

sidered apart from those represented by members on the Government side of the House. Surely the vast army of workmen, silently carrying on their work under bad conditions, are entitled to consideration. Apparently they are shut out from all consideration by this Chamber. No measure is passed for their alleviation. Measures are promptly introduced for primary industries, but the great majority of the men who do the burdensome, the laborious, the dangerous and the unhealthy work in this State receive no consideration from this House. We members on this side of the House are discontented with the present state of affairs. We are not looking for kudos in this matter. I think we have got past that stage; it is not worth troubling about. We are looking for some immediate consideration for the great mass of the people represented by this side of the House, and also by the other side of the House to some degree, who have been ill considered during the last few years. I urge the Government therefore to give favourable consideration to the motion.

On motion by Mr. Pickering, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.39 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 23rd September, 1920.

	PAGE
Questions: Parliament House, damage by white ants	709
Public Service, overtime rates	709
Amusements Tax	709
North-West Development	709
Kalgoorlie Municipal Council resolutions	710
Agricultural College site	710
Wheat, local consumption	710
Select Committee, Factories and Shops Bill, extension of time, to adjourn from place to place	710
Annual Estimates, general debate concluded, votes and items discussed	710
Bill: Roads Closure, 28.	731

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

QUESTION—PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DAMAGE BY WHITE ANTS.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that white ants have destroyed a box frame in the temporary portion of Parliament House on the south front? 2, In view of the fact that the fram-

ing is of oregon pine, might it not reasonably be assumed that considerable damage has occurred thereto, and that there is a danger of the end work and staircase collapsing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied,—
1, Yes. 2, No.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE, OVERTIME RATES.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the rates for overtime paid to a number of civil servants are less than the rates paid for ordinary office hours? 2, Will he issue instructions that this anomaly be corrected, and that the amounts so short paid be recouped to the employees as from 1st July last?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The rates of overtime paid to officers under the Public Service Act are those fixed by regulation, and although in a few instances these are less than the rate of salary paid, they are higher in other cases. 2, The necessity, or otherwise, of amending the rates of pay for overtime is already being considered by the Public Service Commissioner.

QUESTION—AMUSEMENTS TAX.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government noticed that the Federal Government have decided to reduce the tax on amusements? 2, Will the Government consider the advisability of introducing a State tax on amusements to at least the extent of the reductions made in the existing Federal tax?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Government will give consideration to the matter.

QUESTION—NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Premier: 1, Has he noticed the statement in last Friday's "West Australian," that the Hon. George Miles, M.L.C., was proceeding to the Eastern States "to interview the Prime Minister on the subject of proceeding with the railways in the far North in order to link up with existing lines"? 2, Is Mr. Miles proceeding as a representative of the State Government, or has his mission in any way been accredited by the State Government? 3, If so, what is the nature of the credentials furnished him and which railways is he to advocate? 4, Will the Premier request the Minister for the North-West to submit a policy for the development of the North to be discussed and approved of by the State Legislature before any representations are made to the Federal Government?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3 and 4, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—KALGOORLIE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that at a recent meeting of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, the following resolutions were moved:—(1.) "That the Government be requested to allow pastoral leases to be granted to applicants in the Esperance district as elsewhere, and that the Repatriation Board grant assistance to returned soldiers in the Esperance district as obtains in other localities in the State." (2.) "That the Government be requested to arrange for the continuous shipment of rails and sleepers from Albany to Esperance instead of allowing the boat to be idle for a week to 10 days at a time at Albany at the expense of the taxpayer." (3.) "That provision at once be made in the Estimates for the sum necessary for the completion of the Esperance-Northwards railway to the 65-Mile Dam, which has received the King's sanction, as the Minister for Works informed the last deputation that the money already available would only be sufficient for construction to 40 miles northwards." (4.) "That the clearing and formation for the balance required to be done to 64 miles be at once proceeded with." 2, What is the intention of the Government with regard to Nos. 2, 3, and 4.

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, 3, and 4, Answered by No. 1.

Mr. Green: That is no good.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE SITE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: When will the report of the commission appointed to inquire into the site for the Agricultural College be made available?

The PREMIER replied: The matter is still under consideration, further information on many points being desirable. In the meantime the Government are endeavouring to arrange for the accommodation next year of an additional number of students at the Narrogin Farm School, whilst the new High School at Northam will afford special facilities for the study of the science of agriculture.

QUESTION—WHEAT, LOCAL CONSUMPTION.

Mr. TROY asked the Honorary Minister: What amount of wheat was required for seed, food, and local consumption during the year 1919-20?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: Approximately, 1,558,000 bushels for seed and feed for season 1919-20, and 1,434,000 bushels for local consumption for the eight months ending 31st August, 1920.

SELECT COMMITTEE—FACTORIES AND SHOPS BILL.

Extension of Time.

On motion by the Minister for Mines the time for bringing up the Select Committee's report was extended to the 7th October.

To adjourn from place to place.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.40]: I move—

That leave be given to the Select Committee appointed to consider "The Factories and Shops Bill" to adjourn from place to place.

It is not our intention to move about unduly, but there are one or two places in the State in which we hope to have an opportunity of taking evidence without any expense at all. For instance, I propose to visit Geraldton to-night and will be accompanied by the member for the district (Mr. Willcock) and one or two other members of the Select Committee. We expect to take evidence in Geraldton to-morrow. The same thing will probably apply to Katanning and Albany later on. So far as possible we will avoid travelling, but the opportunity now presenting itself should be availed of, and I think it desirable to move this motion.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.42]: I notice that the Minister for Mines has referred to a proposal that the Select Committee should visit Katanning and Albany. This Bill caused a good deal of concern to some of my constituents. I believe the chairman of the Select Committee has correspondence on the subject from Narrogin. If the Committee intend to take evidence in Katanning, I would suggest that Narrogin should also be included, so that the people there who are interested in the matter, and have already communicated with the Committee on the subject, should have the same opportunity of having their voices heard as others in a neighbouring locality.

Question put and passed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from 21st September, on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Foley in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £915:

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [4.43]: I have not a great deal to say on the Budget, but this is the only chance I have had of replying to certain statements made by the Minister for Woods and Forests with regard to myself. As he is leaving for Geraldton in half-an-hour I take this opportunity of somewhat re-arranging my speech in order to deal

with his remarks. The Minister the other evening adopted the old policy—seeing that he had no case he attacked the other side, intending, of course, to put me on the defensive when he himself was charged with what I considered to be a misdemeanour. He read through a speech, taken from “*Hansard*,” delivered by me on the 28th February, 1918, and inferred from the statements I had made, in quoting from a letter from Mr. Mow Fung, of Hong Kong, that “the hon. member got right into it himself.” When it is considered that, although I might have had the chance to gain a personal advantage from some knowledge that I had obtained from a particular source, I halted on the question from October, 1916, to February, 1918, I think this will be sufficient proof to hon. members that I had no intention whatever of seeking any personal advantage. Furthermore, I offered my experience to the House, at the invitation of the then Treasurer, the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner). It will be remembered that the Treasurer was worrying about squaring the finances, like the present Treasurer. He said “I want you to regard yourselves”—meaning the members of the House—“as being 49 co-directors with me, and I invite suggestions whereby the revenue of the country may be increased.” I thought this was a good opportunity. I advise hon. members to read the whole of my remarks, if they can bear with them, made on the 28th February, 1918. Those remarks show that I was prepared, with regard to my knowledge of China, to lay the whole of the cards on the table. I suggested to the Government in this Chamber that they would be able not merely to make £50,000 a year out of the sandalwood business, but also to raise the price to the cutters and set aside a considerable sum for reforestation. That was not the act of a man wanting to get into the business himself with both hands. However, my suggestion was not listened to at that time. I then brought the matter forward again in the “*Westralian Worker*,” urging that the Government should take over the sandalwood business as a State monopoly. That was two years after I received that letter from China. Meantime I was receiving numerous letters from sandalwood getters all over the State. In particular, two getters were for some time anxious to see me and confer with me regarding the business. They were men who sent out teams from the Boulder—Messrs. Joyce and Watkins. They repeatedly expressed a desire to see me. I did not then know them personally, though I knew of them as being interested in teams at Widgeemooltha. The point is that they, as big getters, saw that for several years the sandalwood getters throughout the State had never received more than £8 7s. 6d. per ton, except on one occasion, when they received £9 per ton. But £8 7s. 6d. had been the price prevailing over 30 years. Messrs. Joyce and Watkins were business men, and had money behind them, and they saw that they were being robbed under the arrangements then

existing; and consequently they were anxious to get into the export trade for themselves. The member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) will bear me out in saying that Mr. Joyce tried for months to get in contact with me. I was dodging Mr. Joyce because I wanted the Government to take the business over. However, Mr. Joyce, on the day before he was leaving for China, called at my house and said to me, “Now, look here, why cannot you give me this information? Give me a letter of introduction to anyone you know in Singapore or Hong Kong, and we will make you a partner in the firm without your putting a penny into it yourself.” In fact, I had not a penny. In the circumstances, what would any man have done? What would the Minister for Mines have done? What would any man in his sane senses have done? After two years of advocating what I believed to be in the best interests of the country, I found myself in a position to help the sandalwood getters. Mr. Joyce went to China and saw the position for himself, and thereupon, for the first time in the history of this State, the big sandalwood monopoly, those who had been in the trade up to then, encountered opposition. The trade had up to that time been in the hands of one or two small merchants working in unison with Paterson & Co. This was in the month of October, 1918.

Mr. Pickering: There was always competition in the sandalwood trade.

Mr. GREEN: Whatever competition there was, the getter under the previous arrangement never received more than £9 per ton.

Mr. Pickering: He has never received more since.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member knows nothing about it. Sandalwood recently went up to £16 10s. per ton. Directly Joyce and Watkins got into the sandalwood market, sandalwood began to rise. Mr. John met Mr. Joyce in the street and said to him, “If you have made any money in the sandalwood business, get out of it, otherwise you will be squeezed out.” Sandalwood rose from £9 to £10, to £12, and to £14 per ton. Ultimately the getter received as much as £16 10s. per ton. So that in two years, during which 24,000 tons of sandalwood were exported, there was an average rise of £5 per ton in the price paid to the getters. That represents a gift to the getters of this country of more than £100,000, a gift due to the fact that Joyce and Watkins were operating in China. When they had got into the business and had managed to stick there, five or six other sandalwood getters also gained a footing in the export trade. The result was the smashing up of the monopoly, and an additional return of fully £120,000 to the producers of this country. So much for my getting into the business with both hands. The Minister for Mines has said that the firm of Joyce & Watkins is being run with Chinese money, that the money was put up by Chinese firms, and that I have been acting as an agent for Chinese. I admit at once that if that charge could be made to stick, or even if it was based on a substratum

of truth, I should be guilty of going against my principles and against my belief in the White Australian policy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: To whom could you sell the sandalwood except to the Chinese?

Mr. GREEN: That is a different proposition. We know that if we send products to China, we must sell them to the Chinese. The Minister for Mines, when he was in the flour milling business, was dealing with merchants who were anxious to send cargoes of flour to Singapore and Hong Kong to feed the 'Chinese. In that, of course, there is nothing against the White Australia policy. But if I had been simply a henchman of "joss-house bosses," as the Minister said in that truly diverting language which is characteristic of him, there would have been something derogatory to my principles.

Mr. Pilkington: Why should not a man act as agent for a Chinese firm in Australia?

