

Legislative Council.

Second Reading.

Thursday, 18th December, 1947.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Street Photographers Bill.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT
(No. 2).*As to Report.*

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the report of Committee.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That this Order of the Day be adjourned till the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 3.8 to 9.30 p.m.

BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS
ACT, 1945-1947, AMENDMENT
(CONTINUANCE).*Assembly's Further Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it no longer disagreed to the amendment on which the Council had insisted.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.33] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to appropriate the moneys required for the services of the year in accordance with the Estimates of expenditure which have been agreed to by the Legislative Assembly. Two Supply Bills have been passed during this session and Clause 2 of the Bill grants further supply as shown in Schedule "A." The total anticipated expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund is £16,424,428, and of this £4,760,851 is covered by special Acts which permanently appropriate the amounts required for the purposes of those Acts, while the balance, £11,663,577, is appropriated by Clause 3.

Loan expenditure for the year is estimated to be £5,683,042 as summarised in Schedule "C," and Clause 3 provides for the appropriation of this amount from the General Loan Fund. Clause 3 further appropriates the sum of £1,000,000 from the Public Account for "Advance to Treasurer" which may be used for the purposes set out in Schedule "D." The clause also appropriates the amounts spent last year in excess of the provision on the Estimates, the details of which are fully set out in Schedules "E" and "F."

Revenue for 1946-47 amounted to £14,980,875, including a supplementary grant from the Commonwealth of £628,000 made on the recommendation of the Grants Commission, while expenditure amounted to £15,028,427, resulting in a deficit of £47,552. The estimated revenue was £13,906,393 and, excluding the supplementary grant, the actual revenue was £446,482 more than the estimate. The main items of revenue contributing to the increase were taxation £99,598; land revenue £58,681; timber £81,442; departmental £277,108; and Commonwealth £773,000. Against these increases the returns from the State Trading Concerns were £8,194 less than the estimate, and from public utilities £121,678 less.

The main factor in the increase under taxation was an improvement in stamp duties of £87,491, due to increased trading and sales of real estate. There was also

an improvement of £18,412 in the returns from liquor licenses. Better prices for wool and wheat were reflected in the collections by the Lands Department while profitable sales of sandalwood accounted for the improved timber revenue. Of the increase of £277,000 under the heading of "Departmental," £209,000 came from the Treasury, where the estimates were augmented by better collections of interest by the Rural and Industries Bank, increased payments on account of wire netting supplied to settlers, increased profits from the Commonwealth Savings Bank, and sales of A.R.P. materials.

In addition to the fixed contribution by the Commonwealth of £473,432 towards interest on the public debt, it was estimated that a special grant of £1,100,000 under Section 96 of the Constitution would be received, but the amount recommended by the Grants Commission and paid by the Commonwealth was £1,245,000—an increase of £145,000 which, with the supplementary grant of £628,000 to which I have referred, make up the total increase under "Commonwealth" of £773,000. The decline of £212,000 in the receipts from public utilities was mostly accounted for by lower returns from the railways and tramways, due in part to the railway strike and to the electricity breakdown which, of course, adversely affected the tramways. Returns from the Fremantle Harbour Trust were lower than the estimate by £56,000 and the State Batteries by £41,000.

The actual expenditure for the year, namely, £15,028,427, was £935,226 above the estimate. Under Special Acts there was an increase of £71,112 of which £21,524 was on account of interest and sinking fund. Departmental expenditure, estimated at £4,476,840, increased by £409,828, portion of which was due to the increased basic wage, which affected all departments. Other payments not provided for in the Estimates were an increased amount to the Hospital Fund of £103,000 due to the higher cost of hospital treatment, subsidy for the transport of fertiliser by road during the railway strike, £56,310, donation to the appeal for food for Britain £10,000, increased loss incurred by the State Shipping Service £33,826, additional payment to the University £7,737 and increased payment for exchange £54,251. The last-mentioned item was largely on account of remittances to

pay for a number of "U" class locomotives acquired by the railways.

