5,504,259, representing an estimated increase of £363,534.

#### *Railways and Tramways.*

The principal item of increase, it will be noted, is in connection with railways and tramways, amounting to £199,210, which we have every reason to believe will, together with the other items enumerated, be realised. It might be urged that the estimated results of the operations of the Railway Department for the year are under-stated rather than over-stated, in

view of the increased railway mileage operated by the working railways and also in view of the fact that last year we had to carry a harvest of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million bushels whereas this year we estimate on having a harvest of something like 20 million bushels. It must, however, be borne in mind that owing to the dislocation of the timber industry, together with the fact that the carriage of the bulk of the material for the construction of the Trans-Australian Railway to the Kalgoorlie end has been completed, the earnings of the railway system will not increase to the extent that would otherwise have been the case. That is the increase we expect over the amount received from the railways last year, when we were carrying to Kalgoorlie heavy quantities of material for the construction of the Trans-Australian Railway, which will not be available this year, although we shall be carrying a bumper harvest.

#### *Departmental, Business Undertakings and State Trading Concerns.*

Further details in connection with the revenue are disclosed on pages 8 and 9 of the Estimates, where it will be observed revenue is divided into three sections, as mentioned previously—departmental, business undertakings, and State trading concerns. Under departmental £1,858,119 is estimated, or an increase of £76,258 over the actual revenue received last year. Business and trading concerns are estimated to produce £3,646,140, as against £3,358,804, the actual revenue for last year; a net increase of £287,276 being estimated. On reference to page 15 of the Estimates it will be seen that the estimated expenditure for the year shows a net increase of £39,604 over the actual expenditure for last year. Here let me say that if hon. members turn to the estimates of expenditure of the Colonial Secretary's Department they will learn of a rather remarkable happening. The expenditure for last year and the estimated expenditure for the current year balance each other to a pound—a coincidence which I think is not likely to occur again in the

framing of Estimates in any part of the world.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But this item is only an estimate.

The PREMIER: That is true, but I can assure the hon. member that the balancing of the two amounts was not known or detected until the Estimates had been finalised and printed. Only then was this discovery made. The principal item showing an increase is under special Acts, amounting to £149,475. The increase in the amount is due to interest on additional loan expenditure and additional sinking fund charges which commenced to accrue during this year. The Education Department shows an increase of £10,642. This, however, is to be expected, for the reason that if the State continues to develop and additional schools are opened, increased cost must of necessity result. It will also be noticed that the business and State trading concerns show a decrease in expenditure as compared with the previous year of £75,735. With regard to the estimated deficit for the year of £241,887, members will no doubt contend that this sum has been nearly reached during the first two months of the year. That is perfectly true, but I would point out for the information of hon. members that the bulk of the State's revenue is collected during the second six months of the year. As we expect a bumper harvest, it necessarily follows that there will be heavy increases in the State's revenue from the Railway Department, the State Steamship Service, the State Implement Works and the Water Supply Department as well as in land revenue and taxation generally. There will also be arrears of interest received by the Agricultural Bank, and increases in payments to the Department of Agriculture receivable during the second half of the year. As a matter of fact, our trying period will be from now until the end of December. Members may very easily become alarmed at the position as it will develop from month to month, until that time arrives; because until we receive the benefit of our harvest we shall not receive payment for work performed during the coming

months by the departments I have mentioned—principally the Agricultural Bank and the Departments of Agriculture, Water Supply, and Works, and of course the Railway Department. First of all, if hon. members care to go back and review the results of previous years, they will see that during the first months of the year, no matter what the conditions were, deficits invariably were shown, so that there is, in fact, no reason to question the estimated results for the current year on that basis. It is also the intention of the Government to watch carefully the financial conditions; and, if it is found necessary, further economies will be introduced. The matter will require careful handling, otherwise the reduction of expenditure may easily be more than off-set by a loss in revenue not only immediately but covering an extended period. Provision is made on the Estimates for grants in various directions, which grants may fairly be conditional on funds being available to permit payment. Further, it may be found necessary to reduce those grants below the amounts actually provided.

#### *Public Service Increments.*

We have not made provision on the Estimates for any increases in public service salaries, except in the case of junior officers under the Public Service Act who are in receipt of less than £156 per annum. While appreciating the apparent unfairness of such an action, which under other circumstances might be considered indefensible, it is simply the difficulties of the immediate future that have rendered such a course absolutely necessary.

#### *Workers' Compensation Fund.*

Hon. members will notice items throughout the Estimates for payments to the workers' compensation fund. The operations of this fund have proceeded satisfactorily. It is now over £18,000 in credit. As an instance of the saving resulting to the Government through the establishment of the fund, it may be stated that the saving on the premiums of the Fremantle Harbour Trust and the

State Steamship Service amount to date to nearly £2,000. An even better instance is the Public Works Department which has paid during the last two years 33 per cent. less for workers' compensation than formerly, the total payments for the two years being £10,241 16s. 6d., while the compensation paid for accidents amounted to £5,916 13s. 2d., showing a profit to the fund established by the Government of £4,325 3s. 4d. over and above the 33 per cent. reduction in premium payments.

#### *Loan Expenditure 1915-16.*

As I previously stated, it is difficult at the present stage for me to forecast the loan expenditure for the current financial year. It is usual to deal with the loan expenditure when introducing the financial statement but on this occasion I find it more difficult than is usually the case. The amount to be expended on loan works depends entirely on the financial arrangements to be determined by the conference of Premiers to be held in Melbourne on the 24th inst. When I know definitely the amount of money which will be made available, the Loan Estimates will be prepared and submitted to Parliament. It may be well, however, to issue a warning note that, owing to the tightness of the money market, the tremendous calls for war purposes, and the high rate of interest likely to be demanded, nothing but urgently necessary works can be continued or started during the present financial year. Not only is this likely to apply to public works but to financing Government institutions as well. The expenditure from general loan funds last year was £2,521,608 and the amount voted by Parliament was £2,853,798, showing a saving of £332,190 on the estimate.