Mr. GREEN: The member for Perth may have his own ideas with regard to that matter. From an Australian point of view, however, such a position would be insupportable, at any rate for me. Now let me say that the Minister for Mines knows that the statement in question is an absolute misstatement. I could of course go into heroics and dare the Minister to resign the Albany seat, whereupon I would resign the Kalgoorlie seat, and then the charge he has made against me could be investigated by no less a body than a Royal Commission; and if the charge was held to be proved I would go out of politics, and if the contrary, the Minister would go out of politics. I throw out that challenge to the Minister now in calm language. The firm of Joyce & Watkins is registered at the Supreme Court. There are three men in the firm—Joyce, Watkins, and Green, three white men who, in order to do their business, go into the open market against big firms such as Paterson & Co. and get a fair share of the business. But let us see what a search made at the office of the Registrar of Companies has revealed with regard to the big sandalwood firm which has been operating here for a considerable time. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) has stated here that for two years past Paterson & Co. have not had a Chinese member in their firm. The search I refer to, which was made on the 13th February last, revealed that out of 30,000 shares in Paterson & Co., Duncan Paterson held 7,000, that the second largest holder was Fong Lang, of Canton—a good Australian name; that another large holder was Mrs. Owe Yooy Fong, of Hong Kong; and that the rest of the shares are distributed largely among the Paterson family in various parts of the world. These facts show beyond question that the firm, which undoubtedly thought that it was going to get a monopoly of sandalwood, is largely financed by Chinese money. That is not the case as regards the firm of Joyce &

Watkins. Indeed, the Minister for Mines has paid a tribute to my partners. He said—

I have never refused to see the hon. member on any occasion. He came to my house at Mount Lawley and asked me to see Mr. Joyce. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Joyce and his other partner.

It is Green that is the devil.

The hon. member is a member of the firm of Joyce & Watkins, who have been dealing in sandalwood.

Thus it will be seen that my firm is a white firm consisting of three Australians, and that the big firm which expected to get the sandalwood monopoly is largely financed by Chinese money. The Minister made various statements as to which I might simply say that there is not much in them. Still, they cannot be allowed to pass without reference. In his heat the Minister said—

A man who cannot go on the Esplanade to address members of the community without taking a revolver in his pocket—

referring to myself. That sounds good. Let me say that if I chose to carry a revolver I would be at perfect liberty to do so, provided I got the necessary licence. But, although I have been in some pretty wild corners of the globe, I have never in my life found it necessary to carry a revolver—never in my life. We went through fairly strenuous conditions in the anti-conscription campaign, during which a good deal of heat and intolerance was manifested on both sides. But in my opinion the conditions were never such as to justify any man in carrying a revolver. I never did. The Minister can take up another challenge on this point—he to resign Albany, I to resign Kalgoorlie; let him prove his charge if he can, and I go out; if he cannot prove it, let him go out. However, that is cheap; there is nothing in it. A challenge of that kind is really silly. But the Minister knows that in order to discount what I stated, honestly believing it to be true, he threw a lot of mud at me. Most of his charges were of such a childish character as proved that the Minister had nothing to bring against me, notwithstanding that he had raked every corner he possibly could in order to besmirch my reputation. The Minister said—"There are no Chinese presents in my house." What does he mean by that statement? I shall try to eliminate personalities so far as I possibly can, this afternoon. I am not going to refer to presents that may be in the Minister's house. I merely want to clear myself, and I say that there are no presents from Chinese in my house. There are in my house several curios which I brought from China. There is a set of curios which was sent to me by a Britisher in Hong Kong. It has reached me since my return from China. The Britisher in question, let me mention, is not in the sandalwood trade at all. He is an Australian for whom I have a high regard; a man in

charge of one of the Government departments in Hong Kong. I say there is no substratum of truth whatever in the Minister's insinuation. He further stated—

The white Australian policy provides that no Chinamen shall set up in business in Australia except with white people, or people of European origin, who are prepared to act as their tools.

That is the position of the Minister. Now I have done with that phase of the question. The Minister should know that there are Chinese working the trade exclusively in Fremantle, children of full-blooded Chinese parents on both sides. He must know that. He must know that Jack Cheong is a pure-blooded Chinese and is in the sandalwood business. There are other sandalwood firms financed by Chinese money. But I am not going to take advantage of the shelter of this Chamber to block any opposition by preventing those firms from getting a fair deal. Accordingly I shall not mention their names. He also said—

I never joined with any mob to get heaps of stones piled up on the road in Hannans-street. How soon the member for Kalgoorlie laughs. How soon he admits his guilt.

The hon. member himself now laughs. He knows it is a joke. He knows that I never piled up any stones. We have had, at times, considerable heat over Parliamentary differences. When he was a member of the Labour party there was no man for whom I had a higher regard. For such a man of strong personality and hard-hitting power, when you think he is right, and when he is with you, you must have a good deal of enthusiasm. When he left the Labour party I felt a good deal of resentment, some of which still remains. But never have I attempted to pile up stones to shy at him, or asked anyone else to do so. The only similar occasion I can call to mind was soon after he left us. He was speaking at a meeting in Morris' hall when some fellow threw a tomato, and, I think, with good aim.

The Minister for Mines: You did not throw that tomato?

Mr. GREEN: No, I was not at the meeting. Whenever the hon. member was speaking in Kalgoorlie I made a point of keeping right away. The only other charge the hon. member made against me was in regard to a letter. I can recall no instance of writing a letter to a firm on Parliamentary paper. The manager for Messrs. Joyce & Watkins is Mr. Joyce. The firm have the usual business letter heading and Mr. Joyce writes for the firm. I have frequently written to Hong Kong to a friend of mine, a superintendent of mails, an Australian who understands Australian politics. I am a strong partisan, and on occasion during the war I gave him my view of Australian politics. Whether such a letter of mine was censored or not, I do not know. However, I went to the Minister on the day after his statement, and asked him to

let me have a copy of the letter he had referred to. He said, "I will not show you the letter." So, without being able to put up any defence, I am accused of having done something dire under cover of a Parliamentary envelope, so that the censor would not see it. It is said that I wrote to some banned German firm in Hong Kong with a view to getting business through them. The charge is too silly for words.

Mr. Johnston: How did the Government get a letter from the censor, anyhow?

Mr. GREEN: I am not prepared to go into that. The censor nowadays is controlled by the Police Department; the Minister is in charge of the police, and I suppose he has exercised the power given him to peruse what correspondence he wishes to see, in order to make a charge of the kind.

The Minister for Mines: I assure you I did nothing of the sort.

Mr. GREEN: I accept the assurance. But Messrs. Joyce & Watkins, like any other firm with common sense, would not write to a firm which they thought was banned. We reach out for our business, certainly; we take the directory of Hong Kong, of Singapore, or of Java, and we write to people—we did so during the war—soliciting their orders. The British censor may have banned some particular firm in the meantime; but no man of any sense in a British community would write to one whom he thought was banned. The idea of Mr. John being specially selected to receive this sandalwood deal was not conceived in my own mind; it was in the minds of all the sandalwood merchants at that time. The Minister will remember that the buyers in Fremantle were greatly perturbed at the idea of the sandalwood going to one particular firm, and consequently they met the Minister on the 20th February. At that meeting it was suggested that a conference of the merchants present should be held with a view to arriving at an amicable arrangement regarding the pooling of the export, so that the Government might receive a royalty and safeguard the cutters. The Minister approved of the proposal. Following on that, the merchants held the meeting. Here are the minutes, signed by every merchant present, including Mr. F. W. Barrymore, Mr. G. John, representing Messrs. Paterson & Co., Mr. Le Quesne, Mr. J. F. Pilgrim, Mr. John Hector, Mr. John Stewart. One portion of the minutes reads as follows:—

Mr. Hector moved—"That the Minister be asked to fix the price which shall be paid to the sandalwood cutters, and also the royalty to the Government." Mr. Joyce seconded. The motion was put, and Messrs. Hector, Stewart, Joyce, Barrymore, LeQuesne, and the chairman voted in favour. Mr. John refrained from voting. The motion was carried. Mr. Stewart moved—"That in the event of the Minister proceeding with tenders, the tenderers be allowed by the Government to be present when the tenders are opened and read." Mr. Barrymore seconded. In view of the

suspicious that have been cast upon the manner in which tenders for sandalwood have been called, and in justification of this request, Mr. Stewart read an extract from a letter received by John Stewart & Co. from China by last mail, clearly stating that the idea is entertained there of an attempt on the part of a certain firm in the trade to corner the market in Australia. Messrs. John Stewart & Co. are willing to hand this letter to the Minister, so that the name of the firm believed to be implicated can be known to the Minister. Messrs. Hector, Stewart, Joyce, Barrymore, and the chairman voted in favour of the motion. Mr. John and Mr. Le Quesne refrained from voting.

I think I have shown that any charges made against me were absolutely baseless, and also that there was good reason for believing that, in respect of the calling of tenders, not everything was as it might have been. That was further supported by the fact that the Minister never at any time gave a solid reason—he cannot do so now—why the tenders were called. The Minister the other evening stated that £9 per ton, which was the minimum to be paid to the cutters, and which under the system would become the maximum also, was more than they are getting now. There is a slump just now but, even so, the lowest price is £12 per ton, whereas of course under that proposed arrangement the highest price would have been £9 per ton. When I point out that for the last two years there has been an average price of between £13 and £14 per ton, it will be seen that the cutters were going to get no benefit whatever. If the Government had proposed to nationalise the sandalwood nobody could have complained. Now I am not going to deal with that subject any further. Let me turn to the Budget.

The Minister for Mines: Before you leave the subject: the only thing about which I am concerned is the definite statement you made that I was fraternising with John, cheek-by-jowl, and that you would leave it to members to form their own conclusion as to whether any money had passed. Do you think that is a fair statement?

Mr. GREEN: It was said that you were seen in the company of John.

The Minister for Mines: I say I was never in John's company until he came with the deputation to my office. You have been misinformed. I will stake my life on what I have said.

Mr. GREEN: I am prepared to accept what the Minister tells me.

Mr. Underwood: No, do not do that; resign!

The Minister for Mines: Do you think that in the circumstances it was a fair statement to make?

Mr. GREEN: I made the statement because people upon whom I can depend had told me that the Minister was seen in the company of John. Even if there was nothing wrong in that it was exceedingly indiscreet,

in view of the statement made that Paterson and Co. were to get the monopoly.

The Minister for Mines: I still say that I was not in John's company.

Mr. GREEN: I accept that assurance. But I say that at the time, not having the assurance of the Minister, I was not unfair in making such a statement. The Minister now gives me this assurance that he was not in John's company, and I accept it. Now let me address myself to the Budget. The Premier told us that he had received £560,000 more than he expected to receive. The Premier was never happy when in Opposition. He then told us that the country was on the verge of ruin.

The Premier: It is no longer so.

Mr. GREEN: The simple statement from the Premier that the country is no longer on the verge of ruin cannot be accepted. We have seen that the deficit is piling up.

The Premier: Do you object to increased wages?

Mr. GREEN: Increased wages are the long suit with the Premier. Does the Premier contend that, notwithstanding the high cost of living, wages should be maintained at pre-war rates?

The Premier: No, but apparently you do, for you object to increased expenditure.

Mr. GREEN: I do not object to increased wages.

The Premier: Increased wages mean increased expenditure.

Mr. GREEN: If wages have gone up, incomes and taxation also have gone up. As was shown by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) the other evening, there has been a considerable increase in direct taxation as against what the Labour Government received. A large number of business men in this community have done better during and since the war than ever before. If they have done well by fair trade, I have no objection to raise, but if they have become rich by inflating the price of foodstuffs and the clothes of the working class, the only way to get at them is to see that the burden of taxation falls on their shoulders. The income tax exemption of £156 for the married man and £100 for the single man places a great burden on the workers of this State, especially when we consider the comparatively low purchasing power of money to-day. It is the Premier's duty to ease the burden of taxation on the underpaid workers. The minimum should be at least £300, and the taxation on those people who have done so remarkably well during the years of war and since should be greatly increased. The Premier has not the courage to do this, but I warn him that if he does not do it, the Federal Government will do it. In fact, the Federal Government are doing it already.

The Premier: You would not support me when I wanted to make the exemption £200.

Mr. GREEN: Let the Premier propose to make the exemption £300 and I shall support him.

Mr. Johnston: I supported the Premier on that occasion.