The estimated expenditure by the public utilities was £4,978,469, but the actual amount was £5,432,755—an under-estimate of £454,286. Of this excess expenditure, £413,000 was on account of the railways and is accounted for by large amounts spent on regeneration of rolling stock, part cost of the "U" class locomotives and basic wage adjustments. The last-mentioned factor also affected the other utilities all of which, except the State Batteries, spent more than was estimated. Expenditure by the State Batteries was £28,000 less than the estimate, due to a shortage of manpower making it impossible to undertake all the work offering. This curtailment of work also affected the revenue which, as I have mentioned, was considerably less than the amount estimated.

For the current year the Treasurer has budgeted for a deficit of £681,778, revenue being set down at £15,742,650 and expenditure at £16,424,428. Revenue from taxation is expected to yield £4,838,000 or £385,000 more than in 1946-47. The reimbursement by the Commonwealth under the uniform tax scheme will be £423,000 greater than last year, but other forms of taxation are expected to be less, principally totalisator duty which it is anticipated will be reduced by £32,650. Territorial revenue is estimated to yield £538,000 compared with £526,373 received last year. Most of the increase will come from timber, with a little extra from mining; but the receipts from land will probably be somewhat less.

Departmental revenue is not expected to reach the amount collected last year, principally because of reduced payments to the Treasury for interest and sinking fund by the Rural and Industries Bank, the amount received from that institution last year having covered a period of more than twelve months. The receipts on account of wire and wire netting were also greater than usual in 1946-47 and a reduction must be anticipated this year. The special grant to be received from the Commonwealth under Section 96 of the Constitution is £1,977,000, which is £104,000 greater than the total grants last year. Profits from the trading concerns and recoup of departmental charges, interest, etc. have been set down at £101,832, an improvement of £12,726.

Revenue from public utilities is estimated at £6,202,850, being £318,403 more than was collected last year; £270,000 of the increase is expected to come from the railways and £22,000 from the tramways. Both of these concerns were adversely affected last year by the railway strike, and it is confidently expected that there will be an improvement this year. Another factor is that a greater number of engines are now in use and it should be possible to haul more traffic than has been the case in recent years. The returns from other utilities are not expected to vary very much, except the State Batteries, which are expected to return £18,000 more than last year.

Expenditure for 1947-48 is estimated to be £1,396,001 more than was spent last year. Commitments under special Acts are set down at approximately £52,000 more. Of this, £26,410 is on account of interest and sinking fund on the Public Debt. Actually the sinking fund payments will be greater by £43,619 but this will be partly offset by reduced interest payments as a result of favourable overseas conversions. Payments under other special Acts are mostly for fixed amounts but the State's liability under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act is growing year by year and for the present year an increase of about £20,000 is anticipated.

Departmental expenditure is estimated at £5,707,827, compared with £4,886,668 spent last year, an increase of £821,159. Practically all departments show substantial increases due to an expansion of their normal activities, basic wage adjustments and increased cost of materials. Included in departmental expenditure is an additional grant to the Hospital Fund of £112,000, making the total payment from revenue to that fund of £537,750. Increase in the cost of hospital maintenance is becoming a heavy charge on our revenue. In addition, an allowance of £250,000 to meet the cost of the 40-hour week is included in departmental expenditure. The greatest increase occurs in the Education Department where it is expected this year's expenditure will exceed last year's by approximately £190,000. The cost of the Police Department will be greater than it was last year by £53,297. The Government has approved of an increase in the size of the Police Force, in addition to which added payments

are made to the existing members of the force.

Expenditure in the Lands Department, which last year was £119,010, is estimated for this year at £164,700, an increase of £44,790. In addition to basic wage adjustment payments, the main cause of the increase is the growing staff of the Soldier Land Settlement Branch. Members are aware that, under the agreement with the Commonwealth, the State has to bear the administrative cost of the scheme, and this cost forms a fairly substantial part of the expenditure of the Lands Department. The Agricultural Department will also be more costly this year than last. It is anticipated we will have to spend £197,070 as compared with £159,077 last year. Provision is made for the opening up of new research stations estimated to cost approximately £15,000; for the destruction of grasshoppers and rabbits, £6,500; and for grade herd testing, £2,000.