Hon. J. Mitchell: A saving?

Mr. James Gardiner: Not a saving. It was that much less than the amount voted.

The PREMIER: Well that is a saving. The items showing surpluses, or in other words, a saving in expenditure are as follows:—Departmental £11,312, new railways £81,940, rails and fastenings

£35,791, land resumption £18,983, rolling stock (railways) £17,063, electric power station £90,592, Perth tramways £829, a total of £245,198; harbours and rivers £3,879, water supply and sewerage £77,256, development of goldfields and mineral resources £12,346, abattoirs cold storage, etc. £5,707, Agricultural Bank £78,388, roads and bridges and public buildings, etc. £25,160, State sawmills £1,230, State hotels, etc. £8,519, workers' homes £2,500, sundry other undertakings £272, a grand total of £465,767. On the other hand the following items disclosed excesses or increased expenditure over-estimate as under—Additions and improvements to opened railways £22,458, agricultural immigration £3,445, development of agriculture £2,263, assistance to settlers (net) £102,110, State Implement Works £2,945, brickyards £357, total £133,577. As regards the excess of £102,110 in respect to "Assistance to settlers," I desire to point out that this expenditure is net. The gross expenditure was £879,860 from which credits for amounts paid by merchants for wheat and flour, amounting to about £277,750, have to be deducted. The gross expenditure on this item is made up principally of the following:—Fodder, stores, fertilisers, machinery, etc., advanced to settlers £432,000, seed wheat £100,000, land rents £115,000, water rates £7,900, wheat acquired by the Grain and Foodstuffs Board for gristing etc. £224,960, a total of £879,860. The position then, so far as advances to settlers are concerned is as follows:—Estimated expenditure provided on Loan Estimates £500,000, actual expenditure £879,860, less payments for wheat and flour £277,750, leaving a net cash expenditure on this account for the year of £602,110, which amount was outstanding on the 30th June last.

#### *Loan Expenditure, 1914-15.*

Our Loan expenditure last year totalled £2,521,608 being, as previously stated, £391,402 less than was expended in the preceding year. Return 8 sets out the expenditure for the last four years. It will be noticed that the expenditure for last year included an amount of £602,110 for

assistance to settlers, which was the most unusual, though necessary, disbursement and which, I feel sure had very far-reaching effects upon that portion of the community deserving of assistance from the State. The amount actually advanced to settlers through the Agricultural Bank during the year was £271,612, making, with the amount previously advanced, a total disbursement of £3,361,158. The repayments during the year amounted to £41,893, leaving a net amount of £229,719 of new capital found for the bank. The total amount repaid to date is £799,993, leaving a balance due by borrowers to the bank as on the 30th June, 1915, of £2,561,165. The repayments last year, which I have mentioned as £41,893, did not meet the full amount of the interest due by the bank. It fell short by £28,000.

#### *Agricultural Bank Advances.*

I have an interesting return prepared showing the advances made by the Agricultural Bank and the repayments made by the settlers, and the net actual new cash found for the purpose of the bank for the years 1907-8 to and including the year 1910-11, and from the year 1911-12 to and including the year 1914-15. The statement has been made that we were not finding funds for the purpose of assisting the genuine settler. I think it is just as well to let the House and the country know the amount of new capital we had to find in the last four years for the purpose of assisting settlement and to compare it with the amount which was found during the four years preceding the advent of the present Government. During the four years 1907-8 to 1910-11, the advances made totalled £1,015,063, and the repayments totalled £458,786, which meant in the four years an amount of £556,276 of new capital found for the Agricultural Bank. Covering the similar period from 1911-12 to 1914-15, the present Government's term of office, we have made advances from the Agricultural Bank to the extent of £1,820,916, and repayments have been made totalling only £236,563. So that we have during our four years of office

found in new cash, in excess of the amount that has been repaid, no less than £1,584,352, as against £556,000 of our predecessors during the same period. This means that we have in four years found new money for the agricultural industry in excess of what was found by our predecessors in the same period of no less than £1,028,075.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You borrowed seven or eight millions.

The PREMIER: Of course. We have not been backward in borrowing. It has assisted in the development of the country. The hon. member generally complains about the Government not having rendered assistance to the agricultural community but, as I have just pointed out, we have lent, in the course of four years, a million pounds more than did the Government of which he was a member.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And you have spent more in building railways.

The PREMIER: Another item of expenditure under Loan Account was in connection with workers' homes, £97,500. Under railways and tramways we spent last year £693,118. The principal items included in this being additions and improvements £127,955, Wickepin-Merredin £11,823, Wongan-Mullewa £76,841, Boltgart extension £6,032, Wagin-Bowelling £47,084, Brookton-Kunjin £35,590, Yilliminning-Kondinin £56,152, Wyalcatchem-Mount Marshall £50,336, rolling stock £35,292, water supply £39,553, land resumption £14,282, Kukerin-Lake Grace £5,925, and Perth electric trams £22,908. There was also spent £149,865 on the construction of the power station at East Perth. We expended a further sum of £106,055 on the Fremantle harbour works. Further progress was made with the sewerage at Perth and Fremantle, £120,473 having been expended. On water supply we spent £127,669. A commencement was made with the preliminary work in connection with the new road and railway bridge near Fremantle and the work is now proceeding as quickly as possible as it is realised that a new structure has become absolutely necessary, but the question of completion will be a matter

of obtaining further loan money, of which, of course, at the present time there is no certainty.