Mr. GREEN: So did we. The Premier should realise how the purchasing power of money has declined and should raise the income tax exemption so that any man who is receiving less than £300 per annum shall not be liable to pay income tax. The Premier told us the other night that he was not prepared to impose increased taxation. A night or two afterwards he announced that the Arbitration Court had awarded railway servants increases amounting to about £350,000. Did not the Premier know that a large increase would be granted to the railway servants?

The Premier: I am not deaf. Why do you shout so?

Mr. GREEN: On previous occasions I have spoken in quite as loud a voice and the Premier has fallen asleep. I am particularly anxious to keep him awake on this occasion. Did not the Premier know that he would have to pay increased wages to the railway men? Why did not he allow for the increase in his Estimates?

The Premier: Did you know the amount?

Mr. GREEN: No, but I knew there would be a big increase.

The Premier: Did you?

Mr. GREEN: Yes, and so did the Premier and yet he did not allow for it. As a genial travelling pal and a jolly good fellow I place the Premier first, but when it comes to matters of finance I put him dead last. He reminds me of some of the boomed Generals who went to the war and whose reputations as soon as they went into action were blown away in smoke. Notwithstanding the camouflage and boom of the daily Press in the Premier's favour, I regard him not as a financial genius who can steer this country to prosperity, but as merely a pricked bubble. Physically, the Premier maintains the same appearance, but mentally he is a pricked bubble.

The Premier: I am satisfied you are not a judge of mental capacity.

Mr. GREEN: What does the Premier propose to do in order to make up for the large increase which has been awarded to the railway employees? The Premier says in effect to the people in the country, "You have been paying freights which the people in the town do not have to pay, but because of the higher wages which we have to pay to employees those of you who are furthest outback must make good these increases?"

Mr. Underwood: A man living at Leederville pays some of it.

Mr. GREEN: He does not pay much.

Mr. Underwood: He pays a fair share.

Mr. GREEN: He should pay more than he is paying. The hon. member's interjection will not bear examination. What is Australia's great trouble to-day? It is the

fact that in this great continent two-thirds of the population have flocked to the towns.

Mr. Underwood: They have to pay their way.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, but they are living in congenial surroundings compared with what the hon. member would have if he were on a farm at Tammin or somewhere thereabout. In order to make life in the country tolerable for the people some of the burdens must be lifted from the shoulders of the producers, whether those producers be farmers or men engaged in the mining industry. The Premier is asking our producers to produce more, and at the same time he is advocating this benighted policy to increase the already heavy burden under which the producers are struggling to-day. I hope that our farmers will long continue to get high prices for their export wheat. With vastly increased production in consequence of the high prices ruling, the small quantity of cereal required for home consumption if sold at export prices will be but a small gain to the farmer, but a heavy burden to other producers. The Government must drop the idea of further taxing the people through the railways. No matter what we do, we can never balance the railway ledger by increasing railway freights. The former Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Short, in every report, emphasised the fact that we could never expect to square the railway ledger by increasing freights and fares. He told us that the only way was to increase the population of the State and that is the whole point. In order to increase the population of the State, it is necessary to impose a tax on unimproved land values. The financial magnates of the city who would have to pay most under taxation of this kind have always tried to mislead the people of the country by asserting that advocates of the tax desired to further penalise the farmer. Unimproved land values taxation will do nothing of the kind. In fact, under such a scheme of taxation the money could be set aside to reduce railway freights and the farmers would be relieved of some of their burdens. Suppose a farmer has 1,000 acres, the unimproved value of which is 10s. per acre—the average price of much of our country land is 10s. an acre—it would not matter how much the farmer improved his holding, that value would not be increased for taxation purposes. The farmer could be asked to pay at the rate of 6d. in the pound, so that on 1,000 acres he would pay £12 10s. per year. Roughly speaking, unimproved land values in this State total about 20 million pounds, and a tax of 6d. in the pound would bring in £500,000 per year, one half of which amount would be obtained from the valuable blocks in the metropolitan area. Who has given to the blocks in St. George's-terrace, Perth, and in Hannan-street, Kalgoorlie, their present high value? In the case of Kalgoorlie, it is the man working in the gold-mining areas outback; in the case

of Perth, it is the farmers scattered throughout the country, for all our railways radiate from Perth and Fremantle. Blocks in Hay-street and in St. George's-terrace would not be worth twopence an acre if the aborigines were still in undisturbed possession. These blocks are worth thousands of pounds because of the people who are here, because of the farmers who are opening up the country and because of the work of the pioneers out in the back areas. It should not be necessary to emphasise that this increase in values belongs to the community and that the community should get it. Under the unimproved land values taxation which I advocate, £250,000 a year would come from the landlords in the metropolitan area—men who have done nothing to increase the value of their holdings. The farmer would pay £12 10s. by way of taxation on his thousand acres of land. Suppose he had 300 acres cropped and got a 10 bushel average; that would mean 3,000 bushels of wheat. The average railway haulage on wheat would be about $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel or on that quantity a total of £39 7s. 6d. The farmer pays freights in respect of other produce sent to market and he has to pay freights on the machinery, groceries, and the thousand and one other articles required on the farm. These freights would amount to another £20 12s. 6d. a year.

Mr. Johnston: More than that.

Mr. GREEN: Then that makes my case all the stronger. A small farmer is at present paying at least £60 a year by way of railway freights. If we raised £500,000 by way of unimproved land values taxation, and earmarked that amount as a set-off against the £1,500,000 now paid annually for the carriage of grain, minerals, livestock, horses, parcels, etc., the small farmer instead of paying £60 per annum, would have to pay only £40 for freights.

Mr. Johnston: You would increase the land tax 1,200 per cent.?

Mr. GREEN: Yes. The Premier has told us about the settlement of 3,000 returned soldiers on the land but a large number of those men have been placed on purchased farms, whereas all of them should have been placed on virgin land. If he introduced taxation on unimproved values, the owners of valuable blocks adjacent to our railways, men who are waiting for the unearned increment, would have to pay the tax or else sell out to other people. Then, instead of having about 90 people to every mile of railway as at present, we would have closer settlement all along the railways. The position of the farmer is one of isolation from his fellows because under the most favoured conditions in the eastern agricultural areas, the holder of a modest 1,000 acres is $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles distant from his neighbours, provided they occupy adjoining blocks, and there are large stretches of country without any settlement at all. Throughout the country we would have closer settlement, life on the land would be

worth living, and above all, production would be increased as never before. It has often been quoted that there was one block in Melbourne which was sold when the first land sale took place there, for the sum of about £28. Ten years later that block was disposed of again for £4,000. To-day it is worth $1\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds. It does not require any argument to impress upon the minds of hon. members that the whole of that value has been created by the fact that thousands of people have settled in Melbourne, and that therefore it is a community value.

Mr. Johnston: Is that the value without the buildings?

Mr. GREEN: Yes. Eighty-six per cent. of the people of Australia are without land, and this in a community where we may say there is land everywhere. It is true that we have problems in Australia, and as one of our poets has said there is a great dead heart so far as Australia is concerned. But that dead heart is so richly mineralised that none of us can tell what the future may bring forth so far as the apparently sterile portion of the continent is concerned. There are very large fertile areas in Australia, and on the occasion of a recent trip I made through the six States it struck me forcibly that if we could only get our fertile lands thrown open we could invite millions from Europe to settle on them. We could force those lands into cultivation by imposing a tax on the unimproved value. The people from Europe, whom we would invite to come to our shores, would perhaps talk a language different from ours. But what of that? They would be white, and once having married here and the children of those people having gone through the curriculum of the State schools, even though they might possess un-British names, they would none the less be Australians, and would prove good citizens. Our experience then would be similar to that of America, where the blending of the white races has done so much for that country. The people who would be invited to come to our shores would exist under the very best conditions, and the race that would follow would be thoroughly Australian. It is our duty to get the country more closely populated. There should be some system of unlocking the land because there is room here for 50 million people.

Mr. Piesse: There is plenty of land available now.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member would want to send people away beyond Bencubbin, or to use an American expression, he would send them to Hell and Gone so long as those lands, owned perhaps by the old families with whom the hon. member is connected, were not touched.

Mr. Piesse: There is good land north of Cowcowing.

Mr. GREEN: Why send people out there? We would have them crying out for another

railway, Coweowing north, or Bullabulling south. I am sick of these railway extensions. We travel along our railway lines, and we see mile after mile of fertile country which is not cultivated. While we have such land available, let us utilise it, let us see whether we can get 290 people per mile of railway as they have in the Eastern States instead of 90 people. Let the Premier impose a tax on the unimproved value of the land. The "West Australian" used to be continually advocating this, but it has been quiet on the subject for over a month. That newspaper believes in this method of raising revenue, and of bringing the land close to the railways into cultivation, but perforce they have to sit mum. I would advocate a tax of sixpence in the pound on the unimproved value of the land, and if the Premier would only give a lead in this direction we would see the scribe on the "West Australian" get busy and write a couple of columns in a manner that I could not possibly expect to emulate. It is up to the Premier to set the example. I recognise that members on both sides of the House are as keen as I am in making Australia a great country, but we can never hope to be great until we have closer settlement. The present Premier, in no circumstances, and no Premier in present circumstances, can expect to finance a State such as this with a population of only one-third of a million people. We must get more people, and we must not send them to the back of beyond either. We must impose a tax on the unimproved value of the land so as to compel those people who refuse to cultivate, to cultivate. If we do that we will lift a big burden from those people who are already opening up the country out back.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.36]: In delivering the Budget speech the Premier told us that notwithstanding that his estimate of the revenue was considerably exceeded, we ended the financial year with a deficit of £668,224. The hon. gentleman blames the existing high wages to a large extent for this unsatisfactory condition of affairs, and no doubt he is correct. The deputy leader of the Opposition (Hon. W. C. Angwin), in the course of an able speech delivered on Tuesday night, attributed the year's deficiency to want of business acumen on the part of the members of the Treasury bench. There may be something in that, but those two hon. gentlemen have missed the most important feature of all, and it is to that feature that I have drawn attention on two previous occasions when addressing myself to this subject. It is my intention to bring the matter again under the notice of the House, because I regard it as the most important factor connected with the unsatisfactory state of the finances to-day—I refer to our relationship with the Commonwealth. In 1918 I got some figures from the Under Treasurer, and asked certain questions in the House, in order to learn whether the figures which had been supplied to me were

correct. In speaking on the Estimates, I said—

I consider, and a great many people in the State do so as well, that the chief cause of our financial embarrassment at the present time is our relationship to the Federal Government. Speaking on financial matters last evening the leader of the Opposition said he considered that question transcended all others, and should be debated by all. Towards the conclusion of last session, I asked certain questions in this House and I should like to repeat those questions and give the answers which were supplied.

The figures which were given me by the Under Treasurer were for the year ended June, 1917, and they showed that we received from the Commonwealth £750,245 and at the same time the Commonwealth received from us by way of direct and indirect taxation £1,696,915, showing a deficiency against this State of £946,670.

Hon. T. Walker Do you include pensions in that?

Mr. ANGELO: That total includes the contributions under the Surplus Revenue Act, the special contributions, old age pensions, maternity bonus and everything else that the Treasurer could think of at the time. Last year I again referred to this matter, and quoted the opinion of the then Colonial Secretary. I said nearly 12 months ago—

There is one phase of our financial position which neither the Premier nor the leader of the Opposition dwell upon at any length. Yet it has a great bearing on our deplorable condition. The Government have been very reticent on the question, and the only Minister who has dwelt upon it is the leader of the other House. I refer to our relationship with the Commonwealth. I also quoted the remarks of the leader of another place as follows:—

I wish to impress on members, on the Press, and on the people of Western Australia the eminent importance of at once taking up with vigour and purpose the question of the financial relationship of the State to the Commonwealth. No intelligent consideration of our public finances is possible without a thorough understanding of this matter.

I went on to say—

If necessary the official entrusted with the investigations could be appointed a Royal Commission to go into the matter. I understand the Premier has said the Auditor-General is making some kind of investigation, but I do not think it possible for him to do so and at the same time carry out his official duties. A gentleman like Mr. Owen should be relieved of his duties and put on to the work, which I consider is the most important task at the present time. At the end of June next we must be ready to meet with the Treasurers of the other States, the Federal Treasurer and discuss our future relationship with the Commonwealth.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What is the good if we cannot alter it?