The Public Health Department is estimated to cost £41,906 more this year than last year. Apart from increases due to basic wage adjustments and increased costs of pensions, allowance has been made for additional medical and dental staffs. Additional expenditure of £26,334 is anticipated in the Public Works Department. Of this increase, almost £10,000 relates to money provided for the rehabilitation of stock routes and water supplies in the North-West. A substantial increase is anticipated in the expenditure on public utilities. The estimate for this year is £5,955,750 compared with £5,432,755 last year. Most of this increased expenditure relates to the Railway Department, whose expenditure for this year is estimated at £4,720,000 compared with £4,314,899 last year, an increase of £405,101. Most of this additional expenditure is necessary on account of the regeneration of rollingstock and deferred maintenance which is being carried out as rapidly as manpower and labour permit. Expenditure under "Tramways" is estimated to be £62,757 more than it was last year. In this service, provision is also made for rehabilitation of the tram tracks. Approval is sought in Clause 4 for the expenditure of £180,435 from the Reforestation Fund, particulars of which are set out in the scheme of expenditure which has been laid on the

Table of the House and which are summarised in Schedule "G." I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [9.48]: In the Public Accounts for 1946-47, reference is made to expenditure under special Acts. Item No. 5 covers remuneration set aside for certain executive officials. The amount placed opposite the Governor is £2,000. Members will recollect that recently in a debate in this House on parliamentary allowances, mention was made of the fact that no increase was suggested for the Lieut.-Governor, although almost everyone else in the State had received an increase in some way or another in recent times.

I have a suggestion to make which I trust the Minister will convey to the Premier and his Cabinet. It is this: In view of the distinguished and outstanding services rendered to Western Australia over the past 14 years by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, Sir James Mitchell, the Government should at the earliest opportunity approach His Majesty the King and recommend Sir James's appointment to the fuller status of Governor of this State. Incidentally that would cover the point of increased remuneration. But it would do more than that, for it would serve to show that the work of the Lieut.-Governor—and it has been work, because no-one can truthfully say that Sir James does not put his whole soul into his office—is fully appreciated.

It would be a well deserved and grateful tribute during his lifetime—and I think that is a factor which we ought to take into consideration. We are too prone to wait until public men have passed on before eulogising them. I believe the proper time to show appreciation of a person's work is during his life. This would serve that purpose, because Sir James Mitchell has, indeed, been a great man. I have not the slightest doubt that such action would have the unqualified approbation and support of all sections of the community. In this connection, Keith in his work "Responsible Government in the Dominions" makes this reference—

The appointment of the chief executive officer, whether he be styled Governor General, Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor is

vested in the Crown, and it is understood like all official acts of the Crown, is exercised on ministerial advice.

That, I think, makes the way clear and indicates that there would be no doubt whatever that if such a recommendation were made, it would be readily agreed to. Sir James Mitchell, as Lieut.-Governor, has set a standard of the highest possible order. As chief executive officer, we know he has risen far above all Party considerations, and has set an example for all time.

Of him, more than any other public man I have known, it may be truly said that he is the friend of everybody, rich and poor alike. No other representative of his Majesty has ever made anything like the same contact with the people, and none has, by his readiness to serve, ever won the same place in their hearts. He is known personally in every town and hamlet throughout this great State, and that, I think, is one of his most outstanding achievements. No matter what part of the State he goes to, he is always delightfully received and the people are glad to see him. I want to add that my suggestion applies to the present Lieut.-Governor and is made simply to mark our appreciation of his past services. If in the future we are to have local chief executive officers, I suggest, with all due deference, that until they are fully proved they should have the rank of Lieut.-Governor. Elevation to the higher status of Governor should depend on the manner in which they carry out their duties.

I am sure my suggestion will meet with the support of every member of this House, and for that reason I again ask the Leader of the House to convey the matter to Cabinet and urge that action be taken. It is not within our power to carry a motion to this effect, but we can pass on the suggestion and I hope that will be done and acted on.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [9.55]: I support the second reading. This measure gives members an opportunity to speak on any subject coming within it. At the risk of being a nuisance I shall speak for a few minutes on a subject I dealt with when speaking on the Address-in-reply. I see that in the Bill an amount of £20,000 is set aside for the development of agriculture. In the last 12 months I am sorry to say that Western Australia has had a bad advertisement

in New Zealand and New South Wales owing to the very mixed quality of the wheat we have sent there.

The Minister for Mines: It would be a good thing if they did not take it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: A problem of this nature can be best dealt with when prices are high, as they are today. Recently an inter-State Federal conference was held at Hobart, at which representatives from New Zealand were present, and the visitors from New Zealand mentioned the trouble they had experienced in milling Western Australian wheat. The bakers could not make their usual standard bread with our wheat. Western Australia will lose unless we improve the quality of our wheat and grade it.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: If we did that they would have to pay extra for the premium wheats.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not want to waste time by talking of the local trade, but of export wheat.

Hon. C. G. Latham: All you are doing is to excuse the bad bakers.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Our present f.a.q. system is condemned by up-to-date authorities, including our own Dr. Sutton. People do not take much notice of bakers, but they have been pressing for an improvement in the quality of our wheat for many years. Dr. Kent-Jones, a world-wide authority—there is no greater cereal chemist in the world—stressed that the farmers in Australia were losing money by not adopting some system of grading. I know that that is against the opinion of the members of the Wheat Board and that Mr. Bath would ridicule what I am saying. But we have to keep fighting the opinion that our f.a.q. basis is satisfactory.

When conditions return to normal we will have to maintain our markets in Singapore, India and other countries, and we will have difficulty in doing so. We shall, in all probability, lose them to America unless we improve the quality of our wheat and grade it so that the biscuit manufacturer and the baker will know what they are buying. It is admitted by all the millers and authorities in Great Britain that they do not know how to treat the Australian wheat because it is all mixed together under our f.a.q. system. I read an article the other day by a quali-

fied lecturer in Sydney—he was the liaison officer for the Master Bakers' Association—and I did not know until then that we grew so much Gluclub wheat in this State. Last year 1,960,000 acres were sown to wheat in Western Australia, and of that area nearly 800,000 acres were sown to Bencubbin, 361,000 acres to Gluclub and 348,000 acres to Bungulla. That means that nearly 20 per cent. of our wheat crop this year is Gluclub. I challenge any authority to deny that Gluclub is absolutely worthless for milling purposes.

The Honorary Minister: The people of England do not think so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They have to take it, and they can mill it with good wheat from Canada. Both Bencubbin and Bungulla are not good flour wheats, and there are about 11 other varieties. I can understand the position of the farmer, who does not get enough for his premium wheat. In New South Wales the millers, bakers, Department of Agriculture officials and men from experimental farms and laboratories are getting together on field days to discuss the problems of the industry. They are going to do the same thing in Victoria. The New South Wales Government has established a wheat research station. The master bakers have at their own expense started a bread research institute, and two expert officers have been appointed. The object now is to get all the parties concerned together to discuss the problems that arise. By means of research we may eventually be able to grow a wheat that will be of good milling quality and return a good yield.

The Honorary Minister: What about rust?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is no use the master bakers, the millers and technical officers of the Department of Agriculture working in groups. They must be brought together. We must alter our f.a.q. system, as it is condemned by every real authority in the world, including Dr. Kent-Jones. Our own men in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are advocating a change. I ask the Minister to examine this question and do everything possible to bring the parties together. It would be a wonderful idea, when the Department of Agriculture holds its field days in the country, for representatives of the

millers and bakers to be invited to attend and discuss the problems of the industry. The question is vital and must be dealt with now. It is no use waiting until wheat drops to 4s. or 5s. per bushel. We have lost some of our most expert officers to the Eastern States, and I know the difficulties with which the department is faced, but this problem must be dealt with, as we have been given a bad advertisement in both New South Wales and New Zealand. The Government must wake up and make every possible effort to remedy the situation. I support the motion.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [10.5]: I rise in order to put briefly before the House what I would have liked opportunity to discuss in detail. I am pleased to note in the Estimates that the Royal Perth Hospital is to be completed in its original design of the letter H. I wish to emphasise to the House and to the State at large the added importance that the Royal Perth Hospital must assume in the medical services of the entire State. I make an appeal that nothing whatever should be allowed to hinder the work of completing that hospital.

In the past the Royal Perth Hospital was regarded as a place to which the sick of the metropolitan area and the very sick of the country came for treatment. This hospital is now taking on a new importance in the medical services of the State and I trust that in future, in view of what I learned abroad, it will take a far wider part in that service. In the past a hospital has been regarded as a place in which the patient lay while being given treatment, but that idea has disappeared. A hospital is now the vital core of medical services, and in future the main responsibility of the Royal Perth Hospital will be to act as the very heart of the organisation caring for the sick of the whole State.

Advances made abroad rely entirely on what the layman does not see inside a hospital, the pathological and investigational departments where the real progress in medicine and surgery has been made within the last 10 or 20 years. In the near future those services will become of importance equal to those that have been so largely recognised in the fields of general medicine

and surgery. Therefore the Royal Perth Hospital must play a tremendous part in future in the organisation of hospitals throughout the State. The zoning—or whatever it might be called—of regional hospitals will be impossible until the Royal Perth Hospital plays its full part, and until the investigational departments of that hospital assume an entirely different importance from that which they now enjoy in the service of that hospital.

Before a zoned hospital service is possible, it will be necessary to have radiological, pathological and bacteriological technicians capable of doing the work necessary for those zoned or regional hospitals. They will have to be trained at the Royal Perth Hospital, which will thus become the training centre for all the ancillary services so necessary for the future of medicine in this State. The zoning of the hospital services in the State will not be possible until the Royal Perth Hospital has become the teaching institute for these very necessary services; and until it is completed it will be a physical impossibility to institute those services. This means that the first step towards the decentralisation of medical services into zones must be the building up of the investigational side of the Royal Perth Hospital to a very high level. This will need the almost immediate appointment of a professor of pathology to take charge of the whole department. When that is an accomplished fact, then plans can be made for the future to provide the sick in the country districts with hospitals of a modern character.

Without such services established in the Royal Perth Hospital, it will be useless to proceed in the future with any zoning of the hospital services of the State. Not only will that be necessary, but the hospital will have to take over the role of a mother school for all nursing within the State. It will also be necessary to train dieticians and cooks as well in order that the whole of the modern services, dietary as well as investigational, shall be operable within the system of zoning. Furthermore, to the Royal Perth Hospital will have to be attached a school for statisticians in order that complete records of illnesses in country districts may be compiled and made available when the patients concerned are

transferred from the country to the central hospital.

Until the scheme starts from the top within the Royal Perth Hospital, it is useless for country hospitals to expect any improvements in their services, and certainly in connection with any such modern services, the Royal Perth Hospital must assume a very different place than it has done in the past. I have placed as briefly as I can these points, on which I could enlarge at considerable length. I applaud the fact that the Royal Perth Hospital is to be completed and I trust that will be done as rapidly as possible, so the whole State may benefit from the work that will commence there and radiate throughout the services generally as envisaged by those interested in the problem.

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 *passed*.

BILL—LOAN, £4,147,000.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.18] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to authorise the raising of money necessary to carry out the various works enumerated on the estimates of expenditure from the General Loan Fund, which are now before the House. The various works for which the money is required are set out in the First Schedule, and, in accordance with the usual practice, the amounts appearing therein are estimated to be sufficient, with the balances of previous authorisations, to enable the works to be kept going where necessary for six months after the close of the financial year.

Several of the items on which expenditure is proposed as shown by the Estimates do not appear in the schedule, for the rea-

son that the amounts authorised to be raised for those works by previous Loan Acts, have not been fully expended and there remains sufficient authority to cover the current year's expenditure. It is unlikely that the whole amount for which authority is sought will be raised this year as, owing to difficulty in obtaining materials and scarcity of labour it may not be possible to carry out all the work envisaged by the Estimates. We expect to obtain £2,000,000 out of the loan now being floated by the Commonwealth and further sums will be available from the Commonwealth Savings Bank under the Savings Bank Transfer Act of 1931 by which the State is entitled to 70 per cent of the increase in depositors' balances each quarter.

During the war our drawings from this source were limited by arrangement between the Commonwealth and State Governments and the Commonwealth Bank to £390,000 per annum and we have received that amount for several years past. A review of the cash position may be made by the Loan Council early in the new year, and if necessary further funds will be provided.

The Public Debt at the 30th June this year was £99,002,301, the average rate of interest being £3 5s. 1d. per cent. compared with £96,925,931, at £3 6s. 5d. per cent. on the corresponding date in 1946. Payments to the sinking fund for the current year, including the Commonwealth's contribution, will amount to approximately £1,000,000 and, as there was a balance of £545,000 brought forward from last year, over £1,500,000 will be available for redemption of debt during the current year. The Bill authorises the re-appropriation of certain moneys which are not now required for the original purposes. These moneys and the Acts by which they were first authorised are shown in the Second Schedule while the Third Schedule sets out the works to which they will now be applied. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.25]: Mr. President, now that the business has been completed, it affords me much pleasure to express on behalf of myself and members of this Chamber, our thanks to you for the courtesy that has been shown to one and all of us during the session. I should like to refer to the fact that, when the session opened, your health was very bad, but owing to your determination and willpower, you have overcome that misfortune and we all trust that you will enjoy many years of excellent health. This session has been particularly difficult for yourself and perhaps for others. There has been a change of Government, which, of course, created several changes in this House, with the result that you have not had the able assistance that has been forthcoming in the past.

Further, there have been many new members, members new in experience, and for that reason also the burden on you has been the greater, those new members not having had time to become imbued with the atmosphere that usually prevails in this Chamber. I am afraid that all of us at times must have tried your patience. No doubt newly-appointed Ministers will always try, for the time being, the patience of the President, and the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of Committees. I desire again to express our thanks, and my thanks especially, for all the assistance that you have given during the session.

There have been many debates and much criticism, which I think shows a very healthy sign in public life, because it is by criticism that we learn. We are also very happy to know that, although criticism arises from a member on one measure, in all probability he will support the next measure, and that is the way, I think, in which this Chamber should conduct its business. I feel sure it will be for the benefit of the State if we continue to carry out our business in that way, that we criticise or favour as our consciences dictate.

I should also like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Honorary Minister. I feel quite sure that I could not have carried on without his very able and continued and energetic assistance. He

has undertaken the responsibility for half the business without requiring assistance from me.

In our staff, we are extraordinarily fortunate. Like yourself, Mr. President, Mr. Leake was laid low with illness and we all hope that he has now regained his good health and will retain it for many years to come. During his absence, Mr. Sparks, the Usher of the Black Rod, carried out the duties most ably, and we should congratulate him on the manner in which he undertook those duties at a moment's notice. The Clerk of Records, Mr. Browne, was acting in Mr. Spark's position, and the manner in which he carried out his duties left nothing to be desired. The House is to be congratulated on having such an excellent staff, who are always keen and energetic and who carry out their duties with dignity and are ever ready to assist members in every possible way.

Members: Hear! Hear!

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This year has been a particularly severe one for the members of the "Hansard" staff. There is no doubt about it, the members of the "Hansard" staff have answered the call remarkably well. We have had numerous Royal Commissions, committees and excessively long sittings of Parliament. This Chamber has perhaps not given the members of that staff as much work as another place has; but nevertheless they did a tremendous lot of work and did it most efficiently. I congratulate the Chief "Hansard" Reporter and each individual member of his staff, including those who do not appear in the Chamber. They have excelled themselves in their work, which was done in an uncomplaining and most satisfactory manner.

There are many others connected with the staff of Parliament who are not directly attached to this Chamber. I refer to our genial doorkeeper, commonly known as Charley. We all, I am sure, thank him for the courtesy he extends to us and for the way in which he looks after our correspondence. There is another most important staff that caters for and looks after us extremely well. It depends upon how the inner man is looked after how we carry on our work in this Chamber after the evening meal. I congratulate Mr. Roberts on his work—he has only recently taken over the duties—and also all his staff.

To hon. members I express my thanks. I have not taken over an easy job, and it is only the kindly assistance of members that has enabled me to discharge my duties. I thank all members who have supported the Government Bills and also those who have criticised them, because it is by criticism we learn. I sincerely hope that, if through various causes—some under my control and some not—I shall be in this position in future, I shall have the same loyal support of my friends and the genuine criticism of those who feel they are justified in criticising any measure. You, Sir, and hon. members must have been rather struck this session by the help that in past years was given us by my predecessors. I refer to the late Mr. Drew and to Mr. Kitson, who both so ably led this House for a great number of years. I thank you and members for extreme forbearance with me in my conduct of the business of the House. May I wish you, Sir, the staff and all those others I have mentioned, as well as hon. members, a very happy Christmas and a truly prosperous New Year.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.34]: I am glad to avail myself of the opportunity to support the Minister's remarks and to add my congratulations to his, Mr. President, on your recovery. I am sure every member is pleased that at the close of the proceedings you, Sir, find your health so much better than you did when the session opened. I congratulate the Leader of the House on having successfully steered the course of this Chamber through his first session in his present capacity. He is to be commended for the manner in which he discharged his duties. To the Honorary Minister I would offer my congratulations on the success which has attended his efforts in looking after the legislation which was entrusted to his care. I personally thank the three temporary Chairmen of Committees for the help and relief which they gave during the session.

I also personally thank Mr. Leake, the Clerk of the Council, and Mr. Sparks, the Clerk Assistant, for the courtesy that they have extended to me at all times and for the help they gave me when called upon. I also join in the Leader's congratulations to the Chief of the "Hansard" staff and my appreciation and thanks for the faithful—

perhaps I might more correctly say generous—reporting of the speeches made in this Chamber. We should not overlook the gentlemen in the Press gallery. We should thank them for what they have done, but I hope that the editor-in-chief will not use his blue pencil to such devastating effect in future, but give us better Press notices. We thank the gentlemen of the Press for their courtesy and help.

I agree with the Leader of the House that we ought to be thankful to Mr. Roberts and his staff for the way in which they have looked after our welfare. I hope that you, Sir, will come back to us after the election in May and again occupy the post you now fill so gracefully. To you and to all members I wish a happy Christmas, and I express the hope that 1948 will be a much more peaceful period than the year just closing.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [10.36]: It is now nearly a quarter of a century since I entered this Chamber and this is the first occasion that I have been in a position to take part in extending good wishes at the close of a session. For nine years I sat on the opposite side of the House and it was strange to me, at the commencement of the session, to take my place on this side. I felt I was taking on a new job altogether. There is no doubt that Mr. Kitson will be thinking of us all during this week and wondering what is happening in this Chamber. I join with both the Leader and Mr. Dimmitt in their expressions of thanks and good wishes.

We have much to be thankful for because the Leader, although this is his first session as Leader, has carried out his duties in an eminently satisfactory manner. He certainly has a strong sense of humour, although he is somewhat cutting at times, but that sense of humour carried him safely through. I congratulate you, Sir, on your return to good health, which I hope you will maintain. We are fortunate in having such competent officers to assist us. All of us were deeply concerned about Mr. Leake's illness, but his work was well carried on by Mr. Sparks, assisted by Mr. Browne, who is comparatively new to the work.

I wish to associate myself with the expression of thanks to all the officers of

Parliament, particularly the members of the "Hansard" staff—including the ladies—the Controller, Mr. Roberts, and the kitchen staff. This is the first occasion on which I have heard a Leader include the members of all staffs connected with Parliament in his thanks and good wishes. I do not recollect having heard thanks expressed to the kitchen staff before. After all, if we have good cooks and good meals, that keeps us good tempered and enables us to debate properly.

In all sincerity, Sir, I hope you will be with us again next session, although one naturally likes to see a member of his own Party returned. You have capably discharged your duties and I hope you will continue in your office. I have much pleasure in extending to you and to members best wishes for a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

THE PRESIDENT [10.40]: I wish to express my thanks to the Minister for Mines, Mr. Dimmitt and Mr. Gray for their kindly remarks in connection with the work of the session and my part in it. I also want to thank all members for the consideration they extended to me when I was in ill-health. The spirit of this House has always been one of which we can be proud. I have been particularly impressed this session by the way, in spite of the new conditions with which we were confronted, the spirit of