

I hope these figures will please the hon. member.

Mr. Thomas: Is this a mathematical competition?

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*State Brickworks, £5,000; State Implement Works, £111,868; State Quarries, £10,000; State Sawmills, £301,950; Sale of Government Property Trust Account, £69,379; Sale of Government Property Trust Account, £43,000*—agreed to.

This completed the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Resolutions as passed in Committee of Supply, granting supplies amounting to £3,956,923 from Consolidated Revenue and a further sum of £112,379 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account were formally reported.

On motion by the Premier report from Committee of Supply adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. McDowall in the Chair.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [2-31] moved—

That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty, a sum not exceeding £3,956,923 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Western Australia and a further sum not exceeding £112,379 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 2.32 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd February, 1915.

	PAGE
Paper presented	1668
House Committee, change of Members	1668
Assent to Bills	1668
Questions: Unemployed, assistance	1669
Labour Bureau	1669
Irrigation Works, Harvey, cost	1669
Joint Select Committee, Money Bills Procedure	1669
Motion: Timber Industry	1669
Bills: Government Electric Works, Assembly's message	1674
Vermion Board's Amendment, Request for Conference	1674
Adjournment, special	1674

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Amendment of Regulations under the Electoral Act, 1907.

HOUSE COMMITTEE.

Change of members.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, by leave without notice, the Deputy President (Hon. W. Kingsmill) and the Hon. J. F. Allen were appointed members of the House Committee during the absence on leave of the President and the Hon. R. J. Lynn.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Licensing Act Amendment Continuance.
- 2, Church of England Lands.
- 3, Loan Acts Amendment.
- 4, Public Servants.
- 5, Police Act Amendment.
- 6, Yillimining-Kondinin Railway Extension.
- 7, Pinjarra-Dwarda Railway Extension.
- 8, Katanning-Nyabing Railway Extension.

9, Boyanup-Busselton Railway Extension.

10, Naval and Military Absentees' Relief.

11, Supply (No. 2), £488,270.

12, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

13, Blackboy and Zamia Palm License.

14, Control of Trade in War Time Act Amendment.

15, State Children Act Amendment.

16, Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment.

17, Midland Junction Trades Hall.

18, Dividend Duties Act Amendment.

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYED, ASSISTANCE.

Hon. E. McLARTY asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What has been the cost for the past four months previous to 1st February for assistance to the unemployed? 2, For meals in Perth, and other places? 3, For rations supplied on Government orders? 4, The cost of providing sleeping accommodation, including beds?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, £1,745 16s. 3d. 2, £1,743 3s. 3d. 3, £459 9s. 9d.

QUESTION—LABOUR BUREAU.

Hon. E. McLARTY asked the Colonial Secretary: Is it a fact, as reported in the public Press a few days ago, that the Honorary Minister in another place stated that there were more applications from employers than there were men available to fill the positions?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Honorary Minister made no such general statement. He said that such had been the case at the Labour Bureau's agencies at Narrogin and Geraldton for the month of January.

QUESTION—IRRIGATION WORKS, HARVEY, COST.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS asked the Colonial Secretary: What is the total amount of money expended on the Harvey Irrigation Works to date?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Total expenditure to 18th February, 1915, on these works is £5,126.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. D. G. GAWLER the time for bringing up the report of the Committee was extended until the 25th February.

MOTION—TIMBER INDUSTRY.