Mr. ANGELO: I am going to suggest what we might be able to do, although I know it is a difficult matter. When I was speaking in 1918 I quoted figures which showed that we received for the year ended 30th June, 1918, £762,346 as against a sum of £1,585,465 collected by the Commonwealth from Western Australia, leaving a deficiency against us of £823,119. At the present time I have approximate figures which show that for the year ended 30th June, 1920, we received from the Commonwealth under the Surplus Revenue Act a sum of £414,575, special contributions £154,430, old age pensions £118,770, and maternity bonus £34,335, making a total of £792,110. To arrive at what the Federal Government received from us we have to work it out on a population basis, and from the accounts which have appeared in the Press as to the amount of customs and direct taxation received by the Commonwealth Treasurer. The Customs revenue received last year amounted to £21,574,559, and direct taxation to £20,273,131. The population basis of 5,274,274, of which Western Australia's population is 332,544, shows that the Customs received for Australia was £4 ls. 9d. per head and from direct taxation £3 16s. 10d. On that basis the Commonwealth collected from Western Australia, by way of direct taxation, £1,277,519, and by way of Customs revenue £1,359,271. Western Australia is a consuming State. It would, therefore, be quite fair to add 15s. extra per head of the population for taxation, collected in the other States through goods being sent here and consumed in Western Australia. By such an allowance of 15s. per head there would be added another £249,408, making a total of £2,886,198. After deducting the amount we have received back, £792,110, it shows that we paid the Commonwealth £2,194,088 last year more than we received from them. If we give them credit for our share of the war expenditure, which they are paying out of revenue this year, amounting to £346,395, and the upkeep of the Customs and other departments to £250,000, totalling £596,395, the net deficiency against this State amounts to £1,497,693 for the past 12 months. Mr. Owen was put on to this work, and I should like to read an extract from his report on the question of the net monetary loss to Western Australia caused by Federation. He says—

We may now summarise the net monetary loss brought upon the State Government by Federation from 1st January, 1901, to 30th June, 1919, as follows:—Customs and excise, loss £7,463,000; posts, etc., gain £1,205,000; defence, gain £1,003,000; total of gains £2,208,000. Net loss of Western Australia on above services, £5,255,000. Add direct taxation in Western Australia collected by Commonwealth, £2,800,000. Total monetary loss of Western Australia from Federation; £8,055,000.

If we add to that the loss I have shown for this year, namely, £1,497,693, it is clear that up to the present we have lost £9,552,693 from our connection with the Federal Government. It appears to me that our trouble, so far as our being unable to pay our way is concerned, commenced in 1910-11, about which time the first deficit appeared.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had it from the start.

Mr. ANGELO: Not to any extent. I should like to show one or two of the reasons for this. Of the customs and excise actually paid and the amount returned to each State in 1900-01, this State received 93.4 per cent., and the Commonwealth only retained 6.6 per cent. Five years later, in 1905-06, Western Australia received 87.5 per cent., and the Commonwealth retained 12.5 per cent. In 1909-10 this State received 74.3 per cent., and the Commonwealth retained 25.7 per cent. In 1910-11 Western Australia only received 54.5 per cent., while the Commonwealth retained 45.5 per cent. In 1918-19, the last year of which we have a record, this State received 40.3 per cent., and the Commonwealth retained 59.7 per cent. The year that the Commonwealth Government started to impose direct taxation was 1910-11. Mr. Owen says on this point—

When the six States of Australia joined in the Federation of the Commonwealth, they voluntarily gave up their best source of revenue, namely, customs and excise. This source of revenue was not only the most lucrative but the one best capable of adjustment from time to time to meet the financial needs of the States; and the Commonwealth was given in the Constitution exclusive right to impose customs and excise duties upon the coming into force of the Constitution.

The payment of these heavy customs duties is a detriment to us in two ways. Not only do we lose money we received before Federation, but the cost of living in Western Australia has been made considerably higher than it was before we became federated by virtue of the higher duties now imposed. Not satisfied with the returns from the Customs, the Commonwealth Government in 1910 went in for direct taxation. In 1910-11 they introduced a Federal land tax, and in 1914-15 Federal estates and succession duties, in 1915-16 a Federal income tax, and in 1916-17 a war time profits tax. Every avenue of revenue that really belongs to the State seems to have been invaded by the Commonwealth. Up to June 30th, 1919, the Federal land tax collected in Western Australia amounted to £561,000, the Federal probate tax to £141,000, the Federal income tax to £2,056,000, the war time profits tax to £70,000, and the entertainment tax to £25,000. They are just taking off a portion of the entertainment tax. I know it is not being done for our benefit. I suppose it is because one of the Federal members, Mr. Catts, says he can-

not afford to go to picture shows. We might be able to seize that entertainment tax for our own benefit in Western Australia. These figures amount to £2,853,000. For this year we have had to pay the Commonwealth £1,277,519, making a total of about £4,100,000. The powers vested in the Federal Government alone are, amongst other things, indirect taxation through customs and excise, bounties, defence, post offices and telegraphs, telephones, quarantine and lighthouses. The powers reserved to the States are—education, mining, rabbits, water supply and sewerage, harbours and rivers and roads, medical, health, lunacy, charities, gaols, police, etc. Those powers exercisable by both are—direct taxation, statistics, immigration, railways and tramways, banking, insurance and justice. In group No. 2 we find the huge spending departments of the State, like education, health, charities, lunacy, and so forth. We have to maintain all these departments. The Federal Government are released from all responsibility with regard to them; whereas in group No. 3 we have very little chance indeed of raising any revenue. It would be fair if the States as a whole, especially Western Australia, were to ask the Federal Government if they could not assist us by taking over such departments as education, charities and health. It is permissible for them to do so. If they did this, we should be able to effect a saving of at least the amount of our deficit. The development of the Northern Territory has cost Australia six million pounds, and our share up to the present has been £400,000. We are the only State in Australia that has a northern territory of its own to develop. I cannot understand why the Government of Western Australia did not years ago point this out to the Federal Government. Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia had not the same expenditure in the way of the development of this huge northern territory as we have. The least the Federal Government could do is to release us from our share of this annual contribution. With the £400,000 I have mentioned, we could have done a great deal to develop our own northern territory. At all events we should have something to show for the money if, instead of its going into the coffers of the Commonwealth, it had been applied to the development of the northern portion of Western Australia. In every other way the Federal Government are doing harm to this State. Take the sugar industry, for instance. Western Australia has to contribute largely to keep that industry going in Queensland. That industry has interfered with our jam factories, and made the cost of living in Western Australia higher than it should be. Most of the money raised for Federal purposes is spent in the Eastern States. Nearly all the army and navy stores during the war were purchased in the Eastern States, and the money paid for them spent there. The ships that the Fed-

eral Government are building for naval and merchant service are being built in the Eastern States. The wages that have to be paid to the ships' builders are spent in the East. I understand that the Federal Parliament means at least a million pounds a year to Melbourne. We are told that the Federal Government intend to go on with the building of the Federal capital at Canberra. This will cost something like £100,000,000. Our share of this is to be five million pounds. What are we to get for it? I do not suppose we shall receive a single pound. If that five millions could be spent in our own State in the development of the North, it would go a long way towards populating it and making it more productive. A Navigation Act was passed for the good of the whole of Australia. The only part of Australia which will feel the disadvantage of that Act is our north-west coast. We have to put up with it because the Federal Government have decided to proclaim it. We know the trouble we have had over our base metals. One of the first things that strikes the newcomer is the absence of factories in Western Australia. We did have one or two little factories here.

Member: There is a doll factory at Narrogin.

Mr. ANGELO: That is so. Between 1901 and 1914 the population of New South Wales increased by 35 per cent., that of Victoria by 18 per cent., but the population of Western Australia increased by 67 per cent. But during these 14 years the factories of New South Wales increased by 57 per cent., in Victoria by 74 per cent., and in Western Australia they only increased by 19 per cent. This shows that instead of possessing the number of factories we should have operating we have only a few distributing warehouses. That position will continue until we receive better conditions from the Federal Government. In 1901 our population was only 180,000, and yet we manufactured 265,000 pairs of boots. In 1916, although our population had nearly doubled, it being then 318,000, we only manufactured 217,000 pairs of boots, considerably less than we were manufacturing 15 years before. We all remember the efforts that were made to induce us to sell wheat to New South Wales at 7s. 8d. per bushel. If the people concerned had treated us in a Federal spirit all through, one would not perhaps have minded supplying a sister State in its hour of need. On every occasion, however, they have shown an un-Federal spirit, and have not complied with the terms of the compact under which we joined Federation. I am pleased to see the fight that has been put up against the alleged ratification of that sale of wheat. Only a few years ago there was a drought in New South Wales, whereas we had supplies of chaff and oats here. We were sending them over to New South Wales. And what did New South Wales do? Released the duties on New Zealand chaff and oats, so as to rob us of the market that should have been ours in the circumstances. That is an abso-

lute fact, which has not been mentioned here before.

Hon. T. Walker: The reason may not have been solely as the hon. member suggests. There may have been a desire to get a cheap supply.

Mr. ANGELO: I am not advocating secession or anything of that kind. I hope to be a true Federal Australian all my life, but I want to see the Federal Government carried on in the true Federal spirit. When we of the North do not get what we consider fair treatment from the Government of this State, we do not say that we are going to cut the painter and start as a new State. Instead of that, we send some of our people to Perth for the purpose of advocating to the Western Australian Government what we consider are our just rights and fair dues. It often happens that a deputation from a northern municipality can secure from the State Government what a northern Parliamentary representative has failed to obtain. Now, we know that we have five representatives in the lower House of the Federal Parliament; but I fear those five members have not much say in a total of 75 members, especially in view of the huge representation accorded to the two States, New South Wales and Victoria, which principally benefit from our misfortunes. Something ought to be done immediately to relieve the position. Mr. Owen is considered the best financial man in our public service, and I have brought to the attention of hon. members his figures showing that Western Australia has already lost nine millions through Federation. What is the use of talking about retrenchment in the public service or putting a few hundred pounds here and there on to railway freights if we can get the Federal question adjusted, which would mean the immediate disappearance of our deficit? Our deficit never appeared until the Federal Government, departing from the Federal compact, began to inflict on us indirect taxation, which really they had no right to impose. The State Government should take this important matter up earnestly, and send a representative deputation from this House to Melbourne to consult with the Federal Cabinet. I would suggest that the deputation should consist of the Premier and an ex-Treasurer from this side of the House, the leader and the deputy leader of the Opposition, and the leader of the Country party and another member of this party. This is a matter which affects all sides of the House alike, and such a deputation would show that the Western Australian Parliament is united on the question. It is not a party matter. If such a deputation went to Melbourne and put the case of Western Australia plainly and forcibly to the Federal authorities, I believe something would result. If nothing resulted, then perhaps we could appeal to a still higher authority. However, I do not think that would be necessary. In my opinion, the deputation I suggest would obtain adequate relief for Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Federal authorities would say that we had our representation in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. ANGELO: That is all very well, but what can five representatives do among 75? They are merely voices crying in the wilderness. But if they were backed up by a deputation from this State Parliament, something would be effected. Let me point out again that some money is required for the development of the North. I trust that that development will not depend upon the development of the South. I have already informed the Premier that I consider a special loan should be obtained for the development of the North. In view of the successful flotations of two or three Federal loans recently, in which our State's quotas were fully subscribed, it would not be a bad idea if the Western Australian Government were to ask for a loan of a million locally; and I suggest they should state that the interest shall be subject to State taxation but free of Commonwealth taxation. The Federal Government kindly say to their investors, "We will let you off State taxation, but we will make you subject to Commonwealth taxation." By the means I have suggested, we would get a little of our own back. Commonwealth taxation being higher than State taxation, that would be an additional incentive to people to invest in our State loan. One of our ex-Treasurers has said that such a proceeding would be quite in order. Finally, I trust that the Government will keep in mind the disadvantage under which Western Australia suffers through the actions of the Federal Government; and I hope Ministers will realise that strong representations should be made to the Federal Cabinet, not to treat us with kindness, but to give us our just due in accordance with the compact made at the consummation of Federation.