### *Public Debt.*

Upon referring to Return No. 6 it will be seen that we commenced the year with a gross public debt of £34,420,181. Our raising on public works and undertakings account totalled £2,618,296 for the year, which increased the debt to £37,038,477, against which bonds for £8,200 and local stock for £7,635 were redeemed, thus reducing the debt to £37,022,622. While mentioning the loan raising for the past year, may I be permitted to correct what is, according to the Federal *Hansard* report, an unfortunate misstatement in connection with Western Australia in loan raising, made by the Federal Treasurer when submitting his financial statement last month. He first of all set out that the amounts advanced to Western Australia under the loan arrangement made last October was £2,066,604. That is correct, except that it included the payment made in July of £258,333, so that for the financial year ended 30th June last, the actual amount received from the Commonwealth was £1,808,331. Proceeding further, the Federal Treasurer stated the sums raised by the States during the financial year ended 30th June last for works, in addition to loans made to them by the Commonwealth, and stated that the amount raised by Western Australia, in addition to the amounts above stated, was £2,618,296. This would mean a total loan raised by Western Australia of £4,426,627. What has really happened is that by some unfortunate mistake the amount raised from the Commonwealth and the total amount raised from all sources, including that raised from the Commonwealth, have been given separately, whereas our total loan raising, including the Commonwealth loan, amounted to £2,618,296. The amount stated by the Federal Treasurer as being raised was in addition to the Commonwealth loan. In other words, we obtained from the Commonwealth £1,808,331, and in addition raised in London £154,000; in Australia by the

issue of inscribed stock £316,215, and by the issue of Treasury bills £339,750, thus making the total loan raisings £2,618,296.

### *The Sinking Fund.*

Against our total indebtedness we had £4,068,888 available in the sinking fund, being an increase of £376,785 for the year. In the Public Accounts the figures relating to the transactions and investments connected with the sinking funds can be gleaned. As a matter of fact in the returns hon. members will see detailed information supplied for the first time in connection with this fund. So far as last year is concerned the fund received £257,916 in contributions from revenue, also a net sum of £118,869 from investments after providing £16,500 for redemptions and expenses. It will be seen, therefore, that without statutory provision for a sinking fund contribution annually from Consolidated Revenue, the actual shortage on the year would have been £307,025. Applying the same to the present financial year, and accepting the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure as correct, it would result (after deducting sinking fund payments £265,447, which it is estimated will be the amount required to be paid in 1915-6) in the Consolidated Revenue showing a small surplus of £23,560. There are advantages and disadvantages in a sinking fund under present financial conditions.

Mr. George: You have got a pretty good sinking fund in the deficit.

The PREMIER: Yes, I will give it to the hon. member at any time. Looking at the position from the standpoint of the sinking fund trustees, it cannot be denied that there is a decided advantage to them in being able to purchase, with the sinking fund contributions, through the war depreciating investments, the State's or other Government stocks at a considerable discount, and thereby effecting, when the stock matures, a considerable saving of capital. But from the State's standpoint, with the tightness of the money market and the rate of interest, as advised by the Agent General, at possibly from 5 to 5½ per cent., it is

a decided disadvantage to the State to find, say, £260,000 per annum as a sinking fund contribution to hand over to the trustees to invest in the purchase of stocks at a discount. Under normal conditions it is a tremendous advantage to have these annual contributions to the sinking fund for the purpose of buying stock at a discount. That is one of the principal advantages. There are others, amongst them that of the trustees being in a position to purchase some of our floating stock on the eve of the flotation of a loan, for the purpose of obtaining a better return. Following this point, this money, I think, could be used to greater advantage by being returned to the State for urgent financial works, and by giving the sinking fund trustees Treasury bills or inscribed stock maturing before the date that the sinking fund will be required to redeem the stock for which it was created. That is essential, otherwise the proceeding would be unsafe. So long as the Treasury bills, or the inscribed stock, are issued so that they shall mature and be redeemed before the stock is redeemable, then the deal is perfectly safe; otherwise it would be unsafe.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There would be no sinking fund at all.

The PREMIER: The only difference is that instead of the sinking fund trustees purchasing stock already on the market, they would use the money to purchase our stock which we put on the market during the current year. It does not make the slightest difference; the hon. member does not know what he is talking about. Our sinking fund trustees purchase our own stock, hold that stock, and, while they hold it, we pay the interest as we would pay the original bondholders. Instead of that, during the present financial position it would be infinitely preferable that we should allow those persons to hold the stock at present, and use the money we are finding to purchase stock which we will have to put on the market next year to carry on our public works.

Mr. Willmott: At the same rate of interest?

The PREMIER: I do not say that. I asked the trustees at the outset to agree

to the cancellation of our own stock, which they hold, so as to relieve us of the payment of interest on this particular stock until after the war. But they pointed out that it would have a bad effect on our other stocks on the market.

Mr. James Gardiner: Why? We were holding our own stock.

The PREMIER: I hold the view that it would not. I made representations to the trustees, but they expressed a definite opinion on the matter, and in the circumstances I was not prepared to stress the point. But I feel that under existing conditions we are entitled to retain the cash we have for the purpose of materially assisting the welfare of the State, rather than use that cash to purchase stock with a view to some ultimate gain to the State. The present gain would far outweigh any ultimate gain.

Mr. George: Instead of reducing your indebtedness, you are going to increase it.

The PREMIER: It is not so. Cannot the hon. member understand that we must, of necessity, during this year, raise a certain amount of loan funds? If we can use our sinking fund contributions by getting the trustees to agree to purchase our stock which will be put on the market this year, we will not require the same amount of money from outside sources.

Mr. George: Can you get it from outside sources? That is the point.

The PREMIER: It is not the point. The hon. member does not understand the position. If we cannot get it, that is all the more reason why the money we have should be held by us. Last year £258,800 was paid from Consolidated Revenue as a sinking fund contribution, and in addition, about £115,800 as interest on the State's stock held by the sinking fund trustees, making a total of approximately £374,600. I intend approaching the sinking fund trustees and requesting them to make available this sum for State requirements in the manner mentioned.

Mr. James Gardiner: How many new loans have to bear sinking fund?

The PREMIER: Only one for the half year. The hon. member will discover that

in the Estimates. As I say, I intend approaching the sinking fund trustees with a request that they make available this sum for State requirements in the manner mentioned, namely, by issuing Treasury bills or inscribed stock for the amounts stated. This arrangement will only be a temporary expedient to enable us to overcome the financial difficulties existing at the present time, and when the war is over and finances become normal and money available in London, the Treasury bills or inscribed stock, as the case may be, can be redeemed out of a future loan.

