

Is their respite from the nerve destroying and strength-sapping fatigue of the trenches to be limited, to be restricted because of scarcity of men, whilst thousands who should go are seeking only to reap the harvest of individual liberty and national greatness that these men are sowing. The alternative to all this is compulsory service, that each shall contribute to conserve the rights and liberties of all. So far as Western Australia is concerned, I believe that the Government, the Parliament and the people, without regard to class or creed or party, will stand behind Mr. Hughes and say, "We have put our hand to the plough and we will not turn back." I desire to move the following amendment:—

We beg to assure Your Excellency that we will give the most careful consideration to measures that will best promote the welfare and prosperity of Western Australia.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.48]: I second the amendment.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Drew debate adjourned.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.49]: In moving the adjournment of the House I should like to intimate to members that if we meet again to-morrow I hope they will be prepared to go on with the debate. I do not want members to meet to-morrow and then to find that only one or two members speak. It will best suit all parties if we go on with the debate till it is concluded and then we can take up the business of the House.

House adjourned at 5.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th September, 1916.

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

ELECTION RETURNS.

The Speaker announced the return of writs for the election of members for Sussex, Moore, Northam, Murray-Wellington, Canning, and Coolgardie, showing that the Hon. Frank Wilson (Premier and Treasurer), Hon. H. B. Lefroy (Minister for Lands), Hon. Jas. Mitchell (Minister for Railways), Hon. W. J. George (Minister for Works), Hon. R. T. Robinson (Attorney General), and Mr. Lambert respectively, had been duly elected.

The hon. members took the oath and subscribed the roll.

ELECTORAL—BROWNHILL-IVANHOE SEAT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that, in consequence of the resignation of Mr. Seaddan, a writ was issued for the election of a member for the electoral district of Brownhill-Ivanhoe. Mr. Lutey was declared elected, but, Mr. Lutey having resigned on the 15th inst., a writ has been again issued for the election of a member.

OBITUARY—MR. C. McDOWALL, LETTER IN REPLY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the widow of the late Mr. C. McDowall the following letter:—

Lynton, Colin-street, 16th August, 1916.
Hon. M. F. Troy, M.L.A. Dear Sir,—
Will you please convey to the members

of the Legislative Assembly my sincere thanks for their sympathy in reference to my late husband. It was indeed comforting to know that he was held in such high esteem by all the members. I am also very grateful to you for your personal opinion so kindly and feelingly expressed. Yours very sincerely (sgd.) H. McDowall.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE SOILS, PAPERS.

Mr. WALKER (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the Minister lay on the Table all the papers and reports relating to the soils of the Esperance district?

The PREMIER replied: I shall have much pleasure in doing so.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Railways: 1, Returns of Receipts and Expenditure on Government Tramways for quarter ended 30th June, 1916. 2, Reports in accordance with Sections 54 and 83 of "The Government Railways Act, 1904," for quarter ended 30th June, 1916. 3, Report of the Industries Assistance Board to 30th June, 1916.

By the Premier: Public Service Regulations (embodying amendments up to 1st May, 1916).

By the Minister for Lands: 1, By-laws (Section 43) under "The Land Act, 1898," and amendments. 2, Land Clearing Operations.—Audit of Accounts for year ended 30th June, 1916. 3, Stock Suspense Accounts.—Regulations. 4, Amendment of Regulation 18 under "The Abattoirs Act, 1909." 5, Amended Regulations under "The Abattoirs Act, 1909." 6, By-laws under "The Cemeteries Act, 1897," and amendments. 7, Regulations under "The Zoological Gardens Act, 1898." 8, Additional Regulation under "The Plant Diseases Act, 1914" (Potatoes). 9, Regulations under "The Plant Diseases Act, 1914."

By the Minister for Works: 1, Additional Uniform General By-laws for regulating registration of motor vehicles. 2, Amendment of Uniform General By-laws for motor traffic and standard lights. 3, Building By-laws—Queen's Park Road Board.

4, By-laws.—Ninghan Road Board, under "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1906." 5, Building By-law No. 39.—City of Perth. 6, By-law No. 29 *re* motor vehicles—City of Perth. 7, By-law *re* erection of sign boards, etc., Fremantle Municipality. 8, By-law No. 9 (Parks and Reserves).—Amendment—City of Perth. 9, By-laws *re* Sale Yards.—Wagin Municipality. 10, Additional By-laws *re* motor and other traffic—North Fremantle Municipality. 11, Amendment to By-laws.—Carnarvon Municipality. 12, Erratum, By-law No. 39.—City of Perth.

By the Honorary Minister: 1, Amendment to Regulations of the Education Department. 2, Amendment of By-laws of Albany Water Supply. 3, Amendment of By-laws of Derby Water Supply. 4, Medical Department Regulations—Amendment of Regulation 19. 5, Resolution and By-laws under "The Health Act, 1911-15"—Dowerin Road Board. 6, Health By-laws—City of Perth. 7, Meat Inspection and Branding—Amendment of Regulations. 8, Adoption of Model By-laws—Comet Vale Local Board of Health. 9, Amendment of By-laws—West Kimberley Road Board. 10, Adoption of Model By-laws—Bunbury Municipal Council. 11, Port Regulations—Amendment of Regulation 76. 12, Report of the Harbour and Light Department for year ended 30th June, 1916. 13, Return showing number of members in each industrial union as on the 31st December, 1915.

By the Attorney General and Minister for Mines,—1, Additional Regulation No. 40B under "The Mining Act, 1904." 2, Timber Regulations under "The Land Act, 1898."

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [4.40]: In accordance with custom I desire to inform you, Mr. Speaker, and the Chamber that I have been elected, for the time being, leader of the Opposition.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills of last session reported:—1, War Council. 2, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment. 3, Supplement-

ary Loan Bill, £1,300,000. 4, Health Act Amendment. 5, Road Closure. 6, Licensing Act Amendment Continuance. 7, Land Act Amendment. 8, Permanent Reserve. 9, Appropriation. 10, Sale of Liquor Regulation.

ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill (No. 1), £1,298,000.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the 20th July.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.52]: When the House adjourned some seven weeks ago, strong exception was taken by our friends occupying the Opposition benches at the present time to the adjournment of seven weeks which was asked for on behalf of the Government by the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. D. Connolly). I want to say here that a seven months' adjournment would have been totally inadequate to enable incoming Ministers to fathom the mysterious ways of their predecessors.

Mr. Underwood: Try seven years.

The PREMIER: Seven months would not have been adequate to enable us to unravel, as we intend to do, the marvellous system of administration of our predecessors and their devious methods of finance. Notwithstanding the experience and ability of the colleagues whom I have around me, I am sure that the House generally will understand that it will take a very long time indeed for Ministers to get a complete grasp and an intimate knowledge of the numerous undertakings with which the State has been saddled during the past five years.

Mr. Underwood: It will take you a good while.

The PREMIER: Ministers have assiduously applied themselves to the work of their departments during the short adjournment, and I shall leave it to my colleagues to make the necessary announcements to the

House from time to time, as the session advances, in connection with the work of their respective departments. So far as the personnel of the Cabinet is concerned, the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. D. Connolly) made an announcement setting forth the titles of Ministers; and I now wish to enlarge slightly on that announcement, in order to permit hon. members to understand the re-arrangement of the departments. Many alterations have not been made; but some which we thought desirable in the interests of the country have, of course, been brought about. The Railways have been transferred from the Premier's Department to the Minister for Railways and Water Supply (Hon. James Mitchell). Water Supply has been transferred from the Mines Department to his care. The various industries, covering the Industries Assistance Board, have been transferred from the Agricultural Department to the Minister for Railways and Water Supply; and the Agricultural Bank has also been transferred to his care from the Treasury.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Has the wheat scheme gone over too?

The PREMIER: Yes. Lands and Agriculture are, of course, controlled by my friend, the Hon. H. B. Lefroy, with the exception of the branches which have been committed to the care of the Hon. James Mitchell. The Colonial Secretary (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) takes charge of the Education Department in addition to the other departments heretofore under the control of the Colonial Secretary. The Education Department, as hon. members are aware, was formerly controlled by the Attorney General. The present Attorney General (Hon. R. T. Robinson) takes over the Mines Department in addition to the Attorney Generalship. The Minister for Works and Trading Concerns (Hon. W. J. George) has virtually the same powers as his predecessor, but Mr. George now absolutely controls the Workers' Homes Board.

Mr. Foley: He ought to control his own tongue, too, about the Germans.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) will take his own advice. I do not know what is disturbing that hon. member.

Mr. Foley: You will find out before the debate closes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: Why this unseemly interruption on the part of the member for Leonora? I have a duty to perform. The Premier has been relieved of the Railways, as I mentioned before, and now simply controls the Treasury, apart from endeavouring to control his colleagues. The Honorary Minister (Hon. J. D. Connolly) is controlling the Water Supply Department through the Hon. James Mitchell, and, in addition, is assisting other colleagues in special business with which his previous experience has made him conversant. I regret to say that the Honorary Minister in another place (Hon. A. J. H. Saw), who was assisting the Colonial Secretary in the administration of the Medical Department, has left for the front. I regret to say that from a personal point of view, because the new Government hoped to have very valuable assistance indeed from Dr. Saw; and I am sure that had the hon. gentleman remained in the State we should have received that assistance. Dr. Saw's special knowledge and ability and tact would have gone a long way to assist in the administration of the Health Department. However, he is serving his country at the front; and one cannot take exception to that. It is, perhaps, the best thing the hon. gentleman could do. My colleagues, as I said at the outset, are men of experience and ability; and I am satisfied the country generally deems them such. The result of the election at Northam, and more especially the result of the Canning election, the majorities gained by my two colleagues, and the fact that the poll in both instances was the heaviest on record, represent to my mind an undoubted endorsement of the new Government, and constitute an emphatic reply to the Trades Hall counsellors who induced my friend Mr. Scaddan to abandon his Brown Hill-Ivanhoe electors in order to oppose the present Attorney General. I am sure the result of the Canning election is an indication of the feeling right throughout the country, and I look upon it as an instruction to the Government to endeavour fearlessly to adjust the finances and to provide sound administration as

outlined by me in my policy speech delivered at Busselton.

Mr. Bolton: You have not mentioned Coolgardie.

The PREMIER: I am quite prepared to give the electors right throughout the State a chance at any time to express their opinions. I do not think my friends opposite want to give the electors that chance at present.

Mr. Underwood: Are you prepared to oppose Mr. Scaddan at Brown Hill-Ivanhoe? That is a fair proposition.

The PREMIER: Will Mr. Scaddan oppose me in Sussex?

Opposition Members: Yes.

The PREMIER: Why did not Mr. Scaddan come down to Sussex and oppose me? I wonder why he did not. Why did he select, out of the whole team, the smallest man in stature to oppose? Mr. Scaddan picked out what he thought was the weakest member. Mr. Scaddan thought he could easily down the present Attorney General, but he was very much mistaken, because the man small in stature was able to lay Mr. Scaddan low, big as he is. The aim of the present Government is, as I have voiced on many and many occasions, to restore confidence throughout the State and I am glad that there is a better feeling already exhibited in business circles, in labour circles, and in industrial circles; there is a better feeling in existence right throughout the country already brought about by the fact that there has been a change of Government. We hope to encourage the investment of capital in Western Australia. We wish to induce people to invest in our industrial and other pursuits, and our aim is to give those who invest their money in the State security of tenure and immunity from State competition which has been so disastrous in recent years as carried out by our friends opposite. Notwithstanding the jibes of our opponents it is our intention to oppose unjust and illegal trusts and combines and to do what we can to encourage every honest effort on the part of the citizens of the State in the direction of increased production. We are out to assist by all the means in our power the encouragement of the primary producers in the great work which they have in hand.

Mr. Underwood: You have already dismissed some of them.

The PREMIER: And we look on these primary industries combining mining, pastoral, and agriculture as the industries in which the sure foundation of the State extends. These industries are to be encouraged and fostered so far as in our power lies. The mining industry, which our friends are so apt and willing to throw at us as being an industry that we do not value or recognise, is as we believe it has been in the past the foundation and success of Western Australia, and we give place to no one in the realisation of the immense benefit the mining industry has been to the State and the immense possibilities which therein lies. The opposition to the Minister who controls that department, the Attorney General, which actually assumed the dimensions of a chorus of disapproval from many of our friends opposite and many others as well, is foolish in the extreme, and I venture to think that members of the Opposition to-day realise that the right man is in charge of that department, the right man to encourage the advancement and extension of that industry. Unfortunately for those who criticised at the recent election, and immediately before, the appointment of Mr. Robinson as Minister for Mines, a crisis soon arose on the goldfields that quickly demonstrated his ability, tactfulness and sympathy with the gold-mining industry. The goldfields Press cried him down, at the same time gave a very doubtful compliment to our friends opposite by saying that at any rate they had done no harm to the gold-mining industry. Everyone recognised that a very serious crisis arose when the question of the employment of alien enemies was taken in hand and several mines were closed down owing to the men showing unnatural resentment in having to work with men whom they believed to be enemies of this country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You were going to lead them to battle, you said so a little while ago.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is not making a correct statement and he knows it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are the Italians the men—

The PREMIER: The hon. member mixes our allies with our enemies. It makes little

difference to him whether they are Germans, Austrians, Italians, or Frenchmen, all are calculated to rouse his choler. This crisis arose and assumed very serious proportions, which resulted in the closing down of nearly all the mines on the Golden Belt and affected some four thousand men. That, as members will remember, caused a deputation consisting of members of Parliament and representatives of industrial bodies and civic authorities to wait on me to see if we could find some way out of the trouble. I commend these gentlemen for approaching me so readily, and the practical proposals for settlement which were put before that deputation immediately by my colleague, the Minister for Mines, and his ready response to their request that he should visit the goldfields, and by tactfully and energetically acting in the capacity of intermediary brought about in less than a week an agreement and resumption of work. This ought to point out to those who have belied him that he is the right man in the right place and they ought to be the first to acknowledge the good work that he has done.

Mr. Collier: Whilst giving the Minister credit for what is due, I hope we shall not be having this *ad nauseam*.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is only emphasising his offence.

Mr. Collier: But there has appeared a great deal in the Press.

The PREMIER: He has had nothing in the Press from me. Perhaps the hon. member will add his eulogy to mine.

Mr. Collier: I will give him all that is due to him.

The PREMIER: The Government are certainly entitled to credit for having solved this difficulty which had been threatening the mining industry for 12 or 18 months and which had not been solved previously notwithstanding the goldfields ministry of the day tried their hand, and the Commonwealth Government itself had interfered. The prospects for the future of this industry are of paramount importance to the State and I venture to say the possibilities are nothing like exhausted. The Government intend to make special efforts to encourage the development of our mineral resources. I admit that the history of the world goes to show

that when once the goldfields begin to retrogress it is difficult to stay them, but there is such a large extent of mineral area in Western Australia which is still almost untouched, unprospected, that we have great hopes that the gold-mining industry for many, many years to come will be a main factor in the progress of Western Australia.

Mr. Mullany: You told the member for Kalgoorlie to take his mines and himself to the Eastern States some time ago.

The PREMIER: Possibly I told the hon. member to take himself to the Eastern States and leave his mines behind. I think that is more likely. The Minister is calling in the assistance of those engaged and interested in the mining industry. He wants to obtain the benefit of their knowledge, experience, and practical suggestions so that we may embark on the correct lines to carry on this important industry. The proposal for a conference has already received the approbation of the miners' unions and the Chamber of Mines, and I hope that during my occupancy of office we may do something to earn rather more than the newspaper eulogy received by my friends opposite. There are many abandoned leases on the goldfields that have never since been reopened and the Minister proposes to have these properties encouraged and made known. He proposes to deal with the properties which have been developed partly by the assistance of public funds from the Mines Development vote. These leases which have had public funds spent on them together with private funds should be developed. New-comers are not induced to enter on leases of that description when they know that there is a large financial responsibility to shoulder which has been incurred previously. We hope that some arrangement may be come to whereby people may be induced to go and develop these properties. The pastoral industry is one to which I must give a passing reference as it is a big asset to Western Australia. As all the leases expire in 1928 action will have to be taken after due inquiry has been made. New leases must have a full and reasonable term to run otherwise we cannot induce people to go to the initial expenditure which is necessary to develop them. This matter is being inquired into as well

as the limitation of the areas to be held. We want to encourage the small pastoralists and the cattle growers in order that they may get the advantage not only of the industry as such, but also that we may have a sufficient supply of meat for food purposes for the people in the more congested areas. The classification of the lands available, the adjustment of rents in proportion to the distance from shipping ports, the class of land and water supplies available are all matters which will have to be taken into consideration in the readjusting and the fixing of the rents to be paid.

Mr. Green: Will that refer to pastoral leases on the goldfields?

The PREMIER: All pastoral leases. Legislation will probably be necessary in that direction. With regard to the agricultural industry I do not want to weary hon. members by a long dissertation on that which we have heard about year after year, but I must touch upon the agricultural industry, perhaps the most important of all our industries. The reproductiveness of the soil is the foundation of a country's prosperity, and I am satisfied that as we find the years roll by history will repeat itself, and the prosperity of our magnificent and great State will depend more and more upon this important industry which we are just establishing. The hard times which our farmers have passed through owing to drought and war undoubtedly entitle them to every consideration, and I want to make it perfectly clear that nothing has been promised the farmers' representatives by the present Government but what is absolutely in keeping with our liberal policy and our public pronouncements from time to time.

Mr. Angwin: If they get better treatment than they had in the past, God help the country.

The PREMIER: I hope they will have more sympathetic treatment than that which was given them in the past few years. I am satisfied that we cannot give them too much sympathy.

Mr. Angwin: They do not want sympathy, they want assistance.

The PREMIER: I am, however, convinced that the individual prosperity of

even the hon. member hangs very largely upon what the agricultural industry is to be.

Mr. Angwin: We gave them every assistance.

The PREMIER: The hon. member and his Government squandered money right and left and assisted the waster and allowed the honest man to be turned away from the door. The previous Government had no system at all.

Mr. Foley: Are you getting out a list of the wasters now?

The PREMIER: The whole business was in a state of chaos and it was almost a hopeless task to disentangle it. We have already done something to assist the agriculturist by abolishing the railway terminal charges.

Mr. Angwin: You put them on.

The PREMIER: And we reduced the fertiliser freights from one penny to one farthing per ton per mile from the same date. Of course we put them on in the first instance, but we did so with the full knowledge of the farmers and settlers that agricultural railways were then being constructed. It was part and parcel of the policy and it was accepted as such. The hon. member and his friends went to the country in 1911 with the promise that they would abolish this iniquitous charge. But what did they do? They took it off for five minutes and put it on again, and added fertiliser freights to the extent of nearly 400 per cent. That shows the practical sympathy of our friends opposite towards the farming industry. The Minister for Works has also taken into consideration the question of freights on lines now under construction, and instead of keeping settlers hanging on month after month, and year after year paying contractors' rates on those lines, he has reduced the rates to the level of those applying on the open railway system. The dingo pest which is causing trouble to the settlers has already been tackled, and the rewards have been reinstated in the hope that the pest may be exterminated. Again with regard to the agricultural industry, as outlined in the Press, we have in accordance with our policy appointed a Royal Commission consisting of Messrs. Giles, Paynter, Venn, and

Clarkson, and we intend to ask those practical men to go thoroughly into the position of the industry, to consult those who are engaged in it, and who have big responsibilities in connection with it—just as is being done by the Minister for Mines who is consulting those interested in the mining industry—so that we may derive the greatest advantage from the evidence that may be collected and the brains of those connected with the industry. The Commission will have full scope to inquire, and we trust that we shall get some valuable evidence and valuable suggestions when the report is made available.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are you going to dispense with your experts?

The PREMIER: All and sundry can be called to give evidence; existing experts will be examined and the whole thing will be gone into thoroughly, and when the report is made available hon. members will acknowledge that the money which the Commission has cost will have been well spent. The Commission will also conduct an investigation into the subsidiary industries such as bacon-curing, butter-making, jam and preserves. It is the desire of the Government to produce for local consumption first and then to provide for export. We expect much good from the labours of this Commission and we also expect that it will be of great assistance to us in connection with the repatriation scheme and the settlement of soldiers.

Mr. Carpenter: When do you expect to get that Commission's report?

The PREMIER: I cannot tell the hon. member.

Mr. Carpenter: Nor can anyone else.

The PREMIER: I do not think it will take as long as the Collie Coal Commission.

Mr. Taylor: We hope not; that Commission is like Johnny Walker, still going strong.

The PREMIER: As soon as funds are available—and everything will depend upon the financial situation—we propose to survey all suitable areas and blocks for the purpose of the settlement of soldiers, and in connection with the agricultural industry, it has been proposed, and inquiries are being made in the direction of bringing goldfields boys to the coast to enable them to engage in farming operations, at least those who are

inclined that way. The Government will pay their fares and make arrangements to see that the boys are properly treated in regard to food, accommodation, and so forth. Again, in connection with the agricultural industry we have appointed a Railway Advisory Board consisting of Mr. Brockman, the Surveyor General, Mr. Sutton, the Commissioner of the Wheat Belt, and Mr. Lord, the Chief Traffic Manager. Their duty will be to investigate and report upon any proposals for new railways and their attention will be centered upon agricultural districts lacking railway facilities.

Mr. Gardiner: Do you not think you are overburdening Mr. Sutton with work?

The PREMIER: I think Mr. Sutton can do all this; at any rate I have yet to learn that he has ever complained of over work.

Mr. Gardiner: The same thing has been done with our experts ever since we have had them.

The PREMIER: Of course if it is more than Mr. Sutton can do he will be relieved of some portion of his work. The advisory boards did excellent work at the time when we first started to build agricultural railways, and I am satisfied that without such a Board now we cannot get satisfactory results. The attention of this Board will first of all be directed to those agricultural districts which are lacking railway facilities. I come now to what has been a serious bone of contention and has caused great trouble to my friends opposite, and especially to my friend the member for Kanowna. I refer to the Esperance Railway. This matter has been thoroughly ventilated in the Press, and perhaps hon. members do not want me to dwell too much upon it, but the result of our investigations and inquiries, together with the achievements of the settlers in that district, made us regard it as our duty to stop operations pending further inquiries as to the quality and the suitability of the land to be served. I regret that that course was not taken years ago and that the recommendation by Mr. Paterson and his colleagues that experimental farms be established was not carried out. Those farms would have proved the worth of the country before the House was asked to pledge itself to the expenditure of a huge sum of money. The estimated cost of the 60 miles of line which it was pro-

posed to construct at present was £170,000, including rails, while to complete the line to Norseman the estimated cost was £350,000. The amount expended to 16th August was £21,000. There were 40 men engaged on the work, the sleepers on hand number 34,000, representing about 17 miles, and there were 10 miles of rails down there. We did not, as it were, turn these men off at a moment's notice, but instructions were sent down to the construction engineer to stack and protect sleepers and timber, to protect the banks and cuttings against fretting and erosion, to store the working plant, to complete the wings of the four bridges and leave them safe, and to employ the men on the job at that work until the arrival of the first steamer.

Mr. Green: It is the first time in Australia that a railway has been stopped like that.

The PREMIER: I don't think so.

Mr. Green: And because your side were all in opposition to the line.

The PREMIER: That is not correct. When the hon. member gets the full facts he will admit that we did what was the proper thing.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: You are anticipating the nature of the Commission's report.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the kind. Work will be resumed if the report is favourable. Every protection is being afforded to the material and plant, but the Government would be wrong if they allowed an extra five-pound note to be spent there until it has been proved that it is a sound commercial proposition, and one which the settlers could make a living out of.

Mr. Angwin: Whom do you think is the best expert—Sutton, Richardson, or Cooke?

The PREMIER: I should think that they were all better experts than the hon. member.

Mr. Angwin: I do not profess to be an expert.

The PREMIER: That is a foolish question to ask.

Mr. Angwin: You turned Mr. Sutton down.

Mr. Collier: You put experts to pass judgment on the profession.

The PREMIER: Mr. Mann, I think, knows more about the salinity of the soil

than any other of these gentlemen, although the hon. gentlemen do not think so.

Mr. Collier: Who?

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Boulder (Mr. Collier) did not think so when he gave instructions that a certain report should be kept confidential, and which, therefore, has never seen the light of day.

Mr. Collier: I did not do so. That is absolutely incorrect.

The PREMIER: His minute is on the papers.

Mr. Collier: I said "for the time being," until the complete report is made up. This was an interim report.

The PREMIER: It has not seen the light of day.

Mr. Collier: You know it has.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Collier: I say it has.

The PREMIER: Let the hon. member prove it.

Mr. Collier: I will prove it.

The PREMIER: This is a disgraceful and reprehensible practice.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It ought to be tested on other than party lines.

Mr. Collier: It served your purpose at the Canning election.

The PREMIER: Mr. Mann's report is dated 17th June—

Member: What has the Canning election to do with it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. Hon. members must cease interjecting when I call "order."

The PREMIER: Mr. Mann's report is dated 17th June, 1912. I say it was never published. There is no evidence that it was ever placed on the Table of either House of Parliament.

Mr. Heitmann: It was read in the Legislative Council.

The PREMIER: No. All the favourable reports were fully quoted, and in August, 1912, the Minister for Lands was asked by the Goldfields Esperance Land League of Kalgoorlie for any reports and results of any analysis of soils for publication. Hon. T. H. Bath, who was then Minister for Lands, asked the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt whether it would be advisable to make known the information contained in Mr. Mann's report. The Commis-

sioner replied that it would be better if the full reports could be made available. Then the Minister for Mines, the member for Boulder (Mr. Collier), steps into the breach, and informs Mr. Bath, or advises the department, that they have in his (the Mines Department) some voluminous information concerning the Esperance district and its agricultural possibilities. The Minister for Agriculture then writes to Mr. Collier and asks that the papers should be made available for perusal. Mr. Collier replies that the information should be regarded as confidential for the time being.

Mr. Collier: For the time being, yes.

The PREMIER: Yes, and that is ever since.

Mr. Collier: That is not so.

The PREMIER: From 1912 to 1916 is "for the time being."

Mr. Collier: I say emphatically it is not so, and you know it is not so.

The PREMIER: The hon. Mr. Drew, while speaking in another place on the Bill in January, 1915, stated—

Of all the reports that have been made, there is not one that has been condemnatory of the land.

That is an expression of an opinion of the Government through their mouthpiece, the Minister controlling the Legislative Council. He ignored Mr. Mann's report, the concluding sentence of which is—

I can only express the opinion that in the light of the facts then disclosed, and assuming that the tentative standard of salinity which I have adopted is the correct one, settlement on this land must be considered as hazardous.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That was a big assumption.

The PREMIER: It is not a matter of what it was. It is borne out by the facts. Mr. Mann goes on—

Unless its adaptability for wheat has first been fully tested by means of fairly extensive plots grown on various parts of this territory.

Mr. Angwin: Mr. Drew referred to 1912, not 1915.

The PREMIER: In 1915—

Mr. Angwin: He referred to 1912.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): He referred to 1912, when the Esperance-Norseman line was under consideration as a mining line.

Mr. Collier: It is the same line and the same soil. What nonsense you are talking.

The PREMIER: I quite understand that the hon. member tries to bluff the business. It is, however, much too serious for that.

Mr. Angwin: I quite agree with you, and your statement is a very serious one.

Mr. Green: And your stoppage of the railway is a pretty serious one.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman has his remedy; let him take it. The report was made in 1912. It was in the possession of Ministers. Some decided that it should be kept private and confidential. Why did not Mr. Angwin then read the report to the House when he introduced the Bill to the Legislative Assembly later on?

Mr. Angwin: Because it was read here previously and laid on the Table for three years running.

The PREMIER: For three years running it was not here. Even if it was here, his duty was to call the attention of members to it. Hon. members opposite quoted any report which suited their purpose, but any one which was detrimental to their purpose and would confuse their case and ought to have been in the possession of the House, which was asked to commit the country to this tremendous expenditure, they left out.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: That is absolutely incorrect.

The PREMIER: What did the hon. members know about the salinity of the soil? What does .005 per cent. of salt in the soil convey to any hon. member? It conveys nothing to them. But if there had been quoted to members the paragraph in the report that it was a very hazardous undertaking, then members would have had something tangible placed before them.

Mr. Foley: Mr. Drew's report distinctly gave Mr. Mann's report, and then he compared his report with another gentleman in the same line (Mr. Kearney) who knew more than Mr. Mann. This will be found in *Hansard*.

The PREMIER: No. It is not found in *Hansard*. The hon. member cannot prove it.

The report was not read. This work goes on but in a very desultory fashion. They did not work with a very great heart in the commencement of operations. It is a sort of apology. They say—

We have passed the railway and got the authorisation of Parliament but we do not want to spend any money.

Mr. Collier: And you stopped it.

The PREMIER: They go on to say—

We are not going to raise money or get the material, but are altogether half-hearted in their proposals.

Mr. O'Loughlen: See how you get on.

The PREMIER: In February of this year the Agricultural Bank trustees got instructions from the previous Government that they were to make funds of the bank available for settlers in the Esperance district, and it was only when Messrs. Richardson and Cooke, whom Mr. Angwin is practically condemning I presume, by his interjection—

Mr. Angwin: I say they are not experts like Mr. Sutton.

The PREMIER: It was only when these gentlemen returned from their inspection, and being suspicious that the presence of salt accounted for the poor results from the soil, that they began to make inquiries and that this copy of the report by Mr. Mann came to light.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Oh, I say.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The bank promised this in writing before the settlers went there?

The PREMIER: I do not know about that. What is the position? The settlers were undoubtedly kept in ignorance of the fact that it was a hazardous undertaking with which they were connected—Parliament was hoodwinked. The Bill was passed two years later and the country was committed to the expenditure of £170,000, to say nothing of the £40,000 or £50,000 for harbour works in addition.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: What Government settled them on the land?

The PREMIER: The Agricultural Department have advanced something like £11,000 to the settlers, and at the present time many of the settlers have abandoned

their holdings, and I am sorrowful to admit that the remainder are now in a pitiable plight.

Mr. Taylor: Have advances been made since the line was passed?

The PREMIER: I do not know; probably prior to it and since. The average yield, and hon. members cannot get away from it, in 1913-14, was 4.2 bushels to the acre; in 1914-15 it was 2.5 bushels to the acre, and in 1915-16 the harvest was 5.2 bushels to the acre.

Mr. Collier: You will admit that the land had not been properly farmed. The crop was only scratched in, and at first the settlers had no fertiliser.

The PREMIER: The hon. member must admit that other districts were in exactly the same position.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: No.

The PREMIER: I guarantee that the hon. member for Guildford (Mr. W. D. Johnson) is not prepared to invest his money in the district, and undertake farming there.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Unfortunately other districts have suffered likewise. The losses in agriculture results are not limited to Esperance.

The PREMIER: I am quite aware of that.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Others have suffered in consequence.

The PREMIER: I am aware of that too.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Then do not condemn the Esperance District.

The PREMIER: I am dealing with the reprehensible conduct of hon. members opposite, who knew that it was a doubtful and hazardous operation.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: That is absolutely incorrect.

The PREMIER: A sum of £2,000 is due for rents and nearly £2,000 has been advanced by the Industries Assistance Board for payment of rents. Ministers knew that these farms were absolutely useless and that it was impossible for the settlers to get on there, and yet moneys were taken to pay rents to bolster up the revenue. As recently as the 13th April of this year the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank stated that these holdings had no mortgagable

value at the present time and they refused to advance the bank's money upon them, notwithstanding that Ministers would bring pressure to bear upon them. They say—

It is not safe business for the bank to undertake.

The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) had the file sent on to him by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), and all that Mr. Walker has to say when he reads the file is "Noted with disappointment." We, however, have appointed a Royal Commission and I maintain that we have taken the right steps. We have appointed as this Commission, Mr. C. E. Dempster—

Mr. Foley: Mr. Dempster was a gentleman who was on the pastoral area before it was cut up.

The PREMIER: He will not object to the railway I presume.

Mr. Foley: Under the conditions expressed possibly he will.

Mr. Bolton: He was an opponent of the railway before he was appointed.

The PREMIER: The other gentlemen of the Commission are Messrs. M. F. Padbury and N. K. McDonald. These gentlemen have been appointed to inquire into the whole circumstances surrounding the settlement of the land and as to its quality and suitability for successful farming operations.

Mr. Bolton: After expressing opposition to the railway.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Bolton: The Chairman has expressed his opposition to the railway.

The PREMIER: They have been appointed to inquire into and report on the possibility of successful farming of the land in the mallee belt. The Commission will be given the widest powers and will be enabled to travel over the State and get all the expert evidence available. I feel sure that the Commission is in a better position than if we had appointed a single expert on the Commission. They can find out more information than could be given them by an expert, and in any case they can call experts to give evidence wherever they like. Let us have this, and let us have as many experts as are wanted. The Commission will closely examine all reports in

the hands of the department. They will inspect the farms and will advise what, if any, experimental work should be undertaken by the Government.

Mr. Collier: In the meantime what are the settlers to do?

The PREMIER: The settlers are in no worse position than they have been at any time during the last five years. The area of land similar in every respect to that already settled is sufficiently extensive to justify all expenditure necessary to thoroughly test the district. Should the Commission's report condemn the land for wheat-growing purposes immediate steps will be taken to transfer these settlers, should they desire it, to more favourable areas.

Mr. Foley: Have any measures been taken yet with regard to people who may be starving up to date?

The PREMIER: I cannot say. But the hon. member need not worry on that point. In the meantime, in order that no time shall be lost at all, Mr. Sutton will visit the district as early as possible and ascertain if there are suitable areas of fallowed land to commence experimental work upon. If we have to start clearing the land and putting in experimental areas we will not be able to do it this season, but will have to defer it until next year. We hope, however, that Mr. Sutton will be able to find suitable areas for experimental purposes.

Member: Is it a fair test to put in a crop this season?

The PREMIER: We hope we shall be able to do so. As soon as a report is available Parliament will be given full information.

Mr. E. B. Johnston interjected.

The PREMIER: It would be a much more serious thing if I permitted public moneys to be spent down there, knowing full well that in doing so I ran the risk of the whole of it being lost.

Mr. Munsie: The chairman was absolutely biassed before you put him there.

The PREMIER: I think not. I cannot think that the hon. member will stand to that statement.

Mr. Munsie: It is the truth, anyhow.

The PREMIER: I hope the hon. member will repent that statement outside.

Mr. Bolton: The chairman has made the statement himself.

Mr. Munsie: You knew it before you appointed him.

The PREMIER: With regard to the timber industry the aim of the Government is to preserve our splendid forests as a great national asset—and that has been, I think, the aim of every Government we have had—and by judicious conservation to ensure that they shall remain a source of wealth and revenue to the State for all time.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What do you propose to do?

The PREMIER: Amended timber regulations have been promulgated which provide for the more systematic working of the forests. Strong objections have been made to these regulations on the ground that they will increase the cost of producing marketable timber. Those objections will be very closely investigated and considered, and an endeavour will be made to frame equitable regulations, and if necessary the regulations will be further amended. We are prepared to frame any amendments required on equitable lines. I trust these few remarks on the intentions of the Government with regard to the timber industry will satisfy hon. members. And now I come to the question of State enterprises. Very careful consideration is being given to the conduct of the State steamship service in the immediate future. The Government is adverse to the dual control of the Fremantle Harbour Trust and the State Steamship Service.

Mr. Angwin: The same old tactics. Every statement I gave you was correct.

The PREMIER: Every statement you made was wrong, and your estimates of cost were always based on wrong figures. The Government, I say, is adverse to the dual control of the Fremantle Harbour Trust and the State Steamship Service. This is a very difficult problem and so soon as a decision is arrived at Parliament will be advised. The motor ship "Kangaroo"

—
Mr. Angwin: A splendid bargain!

The PREMIER: A splendid bargain. Owing to abnormal freights this vessel is making large profits, and I think she will continue to make large profits so long as

the war last, and probably for some time afterwards. The position in regard to the ships obtained by the late Government for the North-West trade is most unsatisfactory. The "Western Australia" unfortunately is under charter to the Imperial Government until the end of the war.

Mr. Bolton: Unfortunately? Why?

The PREMIER: Yes, unfortunately. And therefore we will be prevented from disposing of the vessel at a time when she might be disposed of at a good figure. Efforts are being made to sell her if the Imperial Government will permit. Mr. Stevens calls her an absolute disaster and an impossible proposition. The whole of the State Steamship proposition has proved most disastrous. The manager reported of it "It is no good struggling on with old or more less decrepit, slow and most unsuitable ships, designed for trades totally different in every respect from those in which we have to run them." What more do hon. members want to convince them of the nature of the steamship proposition?

Mr. Bolton: What is the date of the report?

The PREMIER: Hon. members will not own up to mistakes they have made in the past.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: What is the date of the report?

The PREMIER: I have not got it here.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: You are dealing with the report concerning the "Western Australia" only. You are as nearly fair as you can be.

The PREMIER: That interjection is not decent, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will please withdraw the remark that the Premier is as nearly fair as he can be. The insinuation is that the Premier is not fair.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: I will withdraw the remark.

The PREMIER: Then the s.s. "Kwinana" is due for her second No. 3 survey at the end of the year and again the manager of the service reports: "She is getting so old and has now reached the stage when she should be sold." Then there is the s.s. "Bambra" which was chartered from the Commonwealth Government and of that the

manager of the service has this to say: "She is of slow speed and low power, which entirely militates against her being a financial success on the North-West trade." Unfortunately this vessel struck an uncharted rock and is now at Singapore to undergo repairs, which, it is estimated will take two months to effect. That increases the difficulties of carrying on the coastal trade. We have the s.s. "Moirá" chartered from the Commonwealth Government for the cattle trade and there is some doubt as to whether we shall be able to retain that vessel. I am at the present time negotiating with the Prime Minister, and I am endeavouring to impress upon him the necessity of permitting this ship to remain on our coast so that we may be able to maintain a supply of meat for the consumption of our people. The State Steamship Service shows a loss since its inception to the 30th June, 1915, of £63,150, and the approximate loss for the year ended 30th June, 1916, was £16,850, making a total loss of £80,000. In arriving at a determination as to the best methods of continuing the service during the war and until normal conditions are restored, the Government will be influenced firstly by a determination to afford the people of the North-West the best service possible in the circumstances, and secondly by a desire to save the State from present and future loss. The whole question is full of difficulties and is now being inquired into.

Mr. Angwin: Was there any loss in last year's working?

The PREMIER: Approximately £16,000.

Mr. Angwin: Get out.

The PREMIER: The State Ferry Service was taken over in 1912 and for the first 15 months showed a profit of £1,250 and in the following year the profit was £1,060. In the third year the profit had disappeared and in its place there was a loss of £396. Consequent upon this, the service was restricted in certain directions and fares were increased, but the year ended 30th June last still disclosed a loss of £355. There is no doubt that this unsatisfactory state of affairs is due in a large measure to the construction of the ferry steamer "Perth," which was costly both to build and to run.

Mr. Heitmann: She is a beauty!

The PREMIER: The only useful service that steamer was ever engaged in was an excursion she undertook one beautiful morning when I saw her from my verandah overlooking Freshwater Bay gaily bedecked with flags and carrying as passengers the members of the previous Ministry. That was the occasion of the steamer's trial run and the vessel certainly looked very charming on that occasion.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I suppose you were sorry you were not there.

Mr. Angwin: Are you sure the Ministers were on board?

The PREMIER: Yes, the hon. member himself was there.

Mr. Angwin: I was not.

The PREMIER: The position of the ferry steamers is being investigated in the hope that some means may be devised whereby the loss to the State may be terminated without prejudicing the interests of the people of South Perth. Our State Fish Supply which was to do so much for Western Australia for the first 12 months (the 1st December, 1914, to the 30th November, 1915) showed a loss of £3,183. For the seven months, 30th November to 30th June last, there was a further loss of £2,740.

Mr. Angwin: What about the charges?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows I cannot give them now.

Mr. Angwin: You are making statements, why not back them up?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has no conception of figures. He is one of the greatest muddlers, and an inspection of the State Implement Works will bear that out. Whilst the average monthly loss in connection with the fish supply for the initial year's operations was £263, that for the past seven months has been at the rate of £391 per month. A large proportion of that loss seems to have been due to the purchase of totally unsuitable vessels. It is not the policy of the Government to carry on competitive trading enterprises of this nature, and whilst the earliest opportunity will be taken of escaping from this heavy financial loss, care will be exercised so that public inconvenience will be avoided by any sudden interference with the fish supplies. We shall endeavour to organise our resources so

that we shall not create a blank, and to enable private enterprise to re-establish themselves in an industry which was taken from them.

Mr. Bolton: Greeks.

The PREMIER: Are they enemy subjects?

Mr. Bolton: You might be proud of them; we are not.

The PREMIER: I am not proud of the hon. member.

Mr. Bolton: You are of the Greeks.

The PREMIER: With regard to the State Brickworks—

Mr. Angwin: You have not published the balance sheet of that enterprise either.

The PREMIER: It will be ready shortly. The hon. member has had five or six of them already.

Mr. Angwin: We have had three, and they all show that the brickworks made a profit.

The PREMIER: The State Brickworks were going to turn out bricks at about 15 or 20 per cent. cheaper than anyone else could make them for, and it took two or three years to get them going. I find that £30,000 has been expended on those works, and although they show a better result than perhaps some of the other enterprises, the loss including depreciation during the 15 months ended 30th June, 1916, was £1,000. An endeavour will be made to sell the brickworks as a going concern.

Mr. Munsie: You must have a buyer.

The PREMIER: Or we shall lease them on conditions which will conserve the interests of the State. Whether we can get anyone to buy or lease them, I do not know.

Mr. Angwin: We saved over £2,000 on the bricks which had to be purchased by the State.

The PREMIER: I doubt that statement very much indeed. Even then the brickworks show a loss of £1,000. I am coming now to the pet works of the hon. member for East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin), the implement works. I went through the establishment for the first time the other day with the present Minister for Works.

Mr. Angwin: I squared them up.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member says he squared them up he does not know the

meaning of the term. The work could not be squared up without the expenditure of a large sum of money. The total amount invested is £275,000 and the loss on operations is £57,000. The trade from 1913 to 1916 amounted to £101,564 for implements, £141,853 for Government departments and £7,545 for the public, making a total of £251,052. That has been the total turnover for the capital amount which I have given hon. members.

Mr. Angwin: Was that capital all out at one time?

The PREMIER: I should think not. You go on constructing your works and expending capital.

Mr. Angwin: You are dealing with the trading account and not the capital expenditure; you know that the capital expenditure is just a little over £80,000.

The PREMIER: The capital in the business, works, plant, stock, etc., is £275,000.

Mr. Angwin: The money is going in and out all the time.

The PREMIER: The turnover since the works were started is £251,000.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: What is the stock worth?

The PREMIER: The stock on hand is put down at £70,000.

Mr. Thomas: You have been making misstatements.

The PREMIER: The hon. member's mental capacity is so limited that he cannot understand.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: Before tea, when I was discussing the State Implement Works, my statement that the total funds invested amounted to £275,000 in round figures, was challenged, and, apparently, the point I was making was not quite understood. The sum of £275,000 includes not only the cost of plant and buildings, which was £94,156, but the stock on hand, representing £70,245, and the book debts £74,734. Then there is the loss since the inception of the undertaking, amounting to £57,000, consisting of £46,858, as shown in the balance sheet, and £10,583 interest on moneys advanced by the Treasury and which have not been charged up to the undertaking.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Then you were wrong in including all this in the capital cost of the work.

The PREMIER: No. The hon. member was wrong; he did not understand what the capital invested in the undertaking consisted of.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: You said the capital cost.

The PREMIER: Well, I will take the hon. member on that point. The capital cost of an undertaking is all the capital invested in that undertaking.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: That is not what you conveyed.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member wishes to split straws he is at liberty to do so.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: The fact that you had to readjust your figures during the adjournment is proof that you were wrong before.

The PREMIER: No; I have done it in order to enable hon. members opposite to understand a commercial term. The turnover is £251,000, the stock on hand represents £70,245, and the patterns, of which two-thirds will never be wanted at all, are valued at £7,000. We are having the whole thing revalued.

Mr. Angwin: That was ordered before you got there.

The PREMIER: Much of the plant is quite unsuitable for cheap production, the works are badly planned, and to alter them in conformity with modern practice to produce economy in working will require the expenditure of large sums of money.

Mr. Angwin: Some £12,000 or £14,000.

The PREMIER: The selling prices have been increased, and now they are approximately the prices of imported implements. So, the terms on which these works were established, and the much-vaunted declaration that we should be able to produce for our settlers implements from 25 per cent. to 33½ per cent. less than the cost of the imported article, has been disproved entirely, while the arguments frequently put up by us when in Opposition have been amply borne out on facts.

Mr. Angwin: Have not the prices of other people's machinery been put up this year?

The PREMIER: I do not know.

Mr. Foley: Then where do you get the comparison?

The PREMIER: From the advertisements that were issued at the time the works were started. Now let us glance at the State Saw Mills. In this enterprise we have a capital of £350,000 employed. In addition to that there is the cost of the Jarnadup or Big Brook siding, namely £57,000, of which only £31,500 was debited against the mill, the balance being charged against permanent railways, notwithstanding that, practically, the siding is used solely for sawmill business.

Mr. Angwin: It is not an ordinary saw-mill line.

The PREMIER: It has been constructed up to a standard better than was necessary for sawmill work, and therefore hon. members opposite thought they were entitled to charge it up to permanent railways. The cost of the mill erection was increased because the siding was not completed in time, and the then Government, in their anxiety to hurry on the erection of the mills, had to pay heavy cartage. From the inception the trade has totalled £645,427, being timber sold £561,158, stores £41,629, forage £26,023, fruit cases £6,947, and sundries £9,670. The profit on the turnover since the inception has amounted to a couple of thousand pounds, and the stocks are valued at £145,172 to bring about that result. That is not a very encouraging outlook for works of this magnitude on a turnover of £145,000. If I could not earn more profit than that on the sale of stores alone, I would cease doing business. In regard to the Wyndham Freezing Works, the plans prepared by Mr. Nevanas were found to be quite insufficient, and, as hon. members know, had to be revised in order to provide the necessary space for machinery and canning works. This was one of the first items to come to light after the appointment of the present engineering expert (Mr. Dalton). Practically the whole of the plans for the works have had to be redrawn. The rough sketches made by Mr. Nevanas, which it will be remembered were submitted to the House, were merely an indication of what was required. Certainly they have been of some little assistance to the Public Works De-

partment, as enabling the officers to produce plans more suitable for the peculiar conditions under which the work will have to be done at Wyndham. It will be remembered that the tender price put in by Mr. Nevanas was £155,000, to which approximately £26,000 had to be added under the conditions dealing with the fluctuations of freight on the coast. Now compare that with the present estimate of the Public Works Department for the completion of the work. The departmental officers estimate that the buildings and machinery will cost £360,000, the water supply £44,000, the jetty £38,000, and the oil tanks £10,000, or a total of £452,000. That is the present estimate of what those works are going to cost this country.

Mr. Munsie: It would have been pretty good business to have got Nevanas to build it at his price.

The PREMIER: Why did not the hon. gentleman persuade his Government to try? The Public Works Department has amongst its officers men who are capable of drawing plans suitable for ordinary works, but in regard to works of this description it had not within its ranks officers whose experience comprised the necessary knowledge. Had an officer been commissioned to make the needful inquiries and examination regarding established refrigerating works in the Eastern States, and had he been accompanied by an expert engineer, plans fully up-to-date and suitable for the locality, and which would have been reliable, could have been purchased at a far less cost than was represented by the commission which was paid to Mr. Nevanas. The method adopted by the previous Government resulted in the loss of much valuable time which might otherwise have been saved. The problem of these works is one which requires very deep consideration. I am of opinion, as I have so often voiced on the floor of this House before, and which is now proved, that we are erecting works which are far and away too big for the anticipated supply of cattle during the next 10, 15, or 20 years.

Mr. Angwin: That is a long way ahead.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is, but we have to build up this cattle-growing industry and it takes time to do that.

Mr. Underwood: What are you going to do about it?

The PREMIER: I would cut down the works by one half if I was able to do so. Unfortunately, however, the foundations are in, machinery has been ordered, and expenditure has been incurred, and I do not know how we are going to curtail them now. At all events I am of opinion that we are going to have a white elephant of a sort which will prove to be a heavy burden upon the State.

Mr. Angwin: Some differ about that.

The PREMIER: No one who has any sense or experience would possibly differ on that point.

Mr. Angwin: Those who understand it differ.

The PREMIER: The problem of State enterprises generally—and perhaps this may have some connection with the insistent interjections made by the Opposition—is a difficult one, and members opposite must admit that. The policy of the Government is certainly not to hamper legitimate private enterprises. We do not believe in competition with our own citizens. That state of affairs has been condemned by the experience of the past five years. Efforts will be made, and strong efforts at that, to minimise the loss, and we will restrict the operations of all these enterprises so far as we can to our own State requirements. Time is undoubtedly necessary to evolve a scheme or schemes dealing with these enterprises in order to carry out our policy. No one would be insane enough to endeavour to shut down huge undertakings in which so much of the State capital had been invested at five minutes notice, and perhaps increase the loss already incurred by hundreds of thousands of pounds. This cannot be gone into in a hurry, and Parliament will have to be patient until we can devise a proper scheme to get rid of this incubus on reasonable terms, so as to disturb as little as possible the labour market and the requirements of this State itself, and of course minimise the loss consequent upon making any fundamental change.

Mr. Angwin: They were very handy for you last month.

Mr. Underwood: Are you going on with the freezing works or are you going to stop them?

The PREMIER: I would like to stop the hon. member. I am now coming to a matter which is one of vital concern. It is the fundamental principle which underlies all our undertakings. I refer to the question of finance. I am using a mild term—and this I think hon. members will admit when I have finished—when I say that the finances of the State are in a condition of chaos.

Mr. Underwood: A parlous condition.

The PREMIER: Many doubtful expedients have been resorted to, and the expenditure of moneys actually made during the last financial year has not been charged up against the Consolidated Revenue Account. The revenue credited has in one instance, at any rate, not been received, and the public figures to the 30th June last do not disclose the correct state of affairs so far as the Consolidated Revenue and Expenditure of the State is concerned. The published accounts, as hon. members will remember, showed a deficit on the 30th June of £1,360,965. I have had an advisory committee to assist me in connection with the position. The committee is made up of the Auditor General, the Under Treasurer, and the Commissioner of Taxation. These gentlemen have given me reports which show that items actually paid prior to the 30th June last have not been charged up against Consolidated Revenue as they ought to have been charged, and that these items amount to £95,000 2s. 6d. This is a very serious state of affairs. It is no use anyone trying to bluff through a position of this sort. It is a matter which requires the attention of every member of this Chamber, if they want the State to go on and prosper in any degree. If they want outside money lenders to finance our requirements the very first thing they have to do is to instil confidence into the minds of the people they are going to borrow money from. We cannot expect that confidence if our finances are handled in the manner I have described. There was the special survey of the "Western Australia," amounting to practically £6,000, which ought to have been charged up to Consolidated Revenue. The money had

been paid away but had not been charged up. There is also the Victoria Quay expenditure of £10,365, which ought to have been charged up but was not so charged.

Mr. Angwin: What was it charged to?

The PREMIER: The Suspense Account.

Mr. Angwin: By the approval of Parliament.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort. This is expenditure for last year.

Mr. Angwin: Yes, it was for last year.

The PREMIER: The hon. member puts his knowledge against the report of these three gentlemen, the financial advisers of the Government, and of Parliament, because the advisory committee includes the Auditor General, who is responsible only to Parliament.

Mr. Angwin: Turn up last year's accounts and you will find it there.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman is talking about something altogether different. The Commission for the Control of Trade in War Time showed a loss of £45,000 odd on imported wheat and flour which was never charged up.

Mr. Angwin: What was that charged to?

The PREMIER: In connection with the London payments in suspense, the vouchers for which had come to hand, there was a sum of £7,271 which ought to have been charged up. There was the loan on the Kalgoorlie Mechanics' Institute, being amounts paid to the A.M.P. Society, under guarantee, for repayment of loan, £1,838, that was never charged up as it ought to have been. There was the shipment of cattle from the North-West, paid in June, which should have been included in the deficit, and which amounted to £9,858 8s. 4d. The loss in connection with the grain and foodstuffs board amounted to £69 4s. The expenditure in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Trust charged to the Government Property Sales Fund for the year 1915-16, payment for which had been made by the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners on or before 30th June, 1916, and credited to Consolidated Revenue Fund in Treasury books, amounted to £15,000. The total expenditure of £95,000 has been altogether omitted from the Consolidated Revenue expenditure. I do not want to say that the

Treasurer for one moment knew of all the items; but he certainly did know of the item of £45,071 because a request had been made to him by the Under Treasurer to debit it up against Consolidated Revenue Fund, but he took great care not to give his consent to this.

Mr. Angwin: I thought you said you saw that eight months before.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member thinks I said something eight months ago he is quite welcome to ascertain the position from the Treasury. I only want the thing cleared up. I want to stop these malpractices which are so bad for the State. The true cash deficit of the State to the 30th June last was £1,456,425 8s. 1d.

Mr. Green: What do you propose to do about the deficit?

The PREMIER: I will tell the hon. member. He will get all the information I am able to give him. There is another peculiar transaction which I desire to refer to, namely, the cattle purchased and brought down from the North-West and sold by auction. The late Government were very careful to take the proceeds of the cattle, namely, £26,835, and place them to the credit of Consolidated Revenue prior to the 30th June last, but the cost of bringing down these cattle and purchasing them, amounting to £22,539, has never been debited, although a portion of the sum, £9,858, was actually paid out in cash. Not a penny in connection with the cost of the transaction was placed to debit. Then there was the amount of £49,449 which was credited to railway revenue for the carriage of wheat, and yet we have not even now received the money. I am not going to make a point of that amount. I have decided to treat it is a loan to the wheat marketing board until it is paid, and to charge interest for it, and so to get over the difficulty in that way. Seeing that our transactions are all in cash in the Treasury, hon. members must admit that a sum of nearly £50,000 should never have been taken to the credit of the Railways when they had not the money. The neglect of the late Treasurer to immediately give approval to the Under Treasurer's recommendations is largely responsible for this state of affairs. The sum of £45,000

lost in connection with the imported flour and wheat proves that contention. The Under Treasurer minuted to Mr. Scaddan on the 26th June asking for approval to include this under Revenue Expenditure, but approval was only given on 17th July, after the accounts had been closed. I would now like to deal with the investment of sinking fund in Treasury bills, in other words the payment of our sinking fund contributions to the trustees by bills instead of in cash, a method which many hon. members took exception to during the last session of Parliament. I have of course taken upon myself to abolish the system by cablegram. It is a pernicious one, and unsound from the financial point of view. The Under Treasurer objected to it on account of its unsound principles. The late Treasurer, however, insisted on having it done. During the last two years by his directions £265,605 have been paid in this manner by Treasury bills which ought to have been paid to the trustees in cash. The previous practice was that the trustees, as they accumulated the cash payment from the Treasury to the sinking fund, purchased the State stocks in the open market, and as a rule could do so at a discount. It is true that in some instances the discount is small, but they were always ready to take advantage of the market and make a profit in that direction. Since the outbreak of war, and during the time that we have been carrying on in this manner, all stocks have fallen in value to a considerable extent, both Commonwealth and British stocks. For example, the three per cent. stocks of a face value of £100 went down to £70, the 3½ per cent. stock went down to £72, and the 4 per cent. stock has fallen in proportion. Had the trustees continued to invest in the open market the sinking fund would have benefited, and instead of receiving Treasury bills for payment they would have had the benefit of at least £52,000. That is to say, the State has lost this amount through the directions of the late Government in connection with the payment of the sinking fund.

Mr. Taylor: Covering what period?

The PREMIER: About two years. That of course is, comparatively speaking, a small matter, but it is a large matter if it goes on

year after year. I think hon. members will appreciate the fact that we must make all efforts, and I am determined to make a big effort, to keep up these payments. If I am unable by any mischance to pay I shall ask Parliament for sanction by legislation to alter the system.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: You cannot discontinue payment without Parliamentary authority.

The PREMIER: I do not know that I could not. If I had not the money to pay, how are hon. members going to make me do so? I do not think there is any law which compels a man to find a sovereign if he has it not in his pocket. One cannot get blood out of a stone. One cannot get money out of an empty Treasury.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Are you going to run this country on that principle?

The PREMIER: The hon. member interjecting has already done it.

Mr. Taylor: It has always been done.

The PREMIER: The previous Government paid by promissory notes instead of by cash. "Thank the Lord, that is paid" is the attitude that has been adopted by the previous Government.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: You say that if you had the money you would send it out of the State to purchase bonds because they are cheap.

The PREMIER: I said nothing of the kind. I said that if the trustees had bought bonds at the market price a large sum, which the State has now lost, would have been saved to Western Australia. We do not raise money in London; we borrow it in London. I am not going to bring money from London here that is required in London. People who finance in that way find themselves in the bankruptcy court, or possibly in the lockup. In connection with this matter I shall have to introduce a Bill, and I ask hon. members to follow me while I briefly outline the proposed legislation. I intend to introduce a measure legalising the action of the late Treasurer in taking loan and other moneys for the purposes of the deficit. We are now in an illegal position. The State has utilised, the late Government have utilised, trust moneys for the purpose of meeting the deficit.

Mr. Taylor: It has been done before, has it not?

The PREMIER: To a very small extent. One does not get deficits of a million and a half every day in a small community such as this of Western Australia.

Mr. Taylor: Your party's credit was not so good.

The PREMIER: I propose to legalise the action of the late Treasurer, and I propose to transfer the whole of the deficit to a public accounts advance account.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: How far will you make that legislation retrospective? Will you cover your actions, as well as Mr. Seaddan's?

The PREMIER: I left a surplus in the Treasury. That is a foolish question. I propose, by Act of Parliament, to transfer the deficit to a public accounts advance account, or, in other words, to fund the deficit.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Just answer me this question. Are you building up all these advance accounts just now in anticipation of having deficits yourself, so that you can include them all?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: You will rake up everything you can and get it all in?

The PREMIER: Of course, to put things on a sound legal footing, so as to ensure that Parliament shall be consulted in future. I am going to provide not only for last year's deficit, and for the deficit which ought to have been included in last year's figures and which will form part of this year's deficit, but also for this year's deficit.

Mr. Bolton: I thought that was the scheme.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is very brilliant to think so. If hon. members will permit me to go along, I will try and get through. The Bill in question will provide for transferring the deficit to a public accounts advance account, and also for reimbursing the deficits of the present year and of subsequent years, should such deficits occur from time to time. The measure will be a machinery Bill to deal with deficits. I am acting on the advice and report of the expert financial advisers of the

Government, who have inquired into the matter for me. I shall take power to issue bonds or stock for repayment of these moneys which have been illegally diverted from their legitimate purpose. There will be a proper limitation on the issue of the bonds. The Treasurer will not be able to postpone indefinitely the issue of the bonds. They must be issued within, say, three years. I propose that their currency shall be 30 years. There will be the necessary restrictions as to amounts to be raised in subsequent years. The restrictions will be set forth in the Bill, the object being to control the Treasurer. The Treasurer will have to come to Parliament each year to get Parliamentary sanction for dealing with the deficit which he estimates will occur. In every year the Treasurer will have to disclose his hand fully to Parliament, saying "There is the deficit, and I propose to deal with it in this way." I estimate it is going to cost £100,000 per annum for the next 30 years to wipe out the present deficit; that is, to provide interest and sinking fund.

Mr. Taylor: What will your sinking fund be?

The PREMIER: What I have given is just a brief outline of the Bill. When the measure is introduced fuller details will, of course, be given to the House. Then I propose to introduce immediately a Bill to amend the Treasury Bills Act. At the present time a very alarming state of affairs exists as regards our Treasury bills. The Act limits the Treasurer to the issue of three million pounds worth of Treasury bills against Loan Acts in force. I find that the State has issued Treasury bills to the amount of £4,011,960, or £1,011,960 in excess of the legal authorisation. What on earth is the use of having these legal restrictions, these Acts of Parliament, if they are not complied with? Very serious complications may arise if we do not remedy the defect at once. The holders of these Treasury bills might want to know by what authority we had issued them; and so there might be trouble in store for us. I shall ask Parliament immediately to give the Government power—in the present stringent time, when we are controlled to

some extent absolutely by the Commonwealth as to our borrowings, and also controlled by the war and the stringency of the money market—power to issue Treasury bills at the Government's discretion to the extent of any unraised balance of a loan authorised by Parliament. At the present time the Treasurer has power to raise money by Treasury bills against the balance of any loan authorised by Parliament, but that power extends only to three million pounds' worth of Treasury bills. The object of the limitation, of course, is obvious. Treasury bills have not quite the same security as inscribed stock has. Treasury bills are secured on the consolidated revenue, inscribed stock on the whole of the assets of the State. Treasury bills do not carry a sinking fund, being only for temporary purposes. Inscribed stock carries sinking fund, under the Act. At all events, we as a State have exceeded our authority for the issue of Treasury bills; and the matter must be put right immediately. During the present financial stress the market for the issue of inscribed stock has been practically closed, and Treasury bills have become a necessary substitute. We are bound, as hon. members, I think, know, to float our loans through the Commonwealth. All the States of the Commonwealth, except New South Wales, have joined in that agreement. The Commonwealth demands that short-dated Treasury bills be issued pending an adjustment for the issue of inscribed stock in respect of money the Commonwealth is raising at Home and re-lending to the States. Taxation, must of necessity, be raised in order to provide at any rate the £100,000 per annum required for the accumulated deficit, and the State's contribution to the Repatriation Fund, amounting in round figures to £16,000 per annum, and for other essential expenditure.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That will not go any distance.

The PREMIER: No. Details will be given when the necessary Bill is introduced, after the Estimates have been prepared and the State's requirements ascertained. At the present moment I am not in a position to say what the State's requirements are.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Upper House will pass any taxation measure for you.

The PREMIER: I am happy to hear it. I am determined that Parliament shall resume control of the finances of the State. It is too big a burden for any Treasurer to undertake. Parliament must consider the position and give the necessary powers and authority. Another Bill we propose to introduce, and a very important one, will make provision for the better representation of the people in Parliament.

Mr. Hudson: Did you not try that once before?

The PREMIER: I proposed it once before, and I carried it through once before. The Bill will provide for the appointment of three electoral commissioners, who will submit a resubdivision of the State into districts, and provide for equitable representation of the Northern and North-West portions of the State, the agricultural, the mining, and the metropolitan areas. The necessity for legislation of this nature is admitted by all. Our predecessors introduced during the last Parliament a measure, which however did not comprise what we consider a fair deal in this matter. I think the Attorney General will be able to convince hon. members opposite that the measure which he will shortly introduce is very much more equitable than the late Government's measure. A Bill is necessary, and will be introduced, to place the wheat marketing scheme on a legal footing, and to enable its continuance by proclamation during the forthcoming season, 1916-17. The measure will substantially follow the provisions of the Acts of the other States. Then several Bills are to be introduced for the benefit of our soldiers at the front.

Mr. Munsie: Is not this wheat pool business a form of State trading concern?

The PREMIER: No. It has no relation to State trading. A Bill will be introduced to facilitate the execution of instruments by soldiers on active service, to enable the attestation of instruments under the Transfer of Land Act by statutory witnesses to be dispensed with, thus simplifying the procedure and allowing soldiers in the trenches or in camp to be witnesses. Then we desire to preserve the electoral franchise of our soldiers on active service, to enable

them to vote for the electoral districts in which they are enrolled, and to enable them to become enrolled for the districts in which they may have lived from time to time prior to enlistment. Further, the Government will ask for amendment of the Workers' Homes Act. We are strong believers in the freehold system, and we wish to enable lessees to convert leasehold into freehold if they so desire, on equitable terms. We propose to amend the Land Act so as to enable lessees of town lots to convert their leaseholds into freeholds on conditional purchase terms. We are, of course, prepared to continue any lessee who does not wish to convert his holding into freehold. We want legislation to amend the Industries Assistance Act to enable repayment of advances to be spread over a period of years, say five years. And there will also be several other Bills. One to confer power retrospectively on the Commonwealth Parliament to tax salaries of Ministers, civil servants and others. All these are ready to pay the tax but there being no legal power have not done so in the past. Another Bill will be to make our year synchronise with Commonwealth law in the matter of Land and Income Tax returns; that is to say that the year shall end on the 30th June instead of 31st December, to coincide with the Commonwealth period, and thus enable the reciprocal exchange of information between State and Commonwealth Commissioners. Another Bill will bring companies under the same provision as private individuals in the matter of income tax, but not necessarily the same rate of tax. There will be a Bill to amend the Trading Concerns Act so as to provide proper capital, to regulate and control the accounts and to debit or credit interest as the case may be on Treasury balances. Then we propose to bring in legislation in regard to street betting and the abolition of the bookmaker, which I hope hon. members will support.

Mr. Collier: What will you do with the bookmakers?

The PREMIER: There is plenty of room at Blackboy Hill for them. Members are aware that street betting at present is a matter subject to municipal by-laws. Then

there is to be a Bill to enable the W.A. Day Funds locally raised to be applied not only to Red Cross objects but for the benefit, assistance and advancement generally of returned sick and wounded.

Mr. Bolton: That Bill is already introduced, I think.

The PREMIER: I am aware that many of these Bills have already been approved.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: The red cross matter is the Privileged Bill.

The PREMIER: Bills will also be introduced to enable the Lake Clifton lime deposits to be leased and for the construction of a railway by the lessees to connect with the Government railway system.

Mr. Collier: Two Bills?

The PREMIER: Yes. We want people to come here and profitably invest their money, employ labour and reap some return from their efforts. Another Bill will authorise the leasing of the lime deposits at Capel and the dredging of shell in Melville Water for the manufacture of cement. We also propose to legislate for the taxation of amusements of all kinds and to increase the totalisator duty. An amendment of the Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act is required to adjust anomalies and defects which the experiences of the last few years have proved to exist. A huge department has been built up, and undoubtedly many economies can be effected. As showing how much the finances require adjustment, I may say that on the 30th June last, the Metropolitan Water Supply undertaking was indebted to the Treasury in the sum of nearly £4,000. The Government is of opinion that the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage should be under a Board of control, and we propose to confer with the local authorities concerned as to the best scheme to be adopted to inaugurate this, in order that the old system of taxation without representation shall be abolished. Then, with regard to the question of returned soldiers, special legislation will be introduced making provision for the settlement of returned soldiers on the land under special conditions, exemption from payment of rent for a stated period, a special rate of interest for loan moneys to be raised by the Commonwealth and lent to the States for the

purpose of settling these men on the land, and necessary restrictions in respect of transfers. Other important special conditions of advantage to soldiers will also be included. Acts on these lines have already been passed in South Australia and New Zealand and we will follow on the lines adopted in those States. This legislation will apply to members of the Imperial Forces as well as to our own soldiers. We hope that when the war terminates and numbers of soldiers have returned and are wanting to strike out in new fields something may be done by this means to build up a large population and establish these men in happy homes. I have endeavoured to outline the legislation proposed.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: What about bulk handling?

The PREMIER: Regarding the bulk handling of wheat, we endorse the system, but are not quite satisfied with the agreement entered into by the late Government, who negotiated with the firm of Metcalf & Co., of Montreal, Canada. An agreement for the preparation of plans and the supervision of the work was prepared and signed by the Company, but is incomplete inasmuch as it has not been signed by the Government. We are now looking into the matter before completing this agreement. We have copies of agreements entered into between the Governments of South Australia and New South Wales with the same firm for similar work, and they differ materially from our agreement in regard to payment for services to be rendered.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Ours is more liberal.

The PREMIER: This question of bulk handling is a very big matter. We recognise the necessity for inaugurating this system which will cost a very large sum of money.

Member: It is a good thing to talk about.

The PREMIER: The whole matter will be inquired into and given careful consideration, and Parliament will be supplied with the fullest information. We appreciate the benefits of bulk handling and are fully alive to the advantages which would accrue if the system were now enforced, and if the wheat to be held during the next 18 months could be stored under it. In connection with the

Industries Assistance Board certain amendments will be required. A new Fire Brigades Bill to amend the Act of 1909 will be introduced. Under the 1909 Act the cost of fire brigades has increased beyond all expectation and it is desirable that a check be put on the ever-increasing expenditure without interfering with the good work done by the Fire Brigades Board. The chief feature of the amending Bill will be, whilst maintaining a form of central administration, to give to local governing authorities a measure of control in respect of the amount of money to be raised in their respective districts, the class of brigade and method of fire protection therein: also to provide that the money raised from local authorities shall be confined to their proportion of expenditure actually incurred in their districts, plus a fair charge for administrative expenses. I now come to the Industries Assistance Board. The affairs of this Board were found to be in a state of absolute chaos. Matters were in a very serious position indeed. The ledger had not been posted for three months. Advances were made far in excess of what was contemplated in the Act; and undoubtedly there will be very heavy loss. The work of the board has been most unsatisfactory. Delays have occurred in answering correspondence and not supplying fertilisers, and other requirements, until late in the season. There was also the inability to render accounts, and there was neglect to pay the surplus owing to many farmers who sold their wheat through the board, and, as hon. members are aware, wasters in many instances were helped beyond their merits, and the honest farmer was discouraged until many left their holdings. Hon. members are conversant with these complaints which have been before them on many occasions. The Minister in charge has put the whole concern on a sound and proper basis. His efforts have been directed to a reorganisation of the department and to endeavour to clear up the past transactions and ascertain the loss which was incurred.

Mr. Collier: He had it reorganised in three days, so that it could not have been too bad.

The PREMIER: It was all a question of brain power and experience, and the Min-

ister excels in both directions. In connection with the Education Department, it is generally recognised that one of the lessons of the war is the need for national efficiency, which can only be attained by aiming at the highest possible standard of intellectual development. The expenditure on education in the past has been generous and Parliament has never begrudged it. Facilities have been afforded to even the smallest places and it is intended to take steps in the direction of providing that when a pupil has reached the age of 14 years, and left school, he shall not forget what he has already learnt. In the metropolitan area in Kalgoorlie this need has been met by the establishment of secondary schools.

Mr. Collier: There is one thing lacking and it is that it ought to be made compulsory, say up to the age of 17.

The PREMIER: I am not prepared to say that that is a fair thing.

Mr. Collier: There is only a comparatively small number attending those schools and they are missing good opportunities.

The PREMIER: There is no doubt that the State secondary schools have done for people of limited means what private secondary schools have done for those who could afford to send their children to them. The continuation classes in the larger centres of population are also doing great work, and efforts will be made to extend those classes wherever opportunities offer, and such matters as the establishment of day continuation classes, and some form of compulsory attendance are receiving careful consideration. For myself I do not see how we can bring that about, but the Government recognise that such compulsion can only be exercised by the clearly expressed will of the people.

Mr. Collier: We abolished fees and the attendances fell off.

The PREMIER: It is a very strange thing that it had that effect. Every effort is being made to bring the whole of the facts to the notice of both employers and parents. The matter of providing secondary education in country districts is being considered by the Minister, the Director of Education, the Professor of Agriculture in the University, and the Commissioner of the Wheat Belt, and it is hoped that some

suggestions will be put forward which will enable the Government to take the initial steps at the beginning of the year. There, again, however, we have financial stringency stepping in. If we have not the money we cannot provide the facilities, and the Government will be compelled to proceed slowly, though the fact that a full inquiry will have been made will enable us to deal economically with the matter. There is a lack of teachers owing to the spirited manner in which they have responded to the call of Empire. That has occasioned considerable difficulty, as it has in other departments and in other occupations. The Government recognise the paramount importance of the question and are determined to do what they can, and the desire is to be ready when the war is over to take advantage of our opportunities. The Minister for Education has already sanctioned a reduction in the number of children attending the schools; that has been reduced from 10 to 8.

Mr. Smith: Do you propose to extend the kindergarten?

The PREMIER: I should like to do so but we have not the means to do all that we would wish to do.

Mr. Smith: You are charging them rent for the hovels they are living in.

The PREMIER: I think that one of what the hon. member calls hovels is free. I have occupied sufficient time in endeavouring to outline the position as we found it. I have endeavoured to forecast the trend of legislation deemed necessary for the welfare and progress of the State. Some of the Bills had already been adopted by our predecessors, and other measures will doubtless be found necessary as the session progresses. The Estimates for the current year are in the course of active preparation and I hope shortly to submit the Budget to the House. The outstanding feature of the present time is Australia's attitude towards the war, whether we are to continue to do our duty to the Empire and Australia, so nobly begun two years ago, and whether we are to answer the call of the Prime Minister on the conscription referendum. The Government will support heartily, and if necessary ask for an adjournment to enable members to actively participate in the campaign. Australia's name has been made

glorious by the valour of her sons and we are determined that the sacrifice shall not be in vain, and we will do our utmost to compel all to shoulder their responsibilities. Self preservation and national duty alike call us and I hope few will be found wanting in this great crisis. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply:—"We beg to assure Your Excellency that we will give most careful consideration to measures that will best promote the welfare and prosperity of Western Australia."

On motion by Mr. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 20th September, 1916.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Land Clearing Operations—Audit of accounts to 30th June, 1916. 2, Stock Suspense Account Regulations. 3, Abattoirs Act, 1909—(a) Amendment of Regulation 18; (b) Amended Regulations. 4, Plant Diseases Act, 1914—(a) Regulation *re* importation of potatoes from Victoria; (b) Regulations. 5, Land Act, 1898, and Amendments—By-laws (Section 43). 6, Zoological Gardens Act, 1898—Regulations. 7, Cemeteries Act, 1897, and Amendments—By-laws.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills of last session:—

1. Supplementary Loan.
2. War Council.
3. Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.
4. Health Act Amendment.
5. Roads Closure.
6. Land Act Amendment.
7. Permanent Reserve.
8. Supply (No. 1).
9. Licensing Act Amendment Continuance.
10. Supply (No. 2).
11. Licensing Act Amendment.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day on motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply and on the following amendment moved by the Colonial Secretary:—"We beg to assure Your Excellency that we will give the most careful consideration to measures that will best promote the welfare and prosperity of Western Australia."

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [4.40] : Permit me in the first place to offer my congratulations to Mr. Colebatch on his elevation to the leadership of the House. I feel certain from my experience of the hon. gentleman that with his great ability and his masterly grasp of details, shown during the time he occupied the position in the House which I now enjoy, he will do very great credit indeed to the office. Henceforth I shall, to a large extent, be the critic instead of the criticised, but I trust that in all my comments I shall be fair and in no case indulge in purposeless or wanton criticism. I do not intend to traverse the whole of the speech made by the Colonial Secretary yesterday, but the hon. gentleman trenched on some controversial ground and made statements which I do not intend to allow to pass unchallenged. The Minister boasted that Mr. Hamersley's return for the East Province was a brilliant victory for the Liberal side. This is only a small matter, but if I