Mr. CHESON (Cue) [6.10]: I desire to re-echo the warning given by other members of this Chamber in reply to the Premier's intimation that railway freights are to be further increased. Any such further increase, coming on top of the heavy increases made during and since the war, will mean the closing up of some of our outback mining fields. Those fields cannot bear any further impost. Increased railway freights must mean further demands by the miners on the mining industry, and that industry cannot stand increased costs in the outback districts. References have been made to our diminishing gold output and to the shortage of workers in the mining industry. One reason for the shortage of miners is simply the high cost of living, which makes it almost impossible for a miner to exist on many of the outback fields. Another big factor in the shortage of miners is the want of ventilation in mines. If the mine owners looked after that matter and made the working conditions better, they would have no difficulty in getting single men into the industry. At present every married man with sons takes all sorts of care that none of them shall go into the mining industry. In the mining districts no young men are embarking in the industry, and those who are in it are getting out as quickly as they can, in view of what

they have seen happen to their fathers. If the mine owners will look after ventilation and working conditions generally, they will have a chance of getting young men as recruits for the industry. A matter urgently requiring the attention of the Government is the activity of what we term on the Murchison the motor-car prospector. Whenever a new field is discovered, men rush out in motor cars and take up the whole of the area; and although they apply for leases they do not comply with the mining conditions. They stop the legitimate prospectors from developing those fields. We know that if manning conditions are not complied with, any person can apply for forfeiture. But what happens in such cases? In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred there is merely a fine imposed. No man will make application for forfeiture of a mine just for the sake of getting the owners fined. Moreover, no one desires to be classed as a professional jumper. The Mines Department should use the police to inspect new fields at least once per month in order to see that the manning conditions are complied with; and if they are not, there should be forfeiture for the benefit of someone prepared to work the show. That is the only way to open up new fields. As to the matter of exemptions, within the last day or two there have been strong protests received from Lake Way and Wiluna against Claude de Bernales. The whole of that district is practically locked up. Those who have it locked up put up a case for exemption to the warden on the plea that flotations are being arranged in order to supply funds. In fact, Bernales has locked up the biggest portion of the outback fields. Many of the mines there are in liquidation, and he has bought the machinery. Very frequently it happens, too, that these mines are not under the jurisdiction of the local warden. Then it is necessary, if one wishes to apply for forfeiture, to move the Supreme Court to have the mine placed under the warden's jurisdiction. Of course the cost of such proceeding is utterly beyond the reach of a working miner. A man like Bernales should receive no encouragement from the Mines Department, but should be compelled to comply with the manning conditions in the same way as anybody else. The State batteries, I am glad to testify, are doing a great deal of good work.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CHESSON: Before tea I was referring to the State battery system and what it has done for the development of the industry. State batteries have not been given the credit to which they are entitled. Meekatharra, Sandstone, and other fields have been opened up through the State battery system. It frequently happens that after good mines have been developed by the State batteries private companies purchase those mines, and so the batteries do not get the credit to which they are entitled. The people of Cue for a very long

time agitated for a public mill, but it was not until 18 months ago that they got the ear of the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Hudson, who agreed to instal a battery. It is now 12 months since that battery was erected. It has crushed 4,000 tons of stone for 7,400 ounces of gold, which at £4 per ounce represents about £30,000. This battery, I may say, has the best record of all the State mills. I give credit to the member for Yilgarn for having erected this battery. But for the mill, not half that quantity of gold would have been put into circulation.

Mr. Smith: How much did the mill cost?

Mr. CHESSON: I cannot say, but it is keeping a large number of men in employment and has been of great benefit to the town and district. Coming to the question of old age pensioners, I find that before such a man can enter the Old Men's Home he has to sign an authority for the State to draw his pension. Once he is an inmate of the Old Men's Home the State deducts 13s. from his pension and allows him 2s. as comfort money. I take no exception to that, but I do complain of the attitude adopted by the Commonwealth. If an inmate of the Old Men's Home, not being an old age pensioner, applies for a pension, his application is refused simply because he did not apply before entering the home. In this I say the Commonwealth is shirking its obligations. I made application for a pension for an inmate of the Old Men's Home, but my application was turned down. I then tried to get for him the 2s. comfort money but that, too, was refused. In my opinion those old men are entitled to that money, and when the Commonwealth refuses it the State should come to their assistance. We have heard a good deal about the price of wheat. I think the farmers are getting a fair deal in the guaranteed price of 7s. 8d. I do not object to the farmer getting the world's parity for all wheat exported, but when it comes to wheat for local consumption, he should remember his obligations to the people of the State. The State has done very much for the farmer, both during drought and during war. The farmer has been assisted by the people as a whole with free seed wheat and with manures. Again, the State has handed to the wheat grower a subsidy to the extent of some £86,000 in the shape of railway carriage of superphosphates. Also the farmer has been assisted, not only through the Agricultural Bank, but through the Industries Assistance Board. And, when exporting wheat, the farmer pays no wharfage dues, whereas the miner, when sending away metal, has to meet those charges. In view of these considerations I think the farmer should remember his obligations to the people when the price of wheat for local consumption is under review. Again, during the war we protected the farmer from his creditors; we provided for him a moratorium.

Mr. Pickering: Was that confined to the farmer?

Mr. CHESSON: The farmers were almost the only people who took advantage of it. If it is decided that the farmer shall have the world's parity for wheat for local consumption, we shall all be saying the Lord's Prayer to the farmer—"Give us this day our daily bread—and give it at a reasonable rate." With all the assistance the farmer has received from the people, he should be at least well satisfied with the price he is getting to-day.

Mr. Johnston: He has given this country a good deal of assistance.

Mr. CHESSON: Not as much as have other sections of the community, such as the gold-mining prospector, who puts up with far more hardships than does the farmer, and who does not ask to be carried by the people. When the mining prospector takes up a lease he has to comply with the prescribed conditions or his lease is forfeited.

The Colonial Secretary: If a man takes up land and does not comply with the conditions, that land is forfeited.

Mr. CHESSON: I can supply the Minister with hundreds of cases in which the land settlement conditions are not being complied with. The pastoralist, like the prospector, goes out and does pioneering work, and has to pay all charges. He does not ask for assistance from the people. Certainly the farmer has no cause for complaint. Yet he wants everything he uses to come into the country free from Customs duties.

Mr. Hickmott: So does the miner.

Mr. CHESSON: No, the miner never complains of the duty on machinery. He wants to see secondary industries established. The miners are not bringing up their sons to follow the mining industry; they want other avenues of employment for their boys. I know a large number of good mechanics who are leaving the State because they cannot here get anything to do in their own line. We require population of the right sort; we want mechanics as well as farmers.

Mr. Hickmott: They are looking for skilled labour and cannot get it.

Mr. CHESSON: If the secondary industries were opened up, there would be plenty of room for mechanics, and mechanics would be attracted here.

Mr. Pickering: What about opening up the country first?

Mr. CHESSON: We require population and a home market. It is necessary that we should develop the secondary industries.

The Minister for Works: What class of mechanics are leaving the country?

Mr. CHESSON: Moulders, fitters, and turners. I know many of them. When the Great Fingal shut down they were hired to go to Broken Hill to Newcastle and to Port Pirie.

The Minister for Works: There was plenty of work here for them.

Mr. CHESSON: Not at that time.

The Minister for Works: The trouble is that we have not mechanics to-day.

Mr. CHESSON: At all events, I will say no more on the subject of the Estimates until we reach the items.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [7.43]: I was glad to hear the optimistic Budget speech delivered by the Premier. Optimism in connection with the finances of the State is something new. We are faced with a deficit on the year's operations of £399,000. Perhaps it is a matter for congratulation that the amount is not double. The Premier, in delivering his Budget, said that at the moment we did not expect there would be any need for further taxation. Since then, and prior to the speech made by the deputy leader of the Opposition, there has been an award of the Arbitration Court in regard to the railway service, and now we are faced with a further deficit of anything up to £350,000. Judging from the Premier's remarks we may now expect a further increase in railway freights, and additional taxation. There has been a great outcry, not only from the farming community, but from those representing the mining industry, against the increase in railway freights. Following on the award recently given to the railway servants, it is inevitable that some steps be taken to adjust the revenue. Speaking as a member of the Country party, I feel that it is the duty of every section of the community to do its utmost to help to meet the difficult position which confronts this State. When we look to the British Empire, we find that really serious efforts are being made to overcome the burden of debt which hangs about the shoulders of the British taxpayer. How are they doing it? They are doing it by drastic taxation and by increased railway freights. It is not a popular cry for any member of Parliament to advocate increased freights or increased taxation of any description but, if we are in earnest regarding the welfare of our State and its future prosperity, it is absolutely necessary to deal with these matters in a drastic way. Doubtless the Premier will bring down some form of increased taxation, and I feel sure that the members of this House will realise the responsibility resting on the people of this State to meet the obligation in a way befitting the people of our race. We are told that we have an accumulated deficit of over four million pounds. If we do not take this matter seriously in hand, it is difficult to forecast what the position in the near future will be. When the occasion arises, I shall be ready to support any measure which is just and equitable to the whole of the people of this State for an increase necessary in the direction indicated. If we are going in for increased taxation, the form in which it should be introduced is that on the unimproved land.

[Hon. G. Taylor took the Chair.]

Mr. Underwood: Make it land values.

Mr. PICKERING: No, I shall not. I believe there is a large territory in this State which could well come under the unimproved land tax, and I think it unwise to add more than is necessary to the unimproved land values if we can get it from any other source of taxation; but if it should be necessary, I shall be prepared to vote any additional taxation which is really required in the interests of the finances of the State. It is of no use talking as if we could wave a magician's wand and wipe away this deficit. We have to get down to bedrock, and look the position squarely in the face, and meet the deficit as we should by the only legitimate and proper means, namely, by paying our obligations. A great deal has been said in this House regarding the increased cost of living. Much of the increased cost of living results from a decreased output. I am not one of those who believe that a man can do in 44 hours what he formerly did in 48 hours.

Mr. Underwood: It would depend entirely on where he was working and how he was working.

Mr. PICKERING: In a measure it might, but taking it generally, no man can do in 44 hours what he had previously required 48 hours to do.

Mr. Underwood: In a hot place he could not do more in 48 hours than in 44.

Mr. PICKERING: I wish to deal particularly with the phase connected with building. I am quite sure that a man in the building trade could not turn out in 44 hours what he had hitherto done in 48 hours. In preparing estimates for work, I have to go into the question of the cost of labour and the cost of materials required in the construction of a building. The cost of box frame doors and frames of every description at the present time is out of all proportion to the cost of a few years ago. On inquiry at a factory where these doors are made, I find that whereas in 1914 ten doors per day were turned out, at the present time only two doors are being turned out, and that in face of the fact that machinery generally has, if anything, been improved in the interim.

Mr. Pilkington: Surely not by the same number of employees.

Mr. PICKERING: I am speaking of the number turned out per man.

Mr. Chesson: Is there no shortage of material?

Mr. PICKERING: No, they have improved machinery which enables more material to be put together than was the case in 1914; yet the number of doors put together by the individual are in the proportion of two to 10.

Mr. Pilkington: One-fifth of the work.

Mr. Johnston: It is surprising that the price is not even higher than it is.

Mr. PICKERING: The price has gone up by 300 to 400 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not believe the statement.

Mr. PICKERING: It was given to me by a man who knows what he is talking about.

Hon. T. Walker: I should like to interview your informant.

Mr. PICKERING: Let members compare the number of bricks laid to-day with the number laid a few years ago, and see whether the two totals are anything like the same. I contend that, with the present trend of labour, there is no desire to give the output which prevailed some years ago. The tendency is not to equal the amount of work which was done in years past. I admit it is necessary that increased wages should be paid to meet the higher cost of living but, if we wish to decrease the cost of living, it is necessary that everyone should do his utmost to increase the output. While there is any restriction of output, it is obvious that the demand will bring about higher prices. The greater the quantity of any commodity on the market, the cheaper the commodity becomes. The law of supply and demand governs that.

Hon. T. Walker: It can be regulated nowadays.

Mr. PICKERING: It is not regulated to that extent.

Hon. T. Walker: Supplies can be regulated. This is done regularly, as you know.

Mr. PICKERING: We have been told by the members representing the mining industry that increased freights on the railways will tend to close down that industry. When I was speaking a few nights ago on a motion for the removal of protective duties as applied to primary industries, not one member in this Chamber spoke to the motion. Members contend, and it no doubt is true, that this is a Federal matter and that any discussion in this House would have no effect. My reply is that no Federal Parliament could afford to disregard an expression of views by a House of this kind. When members representing the mining industry refrain from protesting against the imposition of higher tariff duties, it surpasses my comprehension. It might be that the mining industry would prefer to sacrifice itself to the secondary industries. That is the only conclusion at which I can arrive. Members admit that the limit at which mines can be profitably worked has been reached, and the only possible avenue of relief that I can see is by the removal, from commodities essential to the industry, of the high duties prevailing to-day; but from what we can gather, these duties are more likely to be increased.

Mr. Chesson: The duties will have no effect on the closing down of the mines.

Mr. PICKERING: To-day it is sought to convert our railway system into a paying business proposition. I need not trouble my memory greatly to recall the time when we spoke of railways as being requisites for developmental purposes. If it is a sine qua non that the railways must pay—

Mr. Smith: Do these railways ever pay from the first?

Mr. PICKERING: Some have, mainly the timber railways. The Nannup line for one was, before the war, one of the best paying propositions of any in this State. If we are going to lay this down as a principle, what will become of such railways as the line from Manjimup to Nornalup Inlet? How can we hope that such lines will pay from the jump except as a result of the timber traffic, but I believe most of the timber to be carried on that line is karri, and I doubt whether that will be a big adjunct in this connection. Reference has been made to the Wyndham Meat Works. If we wish to make these works a payable proposition, we must treat them on exactly the same lines as the State Implement Works were treated. We shall have to write off about one-half of the capital before they will become a payable proposition. Whether this course is contemplated by the Government, I am at a loss to know.

The Minister for Works: How much would you write off?

Mr. PICKERING: About one-half of the cost.

Mr. Pilkington: That will only make them look as if they are paying.

Mr. PICKERING: Various members have spoken of the need for utilising the land adjacent to existing railway lines. If I remember rightly, the Government had a classification made of this land, but I do not recollect that any particulars of that classification were ever laid before the House. It would be interesting to know whether the classification was carried out and the result of it, because a considerable mileage of our railways lies through country which, in my opinion, is absolutely valueless, and the argument about imposing an increased tax to bring that land into occupation and to fruition goes to the wall.

Mr. Lutey: What about the land at Midland Junction?

Mr. PICKERING: I have been over a good portion of our railway system and I know that there are miles and miles of land which could not be cultivated in any circumstances. No matter what tax is put on that land, it will not result in any benefit to the State.

Mr. Smith: People would not take it as a gift.

Mr. PICKERING: Members who are most insistent in advocating taxation on unimproved land values would be the last ones to take advantage of any land which is offering. We have heard a lot of what has been done for the farmer. We have heard members talk of spoonfeeding the farmer, but those who talk so much about spoonfeeding the farmer would be the last to leave their comfortable seats in this Chamber and try to make a living on the land.

Mr. Green: Who said that?

Mr. Chesson: Some of us have had rougher experiences than you.

Mr. PICKERING: We hear a lot of that kind of talk, but the experience lies in the past and not in the future.

Mr. Green: Is not that your own position?

Mr. PICKERING: No, I am sticking to my job.

Mr. Green: In St. George's-terrace.

Mr. PICKERING: No; and if I myself am not working, I have someone doing the work for me.

Mr. Johnston: That is the best plan.

Mr. PICKERING: That is my opinion after having had 18 years of work. I wish to bring under the notice of the Government the question of drains in the South-West. We have a Department of Agriculture which devotes a great deal of attention to irrigation. If the department appointed an officer whose business it was to make a survey of the area lying between Perth and Albany, with a view to locating all the different water tables and elaborating a national scheme of drainage, good service would be done for the State. If we wish to bring the South-Western portion of the State under occupation, it is necessary that some national scheme of drainage should be evolved and given effect to. Drainage boards cannot handle the big phases of this question but, if the water tables were fixed and the drains were laid down, it would be a fair thing to bring into the drainage areas all those people bordering on the main drains, and make them construct subsidiary services. Until some such scheme is undertaken, it will be hopeless for settlers in the South-West to make any satisfactory advance with the cultivation of their land. The land is so sour and water-logged that it becomes absolutely valueless.

Mr. Smith: It wants cheap lime.

Mr. PICKERING: That is becoming available but the land must be drained first. I want to deal with the wheat question. We have heard a great deal about the price of wheat and it has been suggested by the "West Australian" that the price should be fixed, and that the price should be that at which it is being sold for local consumption to-day, namely, 7s. 8d. This, I take it, is the thin edge of the wedge for fixing the limit at which farmers can hope to get the top price for anything they produce.

Mr. Smith: What is the top price?

Mr. PICKERING: I suggest it is the price which wheat or any other commodity fetches in the market.

Mr. Chesson: That is what the farmer gets.

Mr. PICKERING: That is what every section of the community demands for what is produced. The "West Australian" declares that the Government have assisted the wheat farmers to the extent of 3s. 8d. a bushel, and they quote figures to show the losses sustained by the railways on account of the carriage of wheat and other grain and manures. It seems strange that the whole of that should be charged to the two million bushels of wheat allocated for home

consumption. When the price of 7s. 8d. was fixed by the representatives of the wheat growers on the Pool, there was an allowance made of 6d. per bushel on account of the favours conferred by the people of Australia on the wheat growers. The "West Australian" worked this out in their issue of Wednesday at 7d. per bushel, and they charged that against the whole of the wheat. In to-day's issue, however, they corrected the statement and charged it against the wheat for home consumption. Conceding that there is a loss of 7d. per bushel, and that the farmer has already made a concession of 6d., that brings it down to 1d. per bushel, and working it out on the basis of two millions, it comes out at 7d. a bushel. Let us see what the "West Australian" would like the farmer to present to the rest of the community. The "West Australian" says that wheat will probably be 16s. a bushel. Even taking 14s. as the parity price that wheat is likely to attain—

Mr. Pilkington: Where do those figures come from?

Mr. PICKERING: They were published in the "West Australian." Even supposing that the parity may reach 14s., and we take the present price in round figures at 8s. a bushel, there remains 6s. a bushel, which works out at something like £600,000. What other section of the community is asked to make this contribution for the well being of the people? Why should one section be picked out to carry the whole of this burden? I would like to know how the Government hope to settle a State like Western Australia by starting out on the basis that wheat, or any other commodity that a farmer produces, must be limited in the price that it realises. On the other hand, when there is a glut there is no assistance extended to the farmer. I have had the honour to represent my electorate in this Chamber for three years and I have never yet heard an expression of opinion in the direction of advocating a minimum price for the farmers' products. Yet we have members stating that farmers shall not receive full value for their products. They say that the State has gone to the assistance of the farmer in the past through the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank, and a few other things. I would point out, however, that everything that the farmer has had by way of assistance he has had to pay it back with interest. Do hon. members state that other industries are not assisted? What about mining? Look at the assistance that has been rendered in the establishment of State batteries. How much has been given for sinking and many other things?

Mr. Smith: We guaranteed the farmers.

Mr. PICKERING: And how much has been lost by that guarantee? The farmer has had to pay everything back with interest. When the guarantee was given no risk whatever was taken.

Mr. Lutey: They were very well satisfied 10 months ago.

Mr. PICKERING: Suppose they were? The hon. member would not accept to-day what he was accepting ten months ago. If we could get three times as much for our products we would take it.

Mr. Chesson: The mining industry never asks for anything unreasonable.

Mr. PICKERING: Neither does the farmer want anything that is unreasonable. Hon. members do not care who suffer so long as they themselves do not. When the farmers come to Perth to buy anything they have to pay what is asked. There is no suggestion that prices should be reduced to anything like their right value. Where they paid £120 a few years ago for a reaper thrasher, they have to pay £260 to-day. Hon. members tell us that wages in England are higher than they are in Australia to-day, and although there are freight, handling charges, insurance, and everything else, to help them, they say that they must have these increased charges.

Mr. Troy: Who says that?

Mr. PICKERING: The Federal Parliament. If we are really in earnest about our policy of land settlement in this State, are we going to help it by our system of fixing the price at which a farmer can dispose of his commodity? There is one thing that is required in connection with land settlement which has increased in price out of all proportion, and that is wire netting. Other commodities such as building material, iron, implements, etc., have also increased out of all proportion.

The Attorney General: Are the increases peculiar to land settlement?

Mr. PICKERING: They apply to everything, but we do not say that we will fix the price which shall be demanded.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, we do, through the Prices Regulation Commission.

Mr. PICKERING: Take the cost of clearing, and anything else that one likes to mention. Clearing to-day is very difficult and expensive.

Mr. Munsie: How much more are you paying to-day than you were paying 10 years ago?

Mr. PICKERING: One hundred per cent. more.

Mr. Smith: Nonsense.

Mr. Johnston: Well, over 50 per cent.

Mr. Munsie: The Industries Assistance Board will allow you the same amount to-day as they did 10 years ago.

Mr. PICKERING: You cannot possibly expect it to be done for that.

Mr. Munsie: But it is done.

Mr. PICKERING: If we are going to say with regard to wheat that the price is to be limited, then why should we not limit the price of meat, wool, butter, potatoes, and every other commodity that the farmer produces? All this is all right when the high price does not suit a section of the community, but when it falls, the farmer can go

hang. The member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) said that the time would come when we would probably have to go to the assistance of the farmers once more. The farmer has the opportunity now of getting off the Industries Assistance Board and putting by something for difficult times that may come again. But members representing other industries say, "No, we will not allow you to do that." There is nothing to show that prices will not fall; they may fall to-morrow. We know how markets fluctuate, and if the price of wheat should fall below that which farmers are getting to-day, the first cry will be for the removal of the 7s. 8d.

Mr. Chesson: That is a guarantee.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member is wrong. That is the price fixed for local consumption. The guarantee was for 5s. a bushel.

Mr. Smith: Are you in favour of wiping out poultry raising altogether?

Mr. PICKERING: I am in favour of poultry raisers growing produce for their own requirements. Most of them can do that. If they cannot grow wheat they can grow Indian corn.

Mr. Green: They cannot do it in the coastal areas, where poultry is raised.

Mr. PICKERING: I happen to be farming on a coastal area and I can grow rye and as much as I want of it. That is good feed for poultry.

Mr. Smith: They will not touch it.

Mr. PICKERING: They will, and they do well on it. I congratulate the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) on his temperate speech this afternoon on the sandalwood question. The only remark I have to make by way of explanation is that the statement I made to the Chamber with regard to the firm of Paterson & Co. was given to me in good faith. It was sent to me by the firm, and I had every reason to believe in its truth.

Mr. Green: You were misinformed.

Mr. PICKERING: I made the statement that the Chinese had been separated from that firm for the last two years. The member for Kalgoorlie to-day read what purported to be the result of a search—

Mr. Green: On the 13th February last.

Mr. PICKERING: Which shows that the statement I made did not coincide with it. I very much regret if I deceived the House, and misled hon. members in this direction.

Mr. Green: I move that your apology be accepted.

Mr. PICKERING: I was informed by the firm that this interest had ceased to exist two years ago. This may still be so in spite of the result of the search, and the interest may have lapsed prior to that record being made. There is one remark I should like to make concerning the "West Australian."

Mr. Smith: What did they say?

Mr. PICKERING: I think they said that I was overburdened with brains. I wish to draw attention to the aspersions which that

paper cast upon the memories of politicians. There is one thing that a member of Parliament stands in need of, and that is a good memory. The "West Australian," however, accuses members of Parliament of having bad memories. Although that newspaper is strong in its advocacy of self-sacrifice on the part of the farmer, may I ask what self-sacrifice the paper in question is showing? The price of this newspaper is now twopence, and the cost of its advertisements is out of all proportion to their value. The "West Australian" has not shown by its actions any interest in reducing the cost of living in Western Australia. The management does not supply free papers to any section of the community, and does not reduce the price of the advertisements. If the paper is in sympathy with the people of Western Australia they have an opportunity of setting a patriotic example and reducing both the price of the issue and of the advertisements. If people generally would join in universal self-sacrifice I am sure the farmers would be only too ready to meet them half-way. If every section of the community would do its share in these times of difficulty the farmers would be prepared to meet them.

Mr. Chesson: The people are already doing it.

Mr. PICKERING: The farmers are being asked to do everything, and that is unreasonable. They realise that we are up against it, and that we should all do our utmost to help every section of the community. When hon. members talk about putting the burden on the shoulders of the farmer I ask them to carry their own share of the burden in these times of difficulty.

Mr. Mullany: You are the only member who has suggested otherwise.

Mr. PICKERING: Some hon. members will bear out that statement. I trust it will not be thought that the farmer desires to exploit the people. All he wants is a fair deal, and he is prepared to give a fair deal to those who treat him in a like manner.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8.22]: I regret that the Premier is not present, for I had prepared a few notes for him with reference to some remarks made by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). The other evening, when speaking about water supplies, the hon. member drew certain conclusions, which I think I shall be able to show were not quite accurate. The real position of the metropolitan water supply is as follows:—The revenue is £170,600, the expenditure, on salaries, is £21,100, and on wages £42,600, and on interest on debentures £33,510, a total of £97,210, leaving a balance of £73,390. The hon. member points out that this would appear to be a surplus or a profit. The position, however, is that there is a special Act which deals with interest and sinking fund, and for that purpose £76,000 is required. If we deduct £73,390 from £76,000 we find that the Estimates are prepared with a deficiency of £2,610. It was because we

possessed that knowledge that the water rate was made with the object of lessening the gap, which otherwise would have appeared in the circumstances I have quoted. Before the increase of 2d. was approved by me last May it was estimated that there would be a deficit of £17,950, made up as follows: on water, £7,912, on sewerage £8,536, and on storm water £1,502. The extra 2d. was estimated to produce £11,000, so that, as far as we could see in May last, when I authorised the charging of the extra 2d., there would be a deficiency of £6,950.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I want you to look at the footnote on the Estimates, which shows that the £33,000 for interest and sinking fund is included in the £76,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that later. As I have said, we have prepared our Estimates showing a deficiency of £2,610. We expect that the recent award, so far as it applies to the water supply, will make a difference of £4,210 this year. The deficit on the water supply, sewerage, and storm water drainage, at the 30th June, 1921, is estimated to be £6,820. Referring to the interjection of the member for North-East Fremantle, I do not see that the £33,000 is included in the £76,000.

Mr. Munsie: The £76,000 is included in the footnote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The interest and sinking fund are included under the provision made under Special Acts, approximately £76,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The £33,570 is marked "h," and it is shown to be included in the £76,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that is intended.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is how it reads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think perhaps the wording might be improved. The intention is to refer to the interest and sinking fund on debentures. Interest and sinking fund on debentures cannot by any stretch of the imagination be supposed to be interest and sinking fund included in a provision made under Special Acts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is mentioned in your Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The interest and sinking fund under Special Acts is £76,000, and that has been provided for, as the hon. member knows. Under debentures, the interest and sinking fund are shown to be £33,510. Apart from the increased wages, the deficiency is estimated to amount to £2,610, and with the increased wages we expect that the total deficiency will be in the neighbourhood of £6,820. I thought it just as well, before the general discussion was concluded, that this position should be made clear to the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not clear according to the Estimates.

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

Item, Clerk Assistant, and Usher Black Rod:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The salary of the Usher of the Black Rod, compared with what it was when he was appointed, is a small one.

Mr. Smith: He is not getting anything at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He comes under Special Acts, and is not paid anything at all for this position. Another position he holds carries these duties with it. This officer has clearly gone back in salary when we take into consideration the increased cost of living. This is a case which should receive consideration from the Government, or else from the President of the Legislative Council. Something might be paid for this particular work now, in view of the increase in the cost of living since the appointment was made, years ago.

The PREMIER: The Usher of the Black Rod is paid as Clerk of the Executive Council a salary of £350. It is true that that salary was fixed many years ago. I will take the matter into consideration.

Item, Messengers, £80:

Mr. LUTEY: This item appears to indicate very low pay. Were the three messengers on full time for a total expenditure of £111, which was the amount expended last year?

The PREMIER: These Estimates are prepared by the President of the Legislative Council. I take it the messengers are not on full time.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Hon. T. WALKER: Why are they not on full time? When Parliament is sitting, and also when Parliament is in recess, messengers have to be employed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not prepared with any special information regarding this vote for the Legislative Council, but in answer to the question of the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe I may say that there are two messengers engaged at the Council besides the one known as the Chief Messenger. Sessional messengers are engaged just for the period Parliament sits; there is no necessity to keep them on full time. I think two boys are kept on for the Assembly all through the year. The Council puts on a sessional messenger, just as the Assembly puts on sessional messengers.

Mr. LUTEY: A payment of only £80 to two messengers for the whole year indicates a sweating wage of £40.

The Premier: All the messengers are not wanted during the recess.

Mr. LUTEY: But we are told two of them are here all the year round, and only £80 is provided for them. I hope the Government will see whether they cannot remunerate these lads better.

Mr. JONES: It looks as if the intention was to cut down the scanty pittance allowed to these three boys from £111 to £80. There are two messengers on full time, and one messenger for the session only. Apparently, then, two and a-half messengers are to receive a total pittance of £80. Parliament cannot afford to sweat

its employees. If the State cannot afford to pay messenger boys a decent wage, it would be better to let the members of the Council run their own errands.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: One messenger boy, who is kept on permanently, a boy just over the school age, say 15 years of age, gets £1 per week. The other messenger boy is put on just for the session, and is called a sessional messenger. He is even younger than the other boy; he is the small boy whom hon. members can see at the Legislative Council door. Last year the Chief Messenger received £204; this year he is to receive £225, or an increase of £21. The item of £111 is for one permanent messenger boy and one sessional messenger boy, both of them 14 or 15 years of age, who stay a year or two. The House Committee have made provision for these boys to attend the Technical School, though I do not know whether the boys avail themselves of that opportunity. The permanent boy gets £1 per week, and I suppose the other boy also gets £1 per week.

Mr. Mullany: No boy gets less than £1 per week.

Mr. Chesson: Do these boys get their food in addition to this sweating wage of £1 per week?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: On sitting days the boys get a meal here, which is charged up to the House Committee. The officers of the House are all treated in the same way. At the tea adjournment they all have their tea here, and that meal is paid for by the House Committee. If the officers are called upon to do any work in connection with select committees which keeps them here during the day, they get their midday meal as well.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Over 20 years ago Sir John Forrest laid it down that boys leaving school to enter the public service were to get £60 per annum for a start. Now, 20 years later, we find boys in the employ of Parliament on £1 per week.

Mr. GREEN: I think the parliamentary messengers, and particularly the junior messengers, are indeed more poorly paid than they should be. During the last two years there was a boy employed by the Legislative Council—he left quite recently—at £1 a week. That was the salary he was receiving when he left. Seeing nothing ahead of him, and no chance of a rise, he left to better himself. We know that the Chief Messenger in either House has a good deal of work to do and can make himself extremely useful to members. Unless there is a sufficient amount of remuneration to induce a smart boy to stay here, the prospect of getting good officers of that kind is remote.

Mr. Smith: But a messenger boy cannot stay long; he cannot remain a messenger boy all his life.

Mr. GREEN: That is so; but there should be a reasonable chance for these lads to

obtain better paid positions around the Houses.

The Minister for Works: How long would the boys have to wait for such positions?

Mr. GREEN: A long time, possibly; but no boy should be kept on here for two years at £1 per week. I accept the Speaker's assurance that the boys get a meal per day here; but it seems that some of them must prefer a bit of bread and jam, or a bit of bread and butter and an onion, to the meal provided by Parliament, because I have seen a boy make his lunch on such food.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am sorry that the member for Kalgoorlie and perhaps other members of the Committee have not thoroughly understood me; perhaps I have not made myself clear. On days when Parliament is sitting, the boys get one meal per day. That meal is the tea meal, not the luncheon meal. The boys bring their luncheon on sitting days the same as, I suppose, they do on days when the House stands adjourned. In the evening the boys have on their table exactly the same food as hon. members have on their tables in the dining room, and for which food members pay. I do not think there is any distinction made. I have had no complaints. The boys come here young, from school, as messenger boys. In most cases it would be the first employment they ever had. Our difficulty is that there is no scope for boys as messenger boys. Let me give an illustration which I know can be borne out by at least one member of this Committee: We had a boy for a number of years attending to the telephone, and he grew from a boy to a man; and I knew it was not fair to him to keep him in that telephone room. I think he was then about 20 years of age.

Mr. Green: Was that Joseph Malone?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr. Green: A very smart lad, too.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes; and his long experience in the telephone room enabled him to do the work very well indeed.

Mr. Green: What was he getting?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I think, 27s. 6d. a week.

Mr. Green: He got 12s. a day after he left.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Through the secretary of the House Committee I advised the boy to seek some other position, since he had outgrown the post up here and there was no hope of increasing his wages. Still the boy hung on, until at last it was intimated to him that if he did not seek another job we would not help him, not even to the extent of giving him a reference. I learnt that the doctor had told him that he was weak chested and ought to get out into the open air. Now I understand that the only regret the lad has is that he remained here so long. He has since told the Minister for Works that he would not have remained here so long had he known what opportunities were awaiting him elsewhere. It is absurd to have young men

up here doing the work of boys. Recently I got a boy into a commercial firm, where he was paid 10s. a week to start, and was granted a substantial rise a few months later.

Mr. LUTEY: Ten shillings a week these days is sweating.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: A boy coming here from school receives £1 per week. It is not a calling which I should be pleased to see a boy of mine enter, but what we offer is not bad for a boy leaving school.

Mr. Smith: It is more than most hon. members started at.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is at least as much as he would get anywhere else to begin with. If the boys who come here cared to study, they could prepare themselves for better positions in the public service.

Mr. LUTEY: I hope the Government will take into consideration the high cost of living and see whether they cannot pay the boys a better wage. The money offering is not fair; the Government ought to be ashamed of themselves.

The PREMIER: It is not a question for the Government. It is for you and other hon. members to say.

Mr. LUTEY: Then I say we should immediately raise the wages or dispense with the boys altogether.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Probably I had some part in inducing the boy Malone to leave Parliament House. One day after he had left I met him in the train. He told me he had been working at the timber mills, and that it had done him so much good that he was a different lad altogether.

Mr. Underwood: He would have done better still if he had gone up North.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At all events he went out of this dreary hole, where he had no prospects whatever. He went into the open air and took on a man's work, and was so satisfied with it that he told me he would never again coop himself up. As to what should be paid the boys here, it is a matter of opinion, but I would not see a boy of mine wasting his life and injuring his health in that telephone room, remaining there for hours after the time when he should be in bed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The position of the boys at Parliament House requires consideration. The work here is boy's work and the trouble is that there is no outlet for the boys. When on the House Committee I endeavoured to find a solution of the difficulty. Many people think it is a fine thing to get their boys into Parliament House.

Mr. Green: They think they will become politicians.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then they do not know what a politician is. I endeavoured to arrange a system under which, when a boy had been here a few years, he could pass on to some other occupation. In my opinion a boy coming here should take up a course at the Technical School with a view to passing from here to the public service. We can get

the best boys in the country, but it is unfair to those boys to keep them here until they have grown into men, and then turn them off. We should endeavour to provide some outlet for those boys. If restricted to a year or two the training they get here might be very useful to them in later days. The question of what to do with the boys employed at Parliament House, how to pass them on when they become men, deserves the consideration of hon. members. It is not a question of paying them men's wages, for the work they do is distinctly boys' work. What is required is some means of turning out those boys useful citizens after they have completed their work here.

Mr. JONES: I should like some assurance from the Premier. I cannot move that the amount be increased, so there seems to be nothing to do than plead to the stony hearts of the Government to give these boys a living wage. Some of them work 12 or 14 hours a day during the session. Could not some system of overtime be arranged to their advantage? We should have some explanation from the House Committee as to whether it is intended to continue to sweat these boys.

Item, Incidental £150:

Mr. MULLANY: There is here an increase in last year's expenditure over and above the estimate. I should like some explanation.

The PREMIER: It was due to some expenditure in connection with the President's room. The care of this building and everything connected with it is in the hands of the President, the Speaker and the House Committee. The Government have no control, except that the Treasurer may reduce the estimates submitted. It must be understood that, when payments are made from this vote, they are made upon accounts submitted to and passed by the House Committee and certified by a certifying officer attached to the committee. From time to time there must be renewals and repairs, even at Parliament House. I understand that these curtains were procured and the additional amount is required to pay for them.

Hon. T. Walker: You cannot tell us what the expenditure is for?

The PREMIER: I have told members that the expenditure is for curtains for the President's room.

Mr. Underwood: Window curtains.

The PREMIER: Does the member for Kanowna expect me to go around and see what is being done? The House Committee have been appointed to look after this work.

Hon. T. Walker: I want to know what you know about it.

The PREMIER: Even when the item appears on the Estimates, it is for the House Committee to say whether the money shall be expended.

Mr. Underwood: Do you only pay for what the committee agree to?

The PREMIER: The money is voted and expended by order of the committee. There are no regulations governing the control of these premises.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is not on the vote of the House Committee.

The PREMIER: It is on the Legislative Council vote.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That does not deal with repairs and renewals.

The PREMIER: The Speaker has control of a portion of the premises, the President has control of another portion, and the House Committee have certain other control, but I understand that the House Committee pass the votes for all these purposes.

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

The PREMIER: Then the House Committee should insist upon doing so. I believe that these curtains were necessary and so the amount appears on the Estimates.

Mr. MULLANY: As a member of the House Committee, I asked for this information. The Premier has not told the House that the extra amount is for the purchase of certain curtains for the President's room. I wish to explain exactly what occurred. The House Committee are treated as a Government department to the extent that they received a circular from the Treasury on the 25th May last containing the following instructions:—

When compiling the expenditure Estimates, every economy must be exercised; every item must be justified. It is desired to reduce to a minimum the number and amount of excess items. The Estimates must, therefore, provide for all essential services.

On the 15th July, the President was on a visit to the Eastern States but, at his request, the Speaker asked the House Committee to agree to provide new curtains and casement blinds for the President's room. The House Committee, having in mind the necessity for economy, examined the curtains and were unanimously of opinion that they were quite suitable for at least a few years' further service. They were prepared to provide new casement blinds, which were in a bad state, but the Committee refused to authorise the expenditure of any money to provide new curtains. At the following meeting of the House Committee, held on the 11th August, the President attended. When the President had been informed that the House Committee had refused to authorise the expenditure for new curtains, he made this remark—according to the minutes—"The President referred to the minute relating to curtains for his room and, after pointing out that the room was under his control, said he would pay for the casement as well as the hanging curtains from the Legislative Council vote." He also indulged in a little mild satire to the effect that he would not trespass on the kindness of the House

Committee by allowing them to pay for the casement blinds out of the House Committee vote, but that he would pay for the whole of the curtains out of the Legislative Council vote. If the President has power to authorise expenditure in this way, it is simply farcical to retain the House Committee. The President, in the first instance, recognised that the proper course to take was to ask the House Committee to authorise this expenditure. The House Committee, having refused to do so, the President, quite airily said, "I shall not trespass upon your kindness but will pay for the whole of the curtains out of the Legislative Council vote." The curtains which were hanging in the President's room have been removed, and new ones have been installed. I do not profess to know so much about the value of curtains as does the President, but the only recommendation in favour of the new curtains is that, like the President, they are somewhat new to the position they occupy. If I were asked to take my choice of the old curtains and the new ones, I would certainly prefer the old ones. I cannot continue to remain a member of the House Committee if things are to be done in this way.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Move to reduce the vote.

Mr. MULLANY: I therefore move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £30.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Menzies has made it clear that the House Committee were unanimous that the expenditure at the time was uncalled for. The first argument for installing new curtains was that the new President was likely to have visitors and he wanted his room to look decent. Unless one examined the old curtains very closely, he would not notice anything wrong with them. In view of the high price of material, and of the minute we had received from the Treasury, we thought that only absolute necessities should be purchased, and we deemed the time inopportune to purchase new curtains for the President's room. I, too, feel rather sore that a decision of the House Committee should have been overridden in this way.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There seems to be some difference of opinion as to the powers of the House Committee. As chairman of the committee, I would point out that this item has nothing whatever to do with the House Committee. It is the Legislative Council vote, which is under the control of the President, and all the items are set out, namely, postage and telephones £15, stationery £35, other £100. If members look at the Estimates for last year, they will find that the item "other" does not appear; it was specifically laid down what each amount was for. The only way in which I can define the powers and authority of the House Committee will be when we reach the vote of the House Committee. The amount "Incidental £1,375" is controlled by the House

Committee and consists of the following items:—Telephones £225, firewood £90, water £90, renewals £265, other £705. I do not know what the item "other" represents. To my knowledge it has never before appeared in the Estimates, and I have been in the House for 20 years. I do not know why it was put there. With regard to the expenditure for new curtains, the President was leaving the State to attend to some business in Melbourne. There are three windows in his room and the President asked that the matter of purchasing hanging and casement curtains should be brought before the Committee. I said to him, "Can you give me any idea of the cost, because that might influence the Committee." He replied, "I have an estimate; it is between £27 and £30." I said, "Then I am safe in putting it before the Committee at £30." The President replied, "Quite so." When the Committee met I brought the matter of the curtains before the members present. The Committee had their meeting in the President's room, and inspected the curtains which were there. The hanging curtains were seen to be slightly faded, but of course they had been there for a good number of years. The casement curtains were absolutely perished. The Committee decided that there was no necessity to go to a big expense to secure new hanging curtains and they passed a resolution agreeing to purchase casement curtains, but turned down the proposal to buy new hanging curtains. I reported the matter to the President on his return, and he said, "I will pay for them out of my vote." I presume, therefore, that the curtains having been installed, the President intends to pay for them out of his vote. The matter came up again at the next Committee meeting. At that meeting the President showed that he was not altogether pleased with the action of the Committee. Evidently the item under discussion has been placed on the Estimates to cover the cost of the curtains. The Committee having decided that the expenditure was not warranted, they were not altogether pleased at the purchase being made over their heads.

Mr. Underwood: Not only over their heads, but spending the money as well.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not know that any good will arise from a discussion on the matter now that it has been ventilated. One member of the Committee said that the expenditure of the money could not be justified as it had been turned down by the Committee. The Committee decided that a certain line of action should be adopted, and yet the very thing that the Committee tried to avoid was carried out. The President may be the best judge of what is required for his room; I am not going to question his judgment. I have merely drawn attention to the position the House Committee occupy and the stand that was taken. The House Committee dealt with this matter just as they would have dealt with any other. At that

same meeting the House Committee had before them an application for an increase in the wages of the staff, but they could not see their way to accede to it, and having arrived at that decision they felt that they could not authorise the expenditure of a sum of money on new curtains, especially as they thought that the existing curtains would last another two or three years.

Mr. JONES: This question is undoubtedly an evasion of prerogative in the matter of what money should be spent in the House. On the other hand, looking at the matter seriously, we must really consider that a certain amount of money is needed in order to keep up the position that the President holds. It certainly requires the furniture and embellishments to be in keeping with the breeches and buckles of the position. We have not been told exactly what sort of curtains were purchased. At any rate, I am not clear as to whether the curtains were of felt, muslin, or crêpe-de-chine, or what colour they were or what the length was. We surely should have that information before we can vote intelligently on the amendment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The only point that concerns me is whether the curtains were worn out. We are told that they were in good order.

Mr. Underwood: And condition.

The Minister for Works: They wanted cleaning, perhaps.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: As hon. members are continually preaching economy, I agree that it would be unwise to pass the amount of £30 for the payment of the new curtains. The Premier has told us that he was under the impression that all money spent here was spent with the approval of the House Committee, and he thought that when accounts were presented for payment that they had been passed by that Committee. I do not believe in giving any officer of the House the full right to spend money in any way he may think fit. In this case we are told that the Committee inspected the curtains, and that in their opinion they would have lasted another two or three years. It is necessary that we should put a stop to this kind of thing and make not only the President, but the Speaker as well, realise that when we appoint a House Committee we intend that that Committee shall say how the money voted them shall be expended. The £30 spent on the curtains might well have gone towards effecting improvements to some school; it certainly could have been spent to better advantage.

Amendment put and passed.

Vote (as reduced to £885) agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st September.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.30]: I have no objection to the

passing of the second reading of this Bill, but I ask that the committee stage be postponed until next Tuesday. There are one or two matters contained in the schedule which require attention, and seeing that the Bill was only circulated last Tuesday, there has been no opportunity yet to deal with them. This is the usual Bill brought down every session. It is rendered necessary owing to the alteration of the various districts and the need to provide for the carrying-on of industries. I am in favour of the passing of the second reading.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.32 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 28th September, 1920.

	PAGE
Bills: Stallions Registration, 1A.	732
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 1A.	732
Local Authorities Sinking Funds, 2A., Com. report.	732
Carriers, received.	732
High School Act Amendment, returned.	732
Building Societies, received.	732
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2A.	733
Rottnest Island, 2A.	735
Western Meat Works, 2A., Com.	736
Prices Regulation Act. Amendment and Continuance, 2A.	737
Motions: Commissioner of Railways, appointment of Lieut.-Colonel Pope, C.B.	738
War Gratuity Bonds redemption.	746

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

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, Stallions Registration.

Introduced by the Honorary Minister.

2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

Introduced by Hon. J. E. Dodd.

3, Carriers.

Received from the Assembly.

4, Building Societies.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES SINKING FUNDS.

Second Reading.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [4.37] in moving the second reading of this Bill said: I desire to point out that it is a measure of only two clauses, giving local authorities power to take up war gratuity bonds, or to cash war gratuity bonds for their employees. Employees of local authorities who went to the war now find themselves in the position of holding war gratuity bonds and of requiring money, and they have not been able to get their bonds cashed without going to persons who want a very considerable discount. It is within my knowledge that various local authorities are anxious to meet their employees in this connection. We know that the funds of local authorities are raised by rating, and there is a provision that not less than two per cent. of the money collected must be deposited with the Colonial Treasurer towards a sinking fund to redeem the loans of local authorities. The local authorities have no power to invest that money in other than State securities. War gratuity bonds being a Federal security, the local authorities, if they are to cash them, must be given specific authority to do so. The Bill limits the investment of the sinking funds of local authorities, so far as Federal securities are concerned, to war gratuity bonds. If this measure passes, the local authorities will lodge war gratuity bonds instead of cash with the Colonial Treasurer. Payment of those bonds is to be made in March, 1924, or about three and a half years hence. The local authorities at present get four per cent. interest on the money deposited with the Colonial Treasurer as sinking fund. As the war gratuity bonds carry 5½ per cent. interest, this will be an advantage to the local authorities. I do not think it is necessary further to urge the passing of this very necessary measure on hon. members, and I move—

• That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly with an amendment.