Mr. James Gardiner: For the sinking fund you are going to give them fresh bonds?

The PREMIER: Yes, and that will make that amount available as a new loan rate.

Mr. George: Breaking your undertaking with all who subscribed to the loan.

The PREMIER: That is absurd; it could only originate with the hon. member. We practically pay them the cash, and the cash is transferred to the sinking fund trustees. It cannot be otherwise. But instead of buying existing stock, which only provides the cash for somebody else, some of the holders of our present stock, which we cannot be called upon to redeem until it matures—instead of buying before maturity we ask them to use the fund for the purpose of taking up new bonds.

Mr. James Gardiner: You can realise that to do that would mean, when it came to redemption, if there was any tightness in the market you could not redeem the stock you originally floated.

The PREMIER: But, as I pointed out, Treasury bills or inscribed stock must be issued in order that that should be redeemed prior to the date of the redemption of the loan. The money market may be so tight that we cannot redeem it, but that condition may arise in respect to all our loans.

Mr. George: It would be a deliberate breach of faith with the bond-holders.

The PREMIER: That is absolutely incorrect, and the hon. member ought to be

ashamed of himself for making such a statement publicly.

Mr. GEORGE: On a point of order, Can the hon. member tell me that I ought to be ashamed of myself? (To the Premier) Sit down, Sir. When I rise to a point of order it is customary that you sit down.

The Minister for Works: Is this customary when the Treasurer is delivering his annual Financial Statement?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will resume his seat.

Mr. GEORGE: I am told I ought to be ashamed of myself. I rise on a point of order to protest, and I am told by the Chairman to sit down.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, there is nothing in the point of order.

#### *Restriction of the Budget Speech.*

The PREMIER: Before I conclude, I wish to take this opportunity of explaining to hon. members that I decided, after careful consideration, to confine my remarks in connection with the Budget to financial considerations only.

Mr. GEORGE: I appeal to the Speaker.

The CHAIRMAN: You have allowed the Premier to proceed with his speech. You must take exception to my ruling at the time. You have not done so, and you have now no redress.

Mr. George: I will test that. You make the Premier behave himself.

The PREMIER: I appreciate the fact that it has been the invariable practice in the past of all Treasurers, including myself, to give a large amount of information detailing the activities of the various Government departments. Recognising that those interested in the welfare of the State generally, and in some of our industries in particular, such as mining, agriculture, and timber, naturally look for some reference in a Budget Speech to the condition of these industries, and while realising from the point of view of disseminating information to the public, not only here, but elsewhere, that this practice has something to commend it, nevertheless it appeared to me that it really over-

shadowed the greater question of finance. I am considering the advisability, therefore, of making this information available, either by publishing the remarks of each Minister when introducing his section of the Estimates, or a brief summary by each Minister of the operations of his departments, as an addendum to my Budget speech, which of course is always set up in pamphlet form for distribution outside the State. In my opening remarks I referred to the large number of men who have been and are being sent forward to the theatre of war from such a comparatively sparsely populated country as Western Australia, and while we have pride in their willingness to sacrifice their all for our protection, I think that the sympathy of this House should also be extended to those bereaved relatives and friends who have given up fathers, brothers, sons and other relatives who have fallen in a just cause, knowing full well that these men are fighting for their country that those who stay at home might live in comparative ease and security, working out their own destiny free from foreign domination. I now move the first item on the Estimates, namely—

*His Excellency the Governor, £1,540.*

*As to resumption of debate.*

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [9.16]: I would like to ask the Premier if he would be prepared to adjourn the debate until he returns from the Treasurers' Conference. It would be very difficult to proceed with it in his absence.

The Attorney General: Until after the war.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That would suit you very well, I think.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Seaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [9.17]: I admit it is rather difficult, and I recognise that members in criticising the financial position would naturally prefer that the Treasurer should be present to listen to any remarks which might be made, and for my own part I should prefer to be present to hear the criticism in order, if necessary, to reply to it personally. At the same time, there does not seem any necessity for un-

duly holding up consideration of the Estimates because I happen for the time being to be attending a conference on the subject of finance. After all, the Estimates of expenditure on loan account have to be dealt with before we proceed very much further, and it occurred to me that members might proceed with the general discussion on Thursday when probably the general discussion could be closed. I am hopeful that members will follow my example by dealing with financial considerations only and will not discuss general matters which can be better dealt with on the Estimates of the various departments. If this course were pursued we would save unnecessary discussion and some repetition. I have endeavoured to confine my remarks to financial considerations and if the hon. member continued the discussion when the House meets on Thursday we might probably, if members were prepared, complete the general discussion before the House adjourned, or, if they felt disposed to complete it before I leave, we might probably meet for an hour on Friday.

Mr. Thomson: Why not finish to-night?

Hon. J. Mitchell: When will you be back?

The PREMIER: On the 6th October.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We will keep it going till then.

The PREMIER: The hon. member would be quite capable of doing that. In the circumstances I hope the hon. member will resume the discussion on Thursday, and Ministers will be able to deal with their respective departments as in the past.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [9.19]: I hope the Premier will agree to an adjournment of the debate until at least Tuesday next. It would be very difficult for members on this side of the House to deal with the mass of figures presented before then. It is usual to grant an adjournment for some days.

The Minister for Lands: There is no use in hastening the introduction of the Estimates if you delay the discussion. What is the use of an early introduction if you delay as you suggest?

Mr. Willmott: It would give us more time to think the matter over.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: We should have time to consider the mass of figures.

Mr. Willmott: We cannot make out those figures as fast as you can spend the money.

The Minister for Works: We cannot spend the money as fast as you want us to.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I move—

*That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again on Tuesday next.*

The CHAIRMAN: I will put the question, "That I do now report progress and ask leave to sit again."

Question passed.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Progress reported.

The PREMIER: I wish to intimate to hon. members that I propose to bring the Estimates on for general discussion on Thursday.

Mr. Taylor: The discussion might go on for three or four weeks if you do not look out.