Debate resumed from the 17th February, on the motion by the Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, "That the present position of the Timber Industry should immediately be taken into consideration by Parliament."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.38]: There is only one reply which can be made to the speech of the Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom, and that reply has been able and effectively given by the hon. Mr. Cullen. No one has a keener appreciation of the wisdom of fostering by every possible means the industries of this State than have the members of the present Government. No one realises more fully than they do the good work done by Millars' company in the production and distribution of wealth. But there is a limit even to the most generous appreciation, and Sir Edward's request would strain the benevolence of even the most generous of Governments. That request is probably unprecedented in its all-embracing character. We are told that creosoted pine has come into competition with jarrah sleepers in the London market, with the result, according to Sir Edward Wittenoom, that Millars' find themselves unable to obtain orders for sleepers, and will be forced to close down their mills unless they can secure the reduction of their f.o.b. cost for jarrah by 20s. per load. The manner in which they seek to effect that reduction is, wholesale exaction from the workers and also from the Government.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: And from their own staff.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : They want reductions in hewing rates, in wages, in cartage, in railage, and in wharfage. In other words, Millars' want the workers' labour at a lower figure than that at which any one else in the community obtains it, and they want a thumping big subsidy from the Government in addition. If Millars' do not get all these things, they threaten, they will close down. It seems to me that the demand is a remarkable one, and based upon reasons extremely remarkable. As regards hewing rates, wages, and cartage, those are matters which must rest between Millars' and their employees. The present high cost of cartage is due, as all hon. members must know, to the high cost of fodder at this particular period. No reduction, I am informed, can be expected, or reasonably expected, in that connection for the present. Any reduction in the cost of haulage is, I am assured, an impossibility at the present time. The actual wages involved in the production of a load of timber at the mills, exclusive of haulage, is about 27s. per ton. That has been the highest cost to the Government; they have never paid more, and they have paid less. The cost under these heads to the Government has been as low as 23s. 6d. per load. The amount collected by the Government from Millars' per load for rail freight, wharfage, etcetera—in fact for everything—is something like 15s. That makes a total of £2 2s. per load. Now, how is it possible for that figure to be reduced to the extent of £1 per load? It could be done only by reducing wages one-half and Government charges as well one-half; and the latter, as hon. members will realise, is impossible with any consideration for the general taxpayer. The wages men are paid in accordance with an award of the Arbitration Court, and their rates vary from 9s. to 14s. per day. Skilled labour, of course, receives the higher pay. The bulk of the wages paid, I am informed, range from 9s. to 11s. per day. These rates leave but little margin for lopping off: and, further, it must be remembered that the cost of living has

risen throughout Western Australia since the war began. The average rail freight paid on timber for export is 7s. 4d. per ton, while the average rate actually received by the Commissioner of Railways during the last financial year was only 6s. 4d. per ton. Thus, there is little room for reduction in this direction. Mr. Short, indeed, says, that any reduction would involve actual loss to the Government. Sir Edward Wittenoom states that the amount of railage and wharfage paid by Millars to the Government in one year was £148,394. Sir Edward, however, forgets to mention the corresponding expenditure involved. Nearly every shilling received by the Government from Millars' company for railway freighting of timber was again disbursed by the Government in the payment of wages, fuel, and other things required in order to make provision for the running of the railways.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: You ought to reduce costs in the Railway Department.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The wharfage rate at Bunbury is only 2s. 6d. per load—not a very heavy amount considering that 10d. of it is paid to the Railway Department for haulage, and that the Bunbury Harbour Board thus receive only 1s. 8d. The money received by the board is utilised to meet necessary disbursements, and interest, and sinking fund. I have mentioned that we have been told Millars' cannot compete with the American creosoted softwood sleeper in England. Now, I am informed that for many years past no jarrah sleepers have been supplied to English railway companies, that no jarrah sleepers have been exported to Great Britain. The companies operating railways in the Old Country have been using Russian creosoted pine for years past; and it is nothing new, therefore, for Millars to encounter competition in the sleeper trade with Great Britain. Western Australia is, however, still sending jarrah to the Old Country, and that timber, I understand, is used principally

for the purposes of wagon building and of flooring. As regards Indian and African orders, I am well aware that India and Africa, owing to financial strain, are purchasing in the cheapest markets, and that India is using her own inferior woods in order to keep money in her own country during the period of financial stress. Sir Edward Wittenoom complains of the Government competition. The only competition worth mentioning was the acceptance of the Commonwealth contract for powellised karri sleepers, which was absolutely new business, and I believe that Millars' did not put in a tender to supply those sleepers; therefore, the remark that the Government are entering into severe competition is uncalled for. Millars' are seeking for a reduction of rents on timber concessions. The company have leases from the Government, granted many years ago. Other mills, including the State sawmills, pay royalty to the Forestry Department at the rate of 2s. 6d. a load. Millars' exported 207,000 loads for the year 1913-14. If they had paid royalty they would have contributed £25,875, whereas they paid only £9,146 in rent and £1,728 in royalty, or a total of £10,884, equal to 1s. a load in the square. Hence Millars' have a big advantage over other competitors, including the Government. It is impossible to devise some means by which Millars' can reduce the f.o.b. cost of timber by 20s. a load. Even if no land rents were charged and no wharfage rates imposed, even if we carried timber free over the railways, such an end could not be attained, except by a 25 per cent. reduction in wages all round. Why should Millars' be singled out for this special treatment? Other companies are facing losses, and they have just as much right to ask for a subsidy as have Millars. The Government are anxious to assist all industries, and have been doing so ever since the war commenced. They are still doing so, but on a different basis from this. Provision is made in every instance for repayment of any moneys lent, either to companies or private individuals. It is admitted that Millars' Company have done well for

the State, but it must be remembered that the State has done well for the company. We have heard nothing from Sir Edward Wittenoom of dividends paid during the last five years, nothing of huge profits made. Now, when there is depression throughout the British Dominions, when everyone is suffering, they come before Parliament interceding, not for loans, but for gifts from the general taxpayer, and on a tremendous scale. I hope the company will reconsider the position, will realise their obligations to the State in these times of adversity, and gallantly bear their share of the burden. Mr. Colebatch criticised the State sawmills. As usual, he quoted Treasury returns. He stated what is absolutely correct, namely, that these undertakings are increasing the deficit. But they have something to show in return. The mills are not carried on at a loss. There was a profit of £2,493 for the last financial year. Still they have enlarged the deficit. They are employing a large number of men. Work has been given to sleeper hewers cast adrift by private employers. Large stacks of sleepers are accumulating, thereby increasing the deficit, because the wages have to be paid out of revenue. But there is something to show in return.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Is there any prospect of realising on them?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, certainly. The mills are employing 1,350 men, most of them put off by private firms. Mr. Colebatch contended that the sleepers would deteriorate. That is not the experience. It is generally admitted that seasoned sleepers are more durable than green sleepers.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I did not say they would deteriorate.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: When we sell the sleepers the deficit will be reduced. We have heard similar criticism of the State Implement Works, that the cash revenue does not correspond with the expenditure. But there are large stocks in hand, and this agricultural machinery is being sold on long terms. I have here a statement showing the expenditure and revenue, and also the sales and stock to the 31st of last January.

The balance sheet shows a credit of £18,735, so there is no loss on the State Implement Works, although, admittedly, they are tending to increase the deficit. To a certain extent the deficit is a bogus deficit. The statement reads as follows:—Scheduled expenditure to the 31st January, £81,299; stores and sundry creditors outstanding, estimated, £5,000; wages outstanding, £1,200; revenue brought to account 31st January, £31,230; debts owing by general public, £14,723; debts owing by State Government, £14,797; debts owing by Commonwealth Government, £2,224, total £31,744; implements manufactured and parts on hand, and implements and parts under construction, estimated, £29,560; jobs on hand, £11,700; pipes Water Supply Department, in stock, £2,000; total £43,260; showing a credit balance of £18,735, although, according to the Treasury returns, the State Implement Works show a deficit. But no accountant would accept the Treasury returns as a fair guide.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Is the hon. member speaking to the motion?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I was replying to Mr. Colebatch. I have nothing more to say on the subject of the motion. I am glad the question has been ventilated. It has enabled me to put the other side, and I trust it will prevent the impression getting abroad that Millars' Company is being unfairly treated by the Government in these times of stress.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: We have never said that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The inference drawn from the hon. member's speech was that they were being unfairly treated, that it was impossible for them to carry on, owing to the burden they had to bear in consequence of the railway freights, wharfage and the high cost of labour; it was a matter that called for immediate remedy, a matter of extreme urgency.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: No one accused the Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is very little room left to make demands on the worker considering the

cost of living, and I think it behoves the company to act its part in this crisis with courage, confidence and hope.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.54]: I find it difficult to determine whether Sir Edward Wittenoom has simply used this motion as a means of ventilating the position of affairs, or whether he takes it seriously. The exact words of the motion are, "The position of the timber industry should immediately be taken into consideration by Parliament." Mr. Cornell said he was not conversant with the timber industry; that was obvious by the time he had finished his remarks. Mr. Colebatch said he did not pretend to know much about the matter; yet he was not called to order. We have heard a good deal about the State sawmills and the implement works, but they seem to have very little to do with this specific motion. The leader of the House said he had heard very little about the subject. We heard very little about it from him, so I would ask Sir Edward Wittenoom does he seriously suggest that Parliament should immediately take this question into consideration.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I will tell you when you have finished.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: But I want it now. I cannot speak after the hon. member.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I am not supposed to interject.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is a process of elucidating information, and I have no objection. Does my hon. friend really wish us to take this matter into consideration and, further, does he think we are competent to do it? We have had three speeches on the subject, not one of which has had much to do with the question. I am going to suggest that if Parliament is to consider this question the only proper way is by select committee. We can substitute "Millars' Company" for "the timber industry," because I do not think the hon. member asks concessions for any other company or for the State mills. I would ask the hon. member, are we to take that statement of his as a plain unvarnished statement of

the position of affairs in the timber industry and particularly in respect to Millars' Company?

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Certainly.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then it is not a question of bluff, as has been suggested? Millars do not threaten anything, but simply make a statement that, unless they can get this reduction, they are going to close down. I should think this was a question for negotiations between the local directors of Millars' and Cabinet Ministers. Parliament is not competent to deal with the question. Suppose we pass the resolution; will it assist the hon. member or his directors in getting a plain statement on which they can work? It does not give them the slightest concession. The only possible proposal that I can see at the present moment is in regard to the Industrial Arbitration question. This comes up, and I suppose will continue to come up. This is the wretched, compulsory, cast-iron system which not only the Government but the members of this House have insisted upon putting upon industrial enterprise, shackling enterprises of all kinds. If the hon. member had devoted his attention to that he would have had my support at any rate. When the question was brought up some few months ago it was rejected by this House. The Government did propose, in view of the circumstances, to make some arrangement—I forget the exact details—by which these awards could be thrown overboard. But the majority of the members of this House would not have it because of a stipulation which the Government put in, namely, that the weaker section of the community should come under this scheme. Can the hon. member expect that this cast-iron system which has been accepted by practically all parties in the State should be thrown overboard now? What about the shipping rates? Without pretending to be intimately acquainted with the mercantile marine, I say it is common knowledge that freights have advanced. If so, is it a reasonable thing to put the whole effect of this upon Western Australia? It seems to me comparatively immaterial, so far as Western

Australia is concerned, what the position of Millars' Company is, and whether they carry on or not. The Government have no means of finding out, neither have ordinary members of Parliament, what the position of Millars' Company is. Suppose they were in a flourishing condition, is it any reason why they should get a concession? Suppose they are not in a flourishing condition, is this the time when Western Australia can afford—to put it on the lowest grounds—or the Railway Department, or any other department afford, to make this concession to what is commonly considered a very wealthy corporation? "Business as usual" we are told was to be the motto of the British merchants. I would be the last person to minimise, or cast any ridicule upon, or be at all severe on, these enormous mercantile undertakings, which are financed in London. They have an uncommonly difficult task to carry out at the best. I hope my hon. friend will not think, when he is answering any of these questions that I am putting to him, that I wish to criticise Millars' Company in any degree at all. We, as members of Parliament, and the Government, are bound to look at the matter from the point of view of Western Australia. If we take this alternative that it is not a question of bluff, or of trying at a particularly difficult moment to exact something from the citizens of Western Australia, and if we take it that Millars' Company are compelled to close down owing to lack of orders, it seems to me that we are indebted to Sir Edward Wittenoom for bringing this question before Parliament for ventilation. If we are to be kept to the strict terms of the motion, that the position of the timber trade should be taken into consideration by Parliament at the present moment, I am unable to support it. I do not see that we can do any good for the people we are representing here, or for Millars' Company, by dealing with the subject which every member who has spoken either shows he knows very little about, or else has been called to order because he has wandered from the point. These are the gentlemen

that the mover of the motion wishes to see this enquiry submitted to. I do not wish to put myself in a similar position. Owing to a slight deafness, as a result of a cold, I am not sure whether the leader of the House spoke about a bogus deficit or a bonus deficit.

The Colonial Secretary: A bogus deficit to a certain extent.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then, I say, this ought to be published in big letters all over the State of Western Australia and in the Eastern States as well. This is a bogus deficit that we have got. This is the latest announcement from the head of the Government in this House. An old friend of mine who had never been a member of Parliament, but who had sat in the gallery for a long time, once said to me "What you really want to do if you wish to make an impression in Parliament is to repeat a statement three times." For the third time, therefore, I would ask the public Press to make a note of the fact that we have a bogus deficit in Western Australia at the present moment. Discussion becomes practically impossible under the conditions outlined by my hon. friend and by the leader of the House. In the midst of a highly technical and important matter, which Parliament is called upon to consider, we have it stated that "This is a bogus deficit, there is no necessity for alarm, and all is going on very well." I am not going to take up the time of the House in going *seriatim* through the statements made by Sir Edward Wittenoom. Some of them, I think, are most valuable, and are given with an authority which no one else in the House possesses on the subject. I think, whether we agree with him or not, we must admit that it is a clear statement from his point of view. How members of the Government are going to deal with this very important matter is not for me to say. If it is their idea that it is a bogus deficit I tremble to think what the result of the negotiations with Millars' Company will be. We are well aware that the management of that company consists of men of high standing, and great ability in the financial world, and they, at any rate,

are not going to run their company as we are running this country. I hope that Sir Edward Wittenoom may think it worth while to answer the two or three questions I have put forward this afternoon. I also hope he will appreciate my attitude in telling him that I am unable to support his resolution, because I scarcely think that he himself either expects or desires that it should be passed by this Chamber.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan, debate adjourned.

BILL—GOVERNMENT ELECTRIC WORKS.

Assembly's Further Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it declined to make the modification requested by the Council.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message—Request for Conference.

The following Message from the Assembly was received and read:—The Assembly in reply to Message No. 35 from the Council relating to the Vermin Boards Act Amendment Bill requests the Legislative Council to grant a Conference on the Bill. Should a Conference be agreed to by the Legislative Council the Legislative Assembly will be represented at such Conference by the Hon. W. D. Johnson, the Hon. R. H. Underwood, and the Hon. J. Mitchell.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.12]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Thursday next.

There is nothing to be gained by adjourning the House until 3 o'clock.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Is there any hope of finishing the Session this week?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think so.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Would it not be better to adjourn until Tuesday next?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think it would be possible to do so.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 23rd February, 1915.

	PAGE
Questions: Bread, price per loaf	1675
.. Railway Construction, Yillimining-Kondinin ..	1675
.. Railway Fares, Excursion rates, Eastern districts, Suburban and Country ..	1675
.. Unionists and preference	1676
Papers presented	1676
Joint Select Committee, Money Bills Procedure ..	1676
Assent to Bill	1676
Loan Estimates, general debate	1676
Bills: Loan, £2,850,000, 2r.	1682
Income and Public Entertainments Taxation, 2r.	1683

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

QUESTION—BREAD, PRICE PER LOAF.

Mr. FOLEY (without notice) asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that in some of the outback towns of the State 8d. per loaf is being charged for bread. 2, Can he inform the House whether it is within the province of the board appointed to deal with similar matters to go into this question?

The PREMIER replied: I am not aware of what the hon. member states. It is, however, a matter that the Commission can inquire into and take action upon, if necessary.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, YILLIMINING-KONDIRIN.

1. Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Works: 1, In reference to the Government's recent promise respecting the Yillimining-Kondinin railway, namely, that it will be handed over to the Railway Department at the end of this month, can he yet state the definite date for such handing over? If not, why not? 2, Is he aware that settlers have ploughs, drills, and other agricultural machinery, furniture, fertilisers, seed wheat, etc., which they desire to take to their holdings, as soon as this railway is made available under reasonable conditions and freights, and that the whole of the districts served by the railway are suffering from the existing uncertainty and doubt as to when the railway will be opened?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Owing to the recent storms in this district, which have necessitated repairs to the railway, the line will be handed over to the Working Railways on the 15th March. 2, If so, the date has now been fixed and the uncertainty removed.

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY FARES.

Excursion rates, Eastern Districts.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to reduce the passenger fares on the country sections of our railways to the same basis as charged on suburban areas. 2, If not, in view of the heavy loss entailed by the present rates of passenger fares, is it the intention of the Government to raise the fares on the suburban areas to a higher basis?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, Not at the present time.

Suburban and Country.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Will he extend the time of excursion (summer) tickets from the