

are not necessary now while the National Security Regulations are in existence, but after the war. Why the urgency now? These people have left nothing undone which they could do and there is nothing of even the lowest order that they have left out. They have resorted to any means in an endeavour to get the referendum through. I do not know what Australia is coming to. The Commonwealth authorities are harping about repatriation and what they will do. I have yet to learn that there is anything done by the Government that talks so much about repatriation. Soldiers are coming back now and are returning to their properties. Some cannot procure the necessary machinery and spare parts to put their farms in proper order. The men are starting to return now and we should have a scheme ready. The Leader of this House should let us know whether this Government drew up any scheme whatever for repatriation. I hope, on this occasion, that the State Government will not depend entirely on the Commonwealth Government as it has done for practically everything since the war started. It is time this Government stiffened its back and stood on its own feet. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,700,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 1st August, 1944.

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

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

MR. SPEAKER: I am prepared to swear in the member for North Perth who was returned at the last general election.

Mr. Abbott took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

MOTION—CONDOLENCE.

The late Mr. R. S. Sampson, M.L.A.

THE PREMIER [4.34]: I move, without notice—

That this House desires to place upon its records its profound sense of the loss sustained in the passing of the late Richard Stanley Sampson, a member of this House, and that an expression of the sincerest sympathy of members be conveyed to his widow by Mr. Speaker.

It is a sad occasion when we perform the duty of recording a motion of sympathy with a widow of a member of this House, and particularly when it concerns a man who has been with us for many years. The late Mr. Sampson had a long and honourable record of service in this House of which he was a member for, I think, over 23 years. During that time he always fought for what he thought to be right in the interests of the welfare of the State, and he did so very persistently in every way open to him. He won the respect and esteem of all members

of this House by his undoubted ability and capacity and we know that, although the fact was not published abroad, he engaged in many acts of generosity in a large number of deserving cases. He also had a long record of public service with the local authorities of the State and made a conspicuous mark for himself in the commercial life of Western Australia. He had many attributes that commended him to his electors whom he so ably represented and those attributes also commended him to members of this Chamber. We will miss him from our deliberations, and we recognise that he was a man who always was anxious and eager to do the best possible for his constituents and to help in every way open to him the progress of the State he loved so well.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I desire to associate myself and those with me with the motion moved by the Premier. We were very sorry indeed when we learnt that Mr. Sampson had passed away after a very severe illness from which he had suffered for a considerable time. I feel sure it was not understood during the latest electoral campaign that his health at the time was such as to cause grave concern to his loved ones. He kept the fact very much to himself. His passing came as a surprise to most of us and caused greater regret than would possibly otherwise have been experienced had we discovered previously that he was so seriously ill. As the Premier mentioned, the late Mr. Sampson rendered great and honourable services to Western Australia. For a time he was a Minister of the Crown and for a very long period he was a private member of this House. I found him a most loyal colleague and a good friend, one who was always ready to take an interest in any matter that he believed was for the good of Western Australia. I think we can sum it up by saying we can ill spare such a man as the late Mr. Sampson, and we can carry the motion with the greatest regret and the greatest sympathy with his surviving relatives.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): My colleagues and I desire to join in the expression of sense of loss sustained through the passing of Mr. Sampson. We knew him to be a man of a most kindly nature. He was assiduous in his attention to his duties and set us an example in the manner he studied the interests of his electorate

and his electors generally, as we saw in his representation of them in this House. We will, as the Premier said, miss him as a figure with which we have been so familiar for a long period. We deeply regret that he was not spared to continue the work in which he had engaged for so many years, and we join sincerely in this expression of sympathy with his widow.

Question put and passed; members standing.

QUESTIONS (9).

BUNBURY HARBOUR.

Mr. WITHERS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has any concrete scheme been evolved for a new or improved harbour at Bunbury?

(2) If so, what are the prospects of an early commencement of such work?

(3) If not, will he endeavour to have same expedited and treated as urgent?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. Any statements to the contrary published or promulgated in the Bunbury district are entirely without official foundation and are not to be relied upon.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) The proposal to provide improvements to the Harbour at Bunbury is continuing to receive active consideration. Investigations are being expedited.

THIRD PARTY INSURANCE.

As to Inclusion in Comprehensive Policy.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that during the passage through Parliament of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Bill, an assurance was given on behalf of the Government, that the recognised motor vehicle comprehensive insurance policy would be sufficient to comply with the provisions of the Bill if, and when, it became an Act?

(2) Is he aware that in order to insure against complete legal liability two separate policies are required by the insurance companies, including the State office?

(3) In order to keep faith with the motor-ing public, will he take the necessary action, either administratively or legislatively, to give effect to the undertaking referred to?

(4) Alternatively, will the State Insurance Office issue a single policy, covering all legal liabilities, which will be accepted by the licensing authorities throughout the State?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) An assurance was given during the passage of the Bill that a comprehensive policy, so long as the owner complied with all the other provisions of the Third Party measure, would be sufficient. The Bill was therefore amended to provide that such a policy would be deemed to comply with the Act.

(2) Yes.

(3) (4) An effort was made to induce the approved insurers to amalgamate the compulsory Third Party insurance with the comprehensive, but the department was advised this course had been proved impracticable. This opinion was endorsed by the Premiums Committee in a report (a copy of which has been laid on the Table of the House). Although a later report by the Manager of the State Government Insurance Office supports the contentions of the Committee, the matter is still being actively investigated.

TRAFFIC ACT.

As to Motor Headlights.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has Traffic Act Regulation 66 been repealed or cancelled?

(2) If not, why is it that motor vehicles, motor cars particularly, are permitted to have one and in many instances two searchlights fitted on the front of the vehicle when the above quoted regulation stipulates that only two headlamps shall be so fitted?

(3) Why is it that vehicles are also permitted to be used at night with only one headlamp burning?

(4) Will he issue orders that when searchlights are fitted to a vehicle they shall be so fitted that they must not be in position when the car is not travelling along undefined tracks as specified in the regulations?

(5) Will he issue instructions that action is to be taken against all offenders?

(6) If not, in view of the menace these lights are to motorists and pedestrians, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Regulation 66 permits of the use of a petrol or searchlight under certain conditions specified therein.

(3) The use of only one headlight is a breach of the regulations, the policing of which in country districts is a responsibility of the local authorities.

(4) It is considered that strict adherence to the present regulation would meet all reasonable requirements.

(5) Instructions to traffic inspectors outside of the metropolitan traffic area must be issued by the local authorities who are the licensing authorities under the provisions of the Traffic Act.

(6) Answered by No. 5.

RAILWAY ROLLINGSTOCK.

As to Transfers to Commonwealth.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What rollingstock was transferred to the Commonwealth Government since the outbreak of the present war?

(2) Was such rollingstock sold, hired or loaned to that Government?

(3) What amount of money has been received from the Commonwealth Government in return for such rollingstock?

(4) What, if any, further payments are due from the Commonwealth Government in this matter and when are they to be made?

(5) How has the money that was received been applied?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Twenty-six locomotives, 150 4-wheel wagons, 77 bogie wagons, and 15 bogie brakevans.

(2) Sold.

(3) £144,759.

(4) Nil.

(5) Placed in a suspense account at the Treasury to be utilised for the construction of up-to-date rollingstock by way of replacement.

WHEAT TRANSPORT.

As to Statement by Senator Fraser.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Did he or his department supply the Commonwealth Government with information to the effect that the Western Australian Government would transport all wheat in

this State to ports by 31st October next, as was stated by Senator Fraser in the Federal Senate on 30th March last?

(2) If he or his department did not supply the information, who did?

(3) If such information is not at his disposal will he ascertain from the Commonwealth Government the source of its information?

(4) If he or his department did supply the information, then in view of the fact that at that time, viz., the 30th March last, there was stored in the country 680,877 tons of wheat, and the average weekly rate of haulage to ports and mills was 9,484 tons, on what basis was the estimate made?

(5) Does the department believe that the wheat in this State can be transported away from country sidings by the 31st October next?

(6) If not, when is it considered the job can be done, and what steps are being taken to speed up the work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. An assurance was given that subject to sufficient coal being available, the Railway Department could transport 17,000 tons of wheat weekly. Had it been possible to maintain this figure from November, 1943, the whole of the wheat would have been cleared by October, 1944, but coal shortages made this impossible.

(2), (3), (4), and (5) Answered by No. 1.

(6) The department is working in close co-operation with Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., in regard to the clearance of wheat now in the country.

HENRY WILLS AND CO.

As to Properties Occupied at Albany.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Railways:

What is the area of, the annual rent charged, and the capital value of the land occupied by the sheds of Henry Wills & Co., at Albany, and also for the land occupied by the offices of the same firm?

The MINISTER replied:

Sheds:—Area—2r. 20.5p. Rent—£200 10s. per annum.

Office:—Area—11.5p. Rent—£50 per annum.

Capital Value:—This land is Crown land and as such has not been assessed.

COMMONWEALTH POWERS REFERENDUM.

As to Appointment of State Scrutineers.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government advised, or is it the intention of the Government to advise, His Excellency to exercise the power conferred upon him for appointment of scrutineers at the places where the scrutiny of referendum votes is to take place—as provided for in Section 18 (2) of the Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act, 1906-1928?

(2) If not, does he not think such appointments highly desirable, and will he take immediate steps to ensure that His Excellency takes the necessary action?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No. In the many previous referenda which have been taken, no such appointments have been made. In any case, the law provides that the Governor may appoint only one person at each polling place and not a representative of each side.

POST-WAR WORKS.

As to Western Australian Programme.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has the Government provided the Commonwealth with a list (partial or complete) of suggested post-war works in this State?

(2) If so, does this include local works suggested by local authorities, and if so, what proportion of the cost are local authorities to bear?

(3) Will he lay on the Table papers showing the respective works (under both (1) and (2)) and the estimated expenditure involved?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) A list of works from Loan Funds and accumulated Revenue Funds for the first year immediately after the war has been submitted. A further schedule of large-scale works in relation to which financial assistance by the Commonwealth Government would be required has also received the consideration of the Government.

(2) The first list includes items from local authorities, which they have expressed

their intention to finance from their own funds.

(3) This will be done at a later stage in the session.

TRAMWAY DISPUTE.

Mr. CROSS (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that serious inconvenience is being caused to essential works, and munition factories because of the present stoppage of electric tramways and trolley buses?

(2) What action is being taken to settle the dispute promptly?

The MINISTER replied: Everything possible has been done. The Commissioner saw me this afternoon, after having made an unsuccessful attempt to settle the dispute, and the case will go to the Arbitration Court tomorrow. The Government realises the position and has done everything possible to bring about a settlement.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Commissioner or the Acting Commissioner?

The MINISTER: The Commissioner himself.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the Premier, ordered: That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the Premier, ordered: That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

MOTION—COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

THE PREMIER [4.53]: I move—

That the following members be appointed to serve on the sessional Committees during the present session:—

Library.—Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Education and Mr. Seward.

Standing Orders.—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Doney, Mr. Withers and Mr. North.

House.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. McLarty, Mr. Needham, Mr. Stubbs and Mr. Wilson.

Printing.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Thorn and Mr. Triat.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.55]: I propose to support the motion but I would like to make an observation or two on the activities of the committees, or of one or two of them, in past years and what I hope will be their activities in the future. I find that every session we appoint, for example, a Library Committee consisting of three members of this House—one of whom we have had occasion this time to change—and I understand that the Library Committee has not met for many years. If that information be correct—as I have every reason to believe it is—it seems to me that some change should be made in the activities of that committee. While the library of Parliament House cannot in these days be expected to be of the standard which I understand it once was, it would appear to merit the attention of the committee more regularly than has been the case in the past.

If we are regularly to appoint a Library Committee I consider that members of this House are entitled to hear from that committee what the results of its deliberations have been and in addition to see some result of these deliberations or else that we should cease to appoint a Library Committee. I understand the records show that religiously, for many years past, we have appointed members to a Library Committee and yet there has not been a resolution from or even a meeting of that committee or any action taken by it. If the House thinks, as it may, that the duties connected with the library are being carried out better without the intervention of the committee than with such intervention then it should cease to appoint a committee. Do not let us continue the ridiculous practice of appointing members to a committee which, in the run of years, has taken no action to assist the development or the continuance or the maintenance of the library in any way as a committee, whatever the individual members of that committee may have done.

Again while I do not for one moment suggest there is anything wrong with the membership of the House Committee—far from it—at the same time the activities of that committee, in the interests of the members of this House and in the interests of the amenities of this House, could be considerably more than they are. We find that year after year passes and still there are

no facilities of any kind for members to deal with their constituents. No degree of comfort is provided if a member wishes to discuss any matter in confidence with one of his clerks or any other person who comes to interview him. The facilities provided are, to say the best, negligible. We find, too, that there are certain parts of these premises which do not bear the hallmark of tidiness. If one looks no further than 30 or 40 yards from where we are, he will find instances of untidiness which in my opinion should not be present in a House of this character.

The trouble as I see it is that on no occasion has the House Committee, in the time I have been here—nine years now—made any report of its activities to the House. It may be—I am prepared to concede this as a distinct possibility—that members of the committee have given attention to these things and that their activities have been prevented by the Government of the day or financial difficulties or some other problem which is not known to me. But on the face of it these things do require attention and for all the information we have to the contrary they have not been attended to. I do not offer these arguments in criticism of the activities of the committees—far from it! I offer them for two reasons. One is that if they have used their best endeavours to have the position improved and some outside force has prevented them, then I commend to them the idea of coming forward and telling the House. The other reason is that I think some reference in the House to this matter may encourage members of the committee who have probably taken some active interest in the committee in the past to renew their efforts in the future. I hope the few suggestions I have made, which I know are supported by members on this side of this House if not on the other, will bear some fruit.

THE PREMIER (in reply): So far as the Library Committee is concerned, I understand that there have been no formal meetings, but members who desire to have the library augmented by the purchase of certain books have made representations to the committee, and at various times various books, which have warranted purchasing, have been bought by the committee and placed in the library. These matters could,

of course, be discussed on the Estimates. Any complaint regarding the activities of the committees in regard to the members of the committees and their duties, and what could or should have been done by them, could be discussed in Committee on the Estimates and at that stage the members of the committees could give an account of their stewardship and activities. Those who complain that they are not able to get books or documents from the library could bring their complaints before the Committee, but, generally speaking, the absence of criticism would appear to warrant the assumption that the committees are carrying out their duties fairly well. It is not always necessary to have formal meetings to decide things which can be done without the necessity of such formality.

So far as the House Committee is concerned, it is a matter, of course, for the members of that committee to do what they think is warranted in the circumstances. The Leader of the Opposition voiced some criticism or complaint about the accommodation. There is foundation for criticism of that type. We know that this House is in an incomplete state. It will cost a considerable amount to finish it in the way the original plans and specifications indicate. The expenditure, at this stage, on the completion of the House, would be a greater amount than was originally thought would be necessary for the construction of the whole building. I think it was estimated that this House would cost about £150,000 to build. The completed building would give us very much more accommodation. The front, which would face St. George's-terrace, would be very much more ornate than the present bricks with the galvanised iron dangling from them. I think that in the post-war reconstruction period if the employment position gets to the stage that it did during the depression period after the last war we may do something with it. Of course, there are opportunities for wealthy members of the community, either during their lifetime or when they depart hence, to have a monument erected, as did the late Sir Langdon Bonython.

Mr. Seward: You are very optimistic.

Mr. Mann: I am afraid we won't be here after the 19th.

The PREMIER: The citizens of South Australia could be justly proud of one of their citizens for raising a building of the type he did. It is a very fine monument to the public spiritedness of Sir Langdon Bonython. I commend the idea to those members who feel that, with the state of their finances, they could make such a worthy contribution to such a good cause. There is a need for accommodation. In fact, as Treasurer, I was interviewed by the House Committee in regard to the provision of more accommodation, particularly for ladies. On occasions large numbers of ladies are present in the House. I admit that the accommodation is absolutely incomplete, and the matter should be attended to. We did get as far as making plans, but it appears that at this stage, when it is stated by the Commonwealth Government and agreed to by most people that to the utmost extent all our financial resources should be expended in the war effort, it is hardly a desirable time to spend a large amount of money on improving a state of affairs which has existed, without very much progress, for about thirty years.

With the Leader of the Opposition, I think there is necessity for this increased accommodation, and so, as soon as manpower and materials are available without being taken away from some more worthy cause, this matter should be given attention. I would suggest that if members have any ideas in connection with the Library Committee, or any of the other committees, a suitable opportunity will arise when the Estimates are before the House to discuss them. As these matters vitally concern our own comfort and convenience, and the convenience of people who come here to interview members on public business, I trust members will avail themselves of that opportunity when it does arise.

Question put and passed.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,700,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Premier, resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to

enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Election of Chairman of Committees.

THE PREMIER: Before moving that the House do resolve itself into Committee of Supply, I move—

That the member for Murchison (Mr. W. M. Marshall) be appointed Chairman of Committees.

Question put and passed.

In Committee of Supply.

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

THE CHAIRMAN: I desire to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all members who have again reposed sufficient confidence in me to elect me once more to this high and responsible position. I know that I will not appeal in vain to members to treat expeditiously all matters of business coming before the Chair, and to pay due respect to decorum and the rules of debate. In return, I give members an assurance that the guiding principles, as far as I am concerned, will be justice and impartiality.

The PREMIER: I was waiting until you, Sir, actually took your seat in the Chair before attempting to congratulate you upon your unanimous selection as Chairman of Committees. That selection was warranted because of the experience we have had of your capabilities during the past four or five years. As you yourself said, Sir, you have endeavoured to carry out your duties with justice and impartiality. I think we can say that you have succeeded in that laudable desire. I would also like to add that the Chairman of Committees can be of great assistance to the Chamber in getting through its business, and you have rendered valuable assistance to the Committee in getting through the business by not unduly prohibiting members from expressing their opinions but rather, on many occasions, granting them a lot of assistance by informing them at just what stage their remarks could be most properly made, or where they are not in order. As a consequence, you

have been of assistance to members when it comes to voting.

Mr. WATTS: I entirely agree with what the Premier has said. When you, Sir, were appointed you said that you would endeavour to carry out the duties with justice and impartiality, and in a fair manner. You have substantially achieved the desire you then expressed. Members of this Chamber have very few, if any, complaints, in regard to your occupancy of the Chair. If there is any complaint it is this—and this is the time to voice it because you will not take exception to it—that you expect members at times to be much quicker witted than they actually are. To use an everyday expression, you go like greased lightning, with the result that sometimes members rise in their places to discuss Clause 22 when you are dealing with Clause 23. Might I suggest that in future you remember that all members are not so rapid in their mental movements as you yourself undoubtedly are, and that you condescend to give them a little more time so that this difficulty will not arise in the future as it has in the past. With that small complaint, made in a very friendly spirit, may I extend my congratulations to you?

Mr. McDONALD: I congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of myself and my colleagues, not only because we feel sincerely that you deserve our approbation, but also that you may not draw some wrong conclusion from the fact that we did not support the remarks of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. We too, have appreciated your impartiality and your desire to expedite the business of the Chamber. Very great success in doing so has attended your term of office, and I am sure it will be a feature of your future activities in this capacity.

THE PREMIER [5.15]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1945, a sum not exceeding £2,700,000.

Supply is required to carry on the services of the State until the Estimates are passed by Parliament. The Estimates are being prepared and will be presented as early as possible. I have had some conversation with the Leader of the Opposition with a view to getting the Auditor General's report made available for the perusal of members at an earlier date. I explained

some of the difficulties to the Leader of the Opposition. I realise that it is definitely desirable to have the report presented as early as possible, but when it is presented, it should be complete and accurate in every detail. Many things which might appear to be not very important are dealt with by the Auditor General, and it is his desire to have the report ready for presentation as early as possible. A conference has been held between the Auditor General and the Treasury officials, and as a result of the arrangements made, we hope that at least the public accounts will be available to members earlier than they have been in the past. On some occasions the Estimates have been almost through before the Auditor General's report has been received. I admit that this is undesirable but, on account of the difficulties, it has been unavoidable. However, I believe there will be an improvement in future. The amount of Supply required is £2,700,000 to meet expenditure on account of—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	2,200,000
General Loan Fund	200,000
Treasurer's advance	300,000

War conditions still prevail, which preclude expenditure for development work and only essential needs can be met from loan funds. On the other hand, expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund has grown and the Supply requested for all purposes is increased by £200,000 this year. Last year the Supply Act provided for expenditure as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	2,000,000
General Loan Fund	200,000
Advance to Treasurer	300,000

Thus the total this year is £2,700,000 compared with £2,500,000 last year. Expenditure is closely watched and confined to necessary requirements. Increased expenditure is still being met in connection with war effort activities, such as concession fares to soldiers, superannuation and leave payments on behalf of employees with the active forces, increased cost of transport, civil defence, etc. Thus we have charges on Consolidated Revenue of amounts not usually entailed in time of peace.

The expenditure for the first three months of last year out of Consolidated Revenue Fund, excluding special Acts, amounted to £2,166,164. Of course interest and sinking fund payments are included

under special Acts, and therefore we do not require authority under the Supply Bill for those payments. The advance to Treasurer is to meet special payments that cannot, for the time being, be charged to votes or accounts. Last year it was estimated that there would be a small surplus of £1,505, but the actual result was a surplus of £38,021.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

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

THE PREMIER [5.20]: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1945, a sum not exceeding £2,200,000 be granted from Consolidated Revenue Fund, £200,000 from General Loan Fund and £300,000 from the Public Accounts.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Bill Introduced.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER [5.22]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I realise that this is a more or less formal Bill which is introduced at the commencement of each session, but I observe that the expenditure from Consolidated Revenue proposed to be authorised under this measure shows an increase of £200,000. The total under this Bill is £2,200,000, whereas last year it was £2,000,000, while in the preceding year it was £1,850,000. While this is merely a Bill to authorise Supply and one that will not affect the actual expenditure of the State, yet in the two years' period, the amount from Consolidated Revenue Fund has increased by £350,000. I can understand there being some increase in costs, but I think there should also be some diminution. For instance, I should think that the cost of civil defence would be considerably less, and the cost of soldiers' concession fares should

be considerably less, if I may make that statement without committing a breach of national security, but speaking simply from ordinary observation. I imagine, therefore, that it should have been possible to maintain expenditure at about the same level as in the past, and the increase of £350,000, although not necessarily final—this is only a forecast of probable expenditure—seems rather a large additional sum without our having been given anything very specific to account for it. Perhaps the Premier will give us a little more information on the subject.

THE PREMIER (in reply): While we are asking for £200,000 more this year than last year, the actual expenditure last year amounted to £2,166,000. Consequently we are seeking Supply of just about that amount. We have to meet increased expenditure in connection with our business undertakings, principally the Railway Department. In common with all departments, the Railway Department has been faced with increased expenditure to meet basic wage increases. Then again, there is a constantly increasing cost for coal. Although the population of the State is increasing only slowly, still we must expect public expenditure to increase with it. There should be no occasion to feel alarmed about an increase in expenditure so long as the revenue also increases. In fact, we cannot get an increase of revenue without an increase of expenditure. We have been receiving more revenue, and it costs us more to get that additional money.

Mr. McDonald: We have the Commonwealth Government collecting the income tax now.

The PREMIER: But we have to meet increased expenditure in the directions I have indicated. The general trend of money values is higher—some people might call it inflation—and more actual money is needed nowadays to get the service that we used to get a few years ago. Consequently, the actual figures have a tendency to increase all the time. So long as the relative positions of revenue and expenditure are maintained, there is no cause to worry. At the first meeting of the Loan Council I attended after the outbreak of the war, a strong demand was made by the Commonwealth that States should keep expenditure down and balance their budgets, so that the greatest possible

amount of money should be available to the Commonwealth for war purposes. So our loan expenditure has been kept down to an absolute minimum, and is now considerably less than the contribution from Consolidated Revenue for sinking fund. Thus we are spending less money from loan than we are paying into the sinking fund. The position, therefore, is satisfactory.

Hon. N. Keenan: Other States—New South Wales and Queensland—are doing much better.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Hon. N. Keenan: New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

The PREMIER: The member for West Perth did not want to disclose what had happened in some cases because of war activities. It is well known that the military personnel within the borders of Queensland is greater than the military personnel in Western Australia; consequently there is a huge amount of money being spent in Queensland.

The Minister for Lands: According to the paper, large sums are being spent by military personnel at Mackay.

The PREMIER: I noticed that in this morning's paper. It is stated there that millions of pounds are being spent by military personnel who are taking out their leave at Mackay, which is a comparatively small town of some 20,000 people.

Hon. N. Keenan: You do not believe that statement?

The PREMIER. I do not know. However, I do know that our own military personnel, and particularly Allied military personnel, are distributing huge sums of money in various States of Australia, and I should say that Queensland is not receiving the lowest amount. That, to a great extent, may account for Queensland's circumstances. This State is putting money aside for the purpose of paying for renovations, renewals and deferred maintenance, and that is in addition to the surplus shown in our Public Accounts. In answer to the hon. member's criticism, I point out that because of the deterioration in the value of money it costs more to do the same amount of work now than it cost formerly. That is why the figures are higher. However, that is not cause for much alarm. I think the position is satisfactory.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the 27th July.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.35]: I do not propose today to say very much on the Address-in-reply, but at the outset I would like to congratulate the member for Nelson on the very logical and reasoned address which he made to us on Thursday last. The contribution he made was couched in a manner which I commend to all members for their guidance in the remainder of this debate. Because I hold that opinion I propose, as far as I can, to follow in the same line of constructive reasoning to the best of my ability in the one or two subjects I shall mention. It seems to me that problems in the present day are such as to warrant that approach, at all events until we see whether we, as a deliberative Assembly, can produce and achieve results which the people of the State are entitled to expect from us.

I would like to extend a word of congratulation to the member for North-East Fremantle on his elevation to the position of Minister for Education. I think, Sir, that if any member on the Government side of the House is competent to undertake the duties of that office it is the hon. gentleman in question. I feel that we shall at least not suffer educationally by his elevation to the position which he now holds.

I have been reading with considerable interest the report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission of which the Minister for Lands has been Chairman. I find it is a document which should commend itself to every member who prides himself on taking an interest in the future well-being of the rural affairs of this State. I do not say that if I were to go into the report line by line and paragraph by paragraph I could not find some matter for adverse criticism; it would be extraordinary indeed if we should find ourselves all in agreement with every item and every detail of the complex and diverse problems which the Commission has considered. But I do say, taken by and

large, that the report gives ample evidence of careful consideration of the statements of the witnesses examined, many of them very dependable people. As I said, the document is well worth the consideration of every member who has at heart the rural development of the Commonwealth in general and Western Australia in particular. I was specially attracted by one or two paragraphs in the report that I believe will have to receive the consideration of this House in a legislative way before we are very much older. I refer, for instance, to the questions of soil erosion and wastage of soil fertility. These subjects are dealt with at page 6 of the report. There has always seemed to me to be a lack of appreciation of soil erosion and wastage of soil fertility that is constantly taking place in various parts of the Commonwealth. It may not be so noticeable in Western Australia as it has been in the Eastern States, and it may not be so noticeable in Australia as it has been in the United States.

The Premier: Salt has been a problem here.

Mr. WATTS: That is so. That must be given consideration, too, if we are to make use of large areas of land; but many people seem to me to have stopped at the need of legislation with regard to soil erosion and now we have this timely word or two from the Commission. As the Commission says, there can be no improvement in land utilisation without effective statutory power to restrain the individual who is not prepared to co-operate in a general scheme designed to prevent or stop soil erosion and wastage of soil fertility. It may be that in many districts this problem is not of much magnitude, but there are other areas where it could easily become a problem which will upset a great many preconceived notions, if we do not give it our careful consideration.

On page 7 of the report there is a short discussion on the question of production costs. It says—

High-cost producers should be stimulated to lower their costs by increasing their efficiency, and that development of an industry should only be encouraged where low-cost production can be anticipated.

One of the few complaints I have to make against this first report—and I hope that in my perusal of it I have not missed any

point which would make this criticism undeserved—is the fact that there does not appear to have been any comprehension of the result of the tariff and fiscal policies of Australia upon the cost of production in the rural industries. There has been too much stress—although some stress I admit is desirable—on the need for efficiency of the farmer himself. The question of efficiency is one which is highly desirable; there is no salvation for anyone in this busy world who does not aim at a substantial measure of efficiency, but no matter how efficient the primary producers of Australia have been or can be, there is no question that their difficulty in competing with the outside world has been greatly increased, and will continue to be increased unless they are able to obtain their necessities—their implements and other articles—at a price commensurate with the price at which those goods are obtainable by their competitors in other countries.

The Minister for Lands: That aspect will be dealt with later on.

Mr. WATTS: As I said, there might be something which will make this criticism undeserved, and I am glad to hear from the Minister that that aspect has not been lost sight of, because I firmly believe that no report of this nature will succeed in its object unless it seeks to impress upon the people of Australia the need for some rearrangement of their ideas on this question. For many years we have loaded the costs of all our industries, of a competitive character with the outside world in particular, by a system which makes them pay very often so much for the articles they require that they do not get value for their money; and, what is worse, they do not get the reward which their efficiency deserves because of the discouragement and cost which is imposed upon them unnecessarily. One must regard the continuance of rural development as being part at least of our Australian economy and there is nothing in this report to indicate that the Commission does not consider it formed, and will form, a very substantial part of that economy. They have made every effort to indicate by statistical and other inquiries the exact position which rural industry, primary production and goldmining occupy, and I think they have arrived at conclusions which are consistent with these

facts. I was somewhat entertained by one paragraph which appears on page 9. I find that this has been underlined by the members of the Commission, and I think the paragraph is worthy of some special reference. The Commission is dealing with the operation of wartime control and uses these words—

However, the experience of the operation of wartime controls, with their inevitable friction and duplications, and the growth of a bureaucratic system has irritated large numbers of citizens and made them uneasy about the danger of too much centralised control. Such people see the prospect of absorption from the point of view of the mouse and not from that of the cat.

Mr. Thorn: A very timely warning.

Mr. WATTS: I thought so too. I was very intrigued by the point of view of the Commission and the thought that some people saw this matter from the point of view of the mouse and not from that of the cat. One can visualise the unfortunate position of the mouse who is faced by the cat. One cannot help remarking on the unfortunate position of those who are likely for too long a period to be governed by a centralised control which is that referred to by these gentlemen in their report.

There are one or two other matters with which I wish to deal. I have often felt that the producers of Australia in regard to this question of price stabilisation are caught between the upper and nether millstones. Although it may be argued that the stabilisation of prices is essential to maintain production this, as the Commission rightly says, involves some restrictions on production. We are faced with the position that it is essential to develop and populate Australia, and more particularly this State. This involves the expansion of production. On the one hand the producer is faced with the position that if he is to have stabilised prices for his products the country must submit to restrictions on production which limit if not effectively endanger the hope of increased development and to some extent increased population. But we want population and we want development. That involves the expansion of production, but are we to turn to the producer and say, "Because the nation's interest demands that you must have increased production and increased population you must, for the reason that stabilisation demands a restriction of production, abandon all hope of stabilised prices and find yourself in a

worse position in the last case than in the first." That is a problem difficult of solution. I feel certain that the members of the Royal Commission find themselves in the same boat. I hope to hear a considered statement on the subject by the Minister for Lands garnered from the wealth of evidence and experience he has had, and I hope that a solution can be found and that some contribution will be made to the matter before the conclusion of the Commission's report. I submit that unless a solution of this question can be discovered so that we can continue to increase in all desirable avenues production and the development of the country, and at the same time offer the producer a return commensurate with his effort, we are going to be in grave trouble.

The question of housing standards has also been raised by the Commission's report. In this regard I compliment them upon what I believe is a very sound and sensible statement of the position concerning that particular problem. Of course, everyone knows—I am sure the Minister for Lands will agree with this—that in regard to farming properties a house of more than a certain capital value does not increase the productive capacity of the land in any way, and may indeed become a financial incubus rather than a benefit. If you have a £3,000 house on a property and that is offered for sale to a purchaser he is not going to pay £3,000 for the house, or give the value of the house up to £3,000, because he knows that his requirements can be met by a house costing one-third of that sum. He is, therefore, not prepared to pay that amount for a house. If you have built a house of too substantial a capital value on a property you are most unlikely upon its disposal to get your money back. Unfortunately the trend in housing costs today is apparently rising rapidly.

I hear that in New South Wales types of houses which used to be built for £900 or £1,000 are now costing almost double that sum. We find that in Western Australia such contracts as were let in the beginning of the housing proposals of the Commonwealth are at least 50 per cent. above the cost that would have been expected two or three years ago. Is this state of affairs to continue? Are we to find that in order to get a reasonably comfort-

able five or six roomed house upon a farm, to suit the requirements of a man and his family, he must incur a capital liability of £1,200 or even £1,500? If that is to be so we shall find that the housing problem is far worse than it appears at first sight. It seems easy enough if one could erect a comfortable and habitable home, such as I have seen occupied by many workers and other people in this State, for a sum not exceeding £600. If we are to have that type of house worth £600 in 1940 costing £1,000 today, and goodness knows how much tomorrow, the whole basis of the idea of good housing must fall down, or alternatively the charge upon the general taxpayer must steadily increase.

If the home that is available for workers has an annual charge upon it greater than the home can reasonably be expected to pay, a subsidy will have to be forthcoming in order to bring the annual cost down to a figure within the ability of the worker to pay. Is that the system to be applied to rural housing? If that is so where is the national exchequer going to find itself ultimately? That is the position as I see it. If it is fair and proper—as I can see that it is—that the working man should be treated in that way in order to bring his expenditure down to a reasonable part of his income, so should the agriculturist be in the same position. The latter is entitled to say, "If I have to pay £400 more for a house than I thought I am entitled to consideration either from the Government or the community." I do not think anyone can gainsay that.

We have to face the problem and endeavour to discover means whereby these homes can be made serviceable, comfortable and durable, and at the same time kept at a figure commensurate with our ideas as to what they ought to cost. It will readily be seen that in this problem alone there is considerable food for thought on the part of the people of this country. I do not propose to say anything more concerning the report of the Rural Construction Commission so far as it has gone, except to conclude my remarks by stating that if the second and subsequent sections of the report of the Commission are as well reasoned as the one to which I have just referred I say in all sincerity that they will be worthy of the serious consideration and the closest study of us all because they will be invaluable whatever opinion may be

held in connection with any legislation that may arise out of them and in connection with any discussions that will take place on legislation of that character.

A question was asked today in regard to third party insurance. I say quite frankly that the position is most unsatisfactory. We now have to take out two policies. We relied, and had good reason to rely because he had the reputation for not going back upon his undertaking to the House, on the words of the then Minister for Works, Hon. H. Millington. These words are to be found on page 953 of "Hansard" of last year. They were uttered in connection with a discussion introduced by the member for Nedlands, backed up by myself regarding the position of the holder of the comprehensive policy. In the course of my remarks I suggested that the holder of one of these policies would be put to additional trouble and expense unless they could be made valid under the third party risk. The Minister adjourned the debate in order to consult the Crown Law authorities, and at a later stage he concluded his remarks on the subject as follows:—

If the owner can produce a comprehensive policy for the current period, it will be accepted.

On that assurance the member for Nedlands and I withdrew any objections we had to that particular clause of the Bill. The Minister as well as we ourselves thought that this suggestion would entirely cover the difficulty we had raised, but subsequently we found that was not the case. I, as the holder of a comprehensive policy for many years, have been compelled to take out a fresh policy. I obtained a small refund of the premiums I had paid on the old policy, but that is beside the point. I now have two policies. What is more, I have had to pay two stamp duties. That is one of the items of expense that was in my mind when I brought up the matter, or supported the query of the member for Nedlands, as to whether a comprehensive policy would be sufficient. I have no doubt that 2s. 6d. on perhaps 20,000 policies, or more, is very convenient for the Treasurer.

The Premier: It was not put in from that point of view.

Mr. WATTS: It is, however, most inconvenient for those who have to pay, and represents a substantial increase on the premiums charged. It is a most unfair tax as

it stands. I was not satisfied with the answer made on behalf of the Minister for Works by the Minister for Education this afternoon. I would have thought that if the Government could not arrive at a decision which was on all fours with the undertaking of the previous Minister for Works it would not have proceeded with the proposal. That was a distinct breach of faith with the people and the members of this House who understood after the amendment had been made—and the Minister understood it—that only one policy would be required. I hope that either the Traffic Act will be amended or the difficulty got over in some other way. There is another aspect of the third-party insurance law to which I shall make reference. I allude to the cumbersome method devised to deal with that matter. Having taken out a separate policy and paid an extra half-crown, a man is obliged to obtain a certificate from the insurance company which has to be taken to the local authority; then the man must fill in an application for his license and, having paid the necessary fee, his license is granted to him. I have not been able to discover the reason for that application. The obtaining of the certificate is all right, although the issuing of two policies and a certificate represents a tremendous waste of paper in these days, when the shortage of paper is such that, in the time of national emergency, it must be conserved. The method devised for the obtaining of the license is cumbersome and quite unnecessary.

What is the position in the country? In the past many people, especially in recent years when the shortage of petrol and tyres has become a factor, were accustomed to making application for a license by post. If they adopt that course now, they do not get their licenses because the local authority must have the necessary application forms made out. Although a man may send the necessary certificate and insurances, he cannot get his license until he fills in the form. Of course, the local authority may post the form back, but even so it would take a week before the letter could be received and a week for it to be posted back. Alternatively, the local authority may write in reply to the farmer and say that he must come in and fill in the necessary form.

I am sorry the Minister for Works is not in his seat this evening, for I would have asked him to agree to introduce an amend-

ment to simplify the whole arrangement. It is not a question of the insurers' requirements: they are not concerned in this matter. The trouble has arisen simply through a misconception of the intention of this House when it passed the legislation. What we wanted was that when the certificate was issued by the insurer it should be shown to the local authorities who would thereupon issue a license. That is what we desired instead of the cumbersome and highly involved method adopted for carrying out this law. I hope that an end will be put to it very shortly.

I would like to devote a few minutes to the question of vermin destruction and the need for careful thought and consideration of this State's laws relating to that subject. I know the Minister for Lands has been giving some consideration, and is prepared to give more, to this question. I hope to have an opportunity to discuss some aspects of it with him privately and I shall not mention those matters at this juncture. I must say, however, that the time has long since passed when this House should put on its thinking cap to determine what alterations of the law are required in order, on one hand, to assist, in a national or State-wide manner, in the eradication of vermin and, on the other hand, to decide what amendments are required to enable development of a protective character to be undertaken more easily than is possible now.

In discussions in this House on various matters raised by local authorities relating to this problem, we considered proposals from them for greater control by local authorities respecting certain aspects and for greater powers in certain other directions. At the time this House did not see fit to accept the proposals for an inquiry but I consider that the proper procedure for such an inquiry is per medium of members of this House—whether by Select Committee or by some other means is no concern of mine. I think the people's representatives in a matter of this description should decide to devote more of their time and attention to consideration of this and other problems I could mention, but particularly to the question of vermin destruction and the necessary measures in connection therewith. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall take some steps to

bring about an improvement in the present position.

This is how I view it: There is no doubt that the exigencies of modern times are placing a very heavy burden on Ministers of the Crown whom I shall not name. It seems to me a question of principle that on matters which are State-wide in character and which cause tremendous losses to the producers, there should be called more into co-operation those who have been producers in the past. The alternative seems to me to be this: A Minister finds himself with many administrative and public duties. If he does not come to the House, where the people's representatives are, for co-operation and assistance, then he is obliged to go to persons who may be civil servants, in which case there would be less to be said, or to go to those who are not civil servants but who may be persons classed as embryo bureaucrats. Any resulting action is taken in the wrong place and, instead of the Government being responsible to Parliament and particularly to this House, which would be all the better, it sheds that responsibility and thereby, in my opinion, encourages an unstatesmanlike outlook, creating a wrong public opinion tinged with a party political outlook.

I do not offer this criticism in any carping spirit, and I do not desire any mistake to be made on that score. I hold that if we are to maintain our democratic political character we must get to work and bring the representatives of the people into closer touch with the administrative problems of the day, and the sooner the better for all concerned. I hope the Government will take that suggestion to heart because I believe that in these days, when we have just passed through a severe national emergency and there still remain many problems that will influence the future, it is absolutely necessary that we shall take some action of that character in order to restore public opinion regarding the rightfulness of parliamentary government and also to ensure that the people's representatives are entrusted with their fair share of responsibility, in an advisory capacity, to the extent that I believe was intended.

The last matter to which I propose to refer concerns the Premier's answer to my question regarding the appointment of

scrutineers under the provisions of the Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act of 1906-28. The Premier said it had not been the custom in the past to appoint such scrutineers. That may or may not appear a sufficient reason for not appointing such officers on this occasion. Personally I think it does not offer a sufficient reason. If we are to be governed by the ideas, customs and habits of the past, then the efforts of the Rural Reconstruction Commission and of other similar bodies will fail in their objectives, because they will produce precisely nothing, and we shall go on making all the mistakes that we made in the past—which I devoutly hope we shall not. We can discount that argument. The next point is as to whether the scrutineers should be appointed at the place where the scrutiny of the votes is to take place. I did not suggest that appointment in the polling places.

The Premier: I think it had application to that too.

Mr. WATTS: I was referring to Subsection (2) of Section 18 of the Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act, 1906-28, which reads—

The Governor-General or any person authorised by him, may appoint one scrutineer at each place where the scrutiny is conducted in each electoral division and the Governor of a State or any person thereto authorised by him may appoint one scrutineer to be present at such place where the scrutiny is conducted in each Electoral Division for the State.

It is quite obvious in this matter that the Commonwealth is one candidate and the State is the other. That is borne out by the provision that the Governor-General may appoint one scrutineer and the Governor may appoint another. Obviously, the Governor-General will appoint a scrutineer on behalf of the Commonwealth and, equally obviously, the Governor will appoint one on behalf of the State. It would not mean more than 50 scrutineers in the circumstances, because there are only 50 electoral divisions in the State.

The Minister for Mines: Would not your argument apply if the whole State were unanimously of one opinion?

Mr. WATTS: No. Obviously, the fact that the whole State is not unanimous is the reason for ascertaining what the view of the whole State really is. Both parties are entitled to have scrutineers.

The Minister for Mines: Every candidate is entitled to that.

Mr. WATTS: Exactly, and in this instance we have two candidates, one being the Commonwealth and the other the State. One says, "I am the candidate for more power." The other says, "I am the candidate for what I have got." It is left to the people as to which will gain the day. It is therefore absolutely essential, in my opinion, that the Governor should be in a position in respect of this referendum, which is by far the most important referendum that has been held in the last 20 years, to appoint scrutineers in accordance with Subsection (2) of Section 18.

The Premier: What would you expect scrutineers to do?

Mr. WATTS: To scrutinise the counting.

The Premier: You do not imply a lack of confidence in the returning officers?

Mr. WATTS: I do not imply any lack of confidence in the returning officers, but I know that mistakes have taken place in the counting of votes. It seems to me, therefore, desirable that the appointments I suggest should be made for the purpose of seeing that there is a check.

The Premier: There are two or three present—the returning officer, the presiding officer and the poll clerk.

Mr. WATTS: Yes, at the various places where the votes are counted. If that was the only thing, I cannot understand why the Premier did not make provision for what I suggested. I was hoping that the Premier would change his mind and be prepared at least to review the position. If the Premier were prepared to do that, I would not ask the House to consider an amendment to the Address-in-reply, which I have in view. If the Premier says that his answer to the question is his last word, I am forced to ask the House to consider the position and the only way I can do that is to move an amendment to the Address-in-reply so as to bring the matter up.

The Premier: Has the Commonwealth taken action to protect its interests?

Mr. WATTS: That I do not know; but I should have thought that would be in the Premier's mind when I asked my question. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply:—"But this House regrets that His Excellency has not been advised to exercise the power conferred on him by Section

18 (2) of the Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act, 1906-28, for the appointment of scrutineers at places where referendum votes are being scrutinised, as this House is of opinion that such procedure is highly desirable in the interests of ensuring a proper count of the votes taken.

On motion by Mr. McDonald, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.16 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 2nd August, 1944.

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Bill: Supply (No. 1), £2,700,000 Standing Orders	
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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,700,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Supply Bill to pass through its remaining stages at the one sitting.

MOTION—COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.37]: I move—

That, in accordance with Standing Order No. 34, the following members be appointed to serve on the Standing Committees during the present session, namely:—

Standing Orders.—The Chief Secretary, Hon.

C. F. Baxter, and Hon. H. S. W. Parker.

Library.—Hon. C. F. Baxter and Hon. E. M. Heenan.

Printing.—Hon. E. H. Gray and Hon. W. J. Mann.

Joint House.—Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. V. Hamersley, Hon. G. W. Miles and Hon. W. R. Hall.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East): I move an amendment—

That all the words after the words "Standing Order No. 34" be struck out and the words "the members to be appointed to serve on the Standing Committees during the present session be appointed by ballot" inserted in lieu.