*House adjourned at 9.22 p.m.*

**APPENDIX TABLES Nos. 1 to 10, referred to in the Treasurer's Financial Statement:—**

**[Return No. 1.] Revenue, -1914-15.**

	£
The Treasurer's estimate for the year was .. .. .	5,307,782
The actual amount received was .. .. .	5,140,725
Or a total net over-estimate of .. .. .	£167,057

*The over-estimates were—*

	£
Dividend Duty .. .. .	6,084
Licenses .. .. .	1,262
Land Tax .. .. .	3,567
Railways .. .. .	154,238
Tramways .. .. .	972
Mining .. .. .	1,115
State Batteries .. .. .	6,938
State Hotels .. .. .	6,276
State Ferries and Jetties .. .. .	4,980
Agricultural Implement Works .. .. .	21,287
State Sawmills .. .. .	16,883
State Brickworks .. .. .	5,509
Quarries .. .. .	194
Meat Sales .. .. .	7,725
Water Supply .. .. .	4,143
Other Public Works and Services .. .. .	1,645
Reimbursements in Aid .. .. .	34,911
Commonwealth .. .. .	9,213
	£286,942

*The under-estimates were—*

	£
Income Tax .. .. .	5,645
Stamp Duty .. .. .	4,398
Probate Duty .. .. .	10,156
Totalisator Tax .. .. .	125
Land .. .. .	49,609
Harbour Dues .. .. .	17,234
State Steamships .. .. .	23,919
Royal Mint .. .. .	389
Residue .. .. .	1,616
Miscellaneous Interest .. .. .	6,794
	£119,885
	£167,057

*Expenditure, 1914-15.*

	£	
The actual amount expended was .. .. .	5,706,542	
The Treasurer's estimate for the year was .. .. .	5,647,076	
		<hr/>
Or a net under-estimate of .. .. .		£59,467
		<hr/>
<i>The under-estimates were—</i>	£	
Special Acts .. .. .	a 10,489	
Colonial Secretary .. .. .	7,321	
Works and Industries .. .. .	107,051	
Residue .. .. .	39	
		<hr/>
		£124,900.
<i>The over-estimates were—</i>	£	
Colonial Treasurer .. .. .	1,747	
Minister for Lands .. .. .	1,873	
Minister for Water Supply .. .. .	17,624	
Minister for Mines .. .. .	10,973	
Minister for Railways .. .. .	8,153	
Minister for Education .. .. .	14,606	
Minister for Agriculture .. .. .	5,022	
Attorney General .. .. .	4,639	
Residue .. .. .	796	
		<hr/>
		£65,433
		<hr/>
		£59,467
		<hr/>

a Mostly Land Improvement Loan Fund Charges.

## [Return No. 2.]

*Synopsis of Balance Sheet for 30th June, 1915, and previous Year.*

	1915.	1914.
DR.	£	£
Sinking Fund .. .. .	4,087,138	3,710,353
General Loan Fund .. .. .	1,278,342	1,189,525
Savings Bank .. .. .	4,683,077	4,701,216
Trust and Deposits Accounts		
generally .. .. .	1,713,776	1,450,686
Sundry Advances, London .. .. .	235,000	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£11,997,333	£11,051,780
	<hr/>	<hr/>
CR.	£	£
Advances to be recovered .. .. .	375,226	136,288
Investments and Sinking Fund	9,355,317	8,715,952
Stores on hand .. .. .	567,725	682,046
Cash in hand—		
Treasury .. .. .	4,757	
Current Accounts .. .. .	157,906	27,856
Trust Accounts .. .. .	18,511	478,475
Eastern States .. .. .	77,906	142,908
London .. .. .	9,194	124,538
Remittances <i>in transitu</i> .. .. .	418,049	296,791
Consolidated Revenue Fund—		
Deficit .. .. .	1,012,742	446,926
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£11,997,333	£11,051,780

[Return No. 3.]

*Estimated Receipts for Year ending 30th June, 1916.*

Heads.	Receipts for Year 1914-15.	Estimated, 1915-16.
<b>STATE.</b>		
Land Tax .. .. .	£ 36,433	£ 40,000
Income Tax .. .. .	80,645	80,000
Dividend Duty .. .. .	93,916	95,000
Totalisator Tax .. .. .	12,125	12,000
Stamp Duty .. .. .	64,398	64,000
Probate Duty .. .. .	40,156	35,000
Licenses .. .. .	44,288	44,050
Land .. .. .	329,872	375,000
Mining .. .. .	23,669	23,500
Timber .. .. .	43,003	41,700
Railways .. .. .	2,049,762	2,250,000
Tramways, Perth Electric	114,028	113,000
State Batteries .. .. .	39,562	80,390
State Ferries and Jetties .. .. .	5,385	7,000
State Hotels .. .. .	28,511	35,500
State Steamships .. .. .	101,919	115,000
State Implement and Engineering Works .. .. .	73,713	128,000
State Sawmills .. .. .	303,117	188,800
State Brickyards .. .. .	991	14,000
State Quarries .. .. .	10,306	13,000
Yandanooka Estate .. .. .	15,221	40,000
Avondale Estate .. .. .	1,408	4,600
Harvey Estate .. .. .	916	750
Albany Cold Storage .. .. .	1,109	1,300
Aborigines Cattle Station .. .. .	3,268	3,000
Fish Supplies .. .. .	4,899	15,500
State Dairy Farm (Claremont) .. .. .	3,108	4,000
Perth City Markets .. .. .	1,759	1,700
Metropolitan Abattoirs and Sale Yards .. .. .	4,586	6,700
Refrigerating Works .. .. .	4,252	4,300
Meat Stalls .. .. .	29,275	34,000
Tourist, Cave Houses, etc. .. .. .	9,178	8,600
Kalgoorlie Abattoirs .. .. .	3,962	4,000
Water Supply and Sewerage .. .. .	404,501	425,000
Harbour Boards .. .. .	115,739	120,000
Royal Mint .. .. .	28,389	28,000
Reimbursements, Fees, and other Services .. .. .	358,929	406,855
Law Courts .. .. .	23,140	23,000
	4,509,438	4,886,245
<b>COMMONWEALTH.</b>		
Financial Agreement, etc. .. .. .	606,899	593,529
Interest on Transferred Properties .. .. .	24,388	24,485
	5,140,725	5,504,259
Deficit from Year 1914-15 .. .. .	..	1,012,742
Total amount available for Expenditure .. .. .	..	4,491,517

## [Return No. 4.]

*Estimated Expenditure on Administration, Recurring, and Revenue-producing Expenditure, Year 1915-16.*

	£	£
<i>Special Acts—</i>		
His Excellency the Governor, Ministerial Salaries, etc. ...	10,900	
Pension, Sir John Forrest ...	500	
Aborigines ...	10,000	
Annuities ...	250	
Auditor General ...	800	
Commissioner of Railways ...	2,000	
Commonwealth Pensions ...	3,000	
Court of Arbitration ...	800	
Judges' Pensions ...	2,000	
Judges' Salaries ...	7,100	
Land Improvement Loan Fund ...	37,000	
Parliamentary Allowances ...	25,400	
Pensions under Superannuation Act ...	16,000	
Public Service Commissioner ...	850	
Tramways Purchase Act ...	3,450	
University of Western Australia ...	13,500	
		133,550
<i>General—</i>		
Government House ...	1,540	
Parliamentary ...	13,294	
Executive Council ...	45	
Premier's Office ...	1,453	
Treasury ...	11,137	
Audit ...	9,006	
Compassionate Allowances ...	1,081	
Savings Bank ...	23,109	
Government Stores ...	11,124	
Government Motor Cars ...	955	
Survey of N.W. Coast ...	3,750	
London Agency and Indenting Office ...	8,317	
Retiring Allowances ...	2,000	
Public Service Commissioner ...	1,635	
Refunds ...	500	
Taxation ...	14,246	
Workers' Homes Board ...	4,307	
Lands and Surveys ...	50,976	
Woods and Forests ...	9,680	
Agriculture <i>a</i> ...	47,407	
Agricultural Bank ...	14,913	
Mines <i>b</i> ...	63,454	
Carried forward ...	293,929	133,550

*a* Includes Rabbits and Vermin Boards.*b* Includes Explosives, Geological Survey, Machinery Inspection, and Mining School.

## Return No. 4—continued

				£	£
	Brought forward	...	...	293,929	133,550
<i>General—continued.</i>					
Crown Law Offices <i>a</i>	...	...	...	75,770	
Education	...	...	...	322,941	
Colonial Secretary <i>b</i>	...	...	...	31,664	
Aborigines	...	...	...	8,449	
Charities	...	...	...	80,698	
Fisheries	...	...	...	4,078	
Gaols	...	...	...	26,077	
Harbour and Light	...	...	...	20,892	
Lunacy	...	...	...	55,735	
Medical and Health	...	...	...	116,839	
Police	...	...	...	121,720	
Parliamentary Expenses	...	...	...	2,915	
London Westminster Bank, Commission	...	...	...	4,000	
Royal Commissions	...	...	...	3,250	
Police Benefit Fund	...	...	...	2,400	
Incidentals	...	...	...	12,708	
Public Works and Buildings	...	...	...	15,815	
					1,207,880
<i>Revenue-Producing Expenditure—</i>					
Royal Mint	...	...	...	22,500	
Public Batteries	...	...	...	87,232	
Railways and Tramways	...	...	...	1,642,079	
State Hotels	...	...	...	29,430	
Refrigerating Works, Abattoirs, etc.	...	...	...	12,717	
Ferries	...	...	...	5,020	
State Steamship Service	...	...	...	102,838	
Water Supply	...	...	...	239,247	
Saw Mills	...	...	...	169,250	
State Dairy Farm	...	...	...	3,801	
State Brickworks	...	...	...	12,500	
State Implement Works	...	...	...	163,827	
State Quarries	...	...	...	11,500	
Fish Supply	...	...	...	14,362	
Meat Stalls	...	...	...	33,224	
Avondale and Yandanooka Estates	...	...	...	30,621	
Tourists Resorts and Cave Houses	...	...	...	9,435	
Aborigines Cattle Station (Moola Bulla)	...	...	...	4,650	
					2,594,933
Total Administration	...	...	...		3,936,363

*a* Includes Electoral, Land Titles, Stipendiary Magistracy and Supreme Court. *b* Includes Lithographic, Observatory, Printing, Friendly Societies, Immigration, Labour Bureau, Public Gardens and Registry.

## [Return No. 5]

*General Expenditure for Year 1915-16.*

	£	£	£
Interest and Sinking Fund on Public Debt	...	...	1,694,066
Subsidies to Municipalities	...	...	9,000
<i>Public Works—</i>			
Roads Boards—Subsidies	27,000		
Roads	300		
Bridges—Revotes	1,350		
Total Roads and Bridges	...	28,650	
Miscellaneous	...	1,475	
<i>Public Buildings, etc.—</i>			
Hospitals and Quarantine	3,130		
Gaols and Quarters	480		
Police Stations, etc.	171		
Court Houses, etc.	805		
Mechanics' Institutes, Halls, etc.	1,250		
Harbours and Jetties, etc.	8,915		
Various Buildings, etc.	19,911		
		34,662	
<i>Railways—</i>			
Relaying Great Southern Railway	12,500		
Construction	3,500		
		16,000	
Total Works and Buildings	...		80,787
<i>Sundry Grants, etc.—</i>			
Hospitals and Benevolent	3,050		
Fire Brigades	7,500		
National Grants	80		
Cemeteries	100		
Parks and Recreation Grounds	3,000		
Land for Schools	1,000		
Public Libraries	3,550		
W.A. Museum and Art Gallery	3,300		
Zoological Gardens	3,500		
Mechanics' Institutes	750		
Various	100		
			25,930
Total General Expenditure	...		<u>£1,809,783</u>

[Return No. 6.]

*Loan Authorisations and Flotations.*

	£	£	£
Authorisations to 30th June, 1914 .. ..	..	37,079,988	
Do. for 1914-15 .. ..	..	2,928,185	
		<hr/>	
Total Authorisations .. ..	..	..	40,008,173
Flotations—			
General Loans .. ..	..	26,938,253	
Local Debentures .. ..	..	246,100	
Local Inscribed Stock .. ..	..	7,838,293	
Treasury Bills .. ..	..	2,735,151	
		<hr/>	
			37,757,797
		<hr/>	
Balance available for Flotation .. ..	..	..	£2,250,376
			<hr/>
Actual Loan Indebtedness—			
Gross Debt on 30th June, 1914 .. ..	..	34,420,181	
Flotation during year—			
London Issues (Treasury Bills) .. ..	..	154,000	
Local Treasury Bills .. ..	..	2,148,081	
Local Stock .. ..	394,400		
Less issued for Redemption .. ..	78,185		
	<hr/>	316,215	
		<hr/>	
			37,038,477
Less Redemptions—			
Local Stock, 1915 (portion) .. ..	..	7,655	
Bonds, Loans, 1878, 1881-4 .. ..	..	8,200	
		<hr/>	
			15,855
			<hr/>
			37,022,622
Less—			
Sinking Fund (as on 31st March) .. ..	..	..	4,068,888
			<hr/>
Net Indebtedness, 30th June, 1915 .. ..	..	..	32,953,734
			<hr/>
Net Public Debt per head of population on 30th June, 1915 ..	101 12 10		
Do. do. do. do. 1914 ..	94 4 11		
Do. do. do. do. 1913 ..	85 17 2		
Do. do. do. do. 1912 ..	77 5 11		

## [Return No. 7.]

*Loan Flotations, Debt, and Expenditure on 30th June, 1915.*

Works and Services.	Flotations.	Actual Indebtness on Works.	Actual Cash spent.
	£	£	£
Railways and Tramways .. ..	18,724,596	18,364,989	17,187,087
Harbours and Rivers .. ..	3,630,337	3,576,917	3,325,366
Goldfields Water Scheme .. ..	2,903,078	2,901,829	2,689,824
Water Supply Generally .. ..	1,256,468	1,255,943	857,260
Sewerage .. ..	1,138,036	1,138,034	1,027,868
Erection of State Batteries .. ..	296,734	296,734	261,775
Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources .. ..	1,408,817	1,391,192	1,338,205
Development of Agriculture .. ..	2,838,099	2,835,338	2,940,099
Telegraphs .. ..	276,721	233,209	269,308
Roads and Bridges .. ..	371,830	348,492	334,666
Public Buildings .. ..	744,018	736,909	715,515
Immigration .. ..	63,314	60,248	56,391
Workers' Homes—Working Capital ..	533,876	533,876	525,500
State Hotels .. ..	50,399	50,399	41,217
State Steamships .. ..	109,972	109,972	105,907
State Saw Mills .. ..	181,670	181,670	199,175
Agricultural Bank .. ..	1,109,611	1,109,611	1,038,058
State Implement Works .. ..	66,444	66,444	74,150
South Perth Ferries .. ..	13,371	13,371	12,967
State Milk Supply .. ..	4,590	4,590	4,496
State Brickyards .. ..	18,499	18,499	26,339
State Quarries .. ..	5,198	5,198	3,698
Crawley and Dalkeith Estates, Aborigines Stations, Savoy House, and Purchase of Land at Nedlands ..	75,513	75,513	68,267
Stores and Stock Suspense Account ..	23,018	23,018	55,000
Miscellaneous .. ..	124,668	124,627	63,352
	35,968,877	35,456,622	33,221,490
Redemptions .. ..	..	512,255	..
Cost of Raising .. ..	..	..	1,469,046
Unexpended Balance .. ..	..	..	1,278,341
	35,968,877	35,968,877	35,968,877

*Reconciliation with Return No. 6.*

Flotations as above .. ..	£ 35,968,877
Converted Bonds under Agricultural Bank Act (£1,566,000) and Local Stock issued for redemption purposes (£222,920) included in Return No. 6 under "Flotations" .. ..	1,788,920
Flotations in Return No. 6 .. ..	£37,757,797

[Return No. 8.]

*Loan Expenditure for 1914-15, compared with previous Years.*

Undertakings.	1914-15.	1913-14.	1912-13.	1911-12.
	£	£	£	£
Railways and Tramways, including Land Resumption	693,118	1,166,584	1,903,991	1,320,309
Fremantle Harbour Works .. ..	106,055	66,142	77,379	35,813
Fremantle Dock and Slip .. ..	1,291	1,868	11,330	80,842
Harbours and Rivers generally ..	58,014	21,860	61,790	69,109
Sewerage—Perth and Fremantle ..	120,473	140,582	160,931	93,572
Water Supply .. ..	127,669	191,528	234,184	31,417
Development of Goldfields .. ..	47,263	50,659	78,143	92,345
State Smelter, Ravensthorpe .. ..	60,000			
Development of Agriculture .. ..	79,271	156,752	155,432	362,406
Assistance to Settlers .. ..	602,110			
Immigration .. ..	16,665	56,218	63,447	96,805
Steamships .. ..		5,907	100,000	
Workers' Homes —Working Capital	97,500	278,000	150,000	
Saw Mills .. ..	29,069	126,416	43,691	
State Hotels .. ..	6,546	17,091	17,580	
Agricultural Bank—Working Capital	271,612	506,638	259,808	
Agricultural Implement Works ..	18,436	43,070		
Brickyards .. ..	11,507	13,710	1,121	
Ferries .. ..	5,974	2,000	4,993	
Public Buildings .. ..	81,004	44,166	38,699	91,707
Roads and Bridges .. ..	5,026	6,167	37,818	23,106
Perth-Fremantle Road, Re-instatement	21,198			
Purchase of Plant and Stock (Suspense Account)	55,000			
Fremantle Road and Railway Bridge	1,582			
Sundries .. ..	5,225	17,652	8,881	12,121
Totals .. ..	2,521,608	2,913,010	3,409,218	2,309,552
Loan Expenditure per head of mean population .. ..	£7 15 8	£9 1 8	£10 17 6	£7 16 11

## Public Debt and Sinking Funds.

Loan.			Sinking Fund.		Remarks.
Year.	Amount.	Maturity.	Rate per cent.	Accumulation.	
	LOANS CARRYING SINK- ING FUNDS.				
	INSCRIBED STOCK.				
	£			£ s. d.	
1899-1915 ..	998,353	1934	1	441,481 8 0	
1896 .. ..	1,500,000	1935	1	323,647 9 3	
1897-1900 ..	3,500,000	1935	1	644,148 6 8	
1897 .. ..	1,100,000	1936	1½	436,043 12 1	G.S.R. Purchase
1896 .. ..	2,500,000	1927	3	1,314,147 16 11	Coolgardie Water Scheme
1900-1902 ..	680,000	1935	1	85,108 3 6	
1902-1905 ..	2,600,000	1935	1	288,192 2 9	
1907-1908 ..	2,000,000	1947	1	87,005 15 10	
1909 .. ..	1,445,000	1955	½	10,224 4 9	
1910 .. ..	1,342,000	1955	½	2,326 15 2	

1911	..	..	1,650,000	1955	$\frac{1}{2}$	45,343	4	0	Issued for redemption of £1,876,000 stock; balance taken from Sinking Fund.
			LOCAL INSCRIBED STOCK.						
			790,000	1926	$\frac{1}{2}$	386,720	0	4	Amount of £386,720 also includes Sinking Fund on Debentures for £246,100
1903	..	..	556,550	1923	$1\frac{1}{2}$				
1904	..	..	72,470	1924	$1\frac{1}{2}$				
1911	..	..	476,305	1926	$\frac{1}{2}$				
1915	..	..	78,185	1935	$1\frac{1}{2}$				
1907	..	..	250,000	1917	$1\frac{1}{2}$				
1904	..	..	250,000	1924	$1\frac{1}{2}$				
1914	..	..	144,735	1934	$\frac{1}{2}$				
			DEBENTURES.						
1872-1888	..	..	118,300	..	1	4,499	6	3	Reedeemable by Annual Drawings.
1904	..	..	246,100	1924	1	..			Sinking Fund above.
			£22,297,998			£4,068,888	5	6	
			BALANCE OF DEBT.						
Various	..	..	14,724,624	Various	..	..			Consisting of Inscribed Stock for which the Sinking Funds have not commenced, and Treasury Bills which carry no Sinking Fund.
			...	...	...				
Total Debt	..	..	£37,022,622	Accrued Sinking Fund		£4,068,888	5	6	

## Trade, Production, Population, etc.

	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.	1912-13.	1913-14.	1914-15.
Railway Revenue ... ..	£1,649,397	£1,858,914	£1,896,579	£2,047,823	£2,382,022	£2,163,790
Railway Mileage ... ..	2,145	2,376	2,598	2,854	2,967	3,332
Wool produced (exported) ... ..	£969,904	£1,047,456	£1,008,858	£964,938	£907,368	£817,630
*Wheat produced ... (bushels)	5,602,368	5,897,540	4,358,904	9,168,594	13,331,350	2,624,190
*Hay produced ... (tons)	195,182	178,891	299,695	255,751	278,585	156,932
Gold produced ... ..	£6,553,314	£6,003,789	£5,634,004	£5,493,072	£5,478,932	£5,195,782
Timber produced (exported) ... ..	£907,702	£932,800	£1,001,593	£965,808	£1,142,280	£810,451
Coal produced ... ..	£114,487	£104,016	£121,109	£150,184	£153,374	£137,575
Other Minerals (exported) ... ..	£328,471	£155,277	£150,490	£195,764	£215,819	a £167,304
†Number Sheep ... ..	4,731,737	5,158,516	5,411,542	4,596,958	4,421,375	4,457,585
†Number Cattle ... ..	793,217	825,040	843,638	806,294	834,265	863,835
†Number Horses ... ..	125,315	134,114	140,277	147,629	156,636	161,625
Area of land selected ... (acres)	1,904,780	1,922,112	1,973,565	1,408,108	998,851	502,551
Area of land leased ... (acres)	10,330,373	9,314,310	11,595,445	21,170,037	8,622,488	7,855,984
*†Area of land for cultivation ... (acres)	4,685,607	5,309,832	5,650,628	6,717,226	7,320,533	a 7,529,723
*Area of land under crop ... (acres)	722,086	855,024	1,072,653	1,199,991	1,537,923	a 1,863,023
Tonnage Shipping, Inwards ... ..	2,279,852	2,408,803	2,597,156	2,767,276	3,381,304	b 2,594,402
Tonnage Shipping, Outwards ... ..	2,271,879	2,419,078	2,615,952	2,755,500	3,375,282	b 2,634,891
Exports, including Gold ... ..	£8,576,659	£8,177,272	£10,443,570	£8,846,039	£10,415,095	£5,352,140
Exports, excluding Gold ... ..	...	...	£3,300,473	£4,549,126	£5,429,954	£3,062,276
Imports ... ..	£6,932,731	£8,450,855	£9,283,722	£9,589,745	£9,727,473	£8,318,189
Savings Bank's Deposits ... ..	£2,400,099	£3,170,345	£3,504,626	£3,716,184	£4,551,872	£3,743,135
Savings Bank's Withdrawals ... ..	£2,070,776	£2,667,377	£3,316,113	£3,684,046	£4,600,884	£3,876,137
Excess of Arrivals over Departures ... ..	2,691	12,013	9,319	9,206	4,527	c 8,283
Population § ... ..	271,162	287,855	302,271	314,157	324,854	322,894

\* Seasons ended 28th February.

† Years ended 31st December, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1914.

‡ Area cropped, cleared, fallowed, ringbarked, etc.

§ As on 30th June.

¶ Including Perth Tramways.

a Preliminary figures, liable to revision.

b Year ended 31st March, 1915.

c Excess of departures over arrivals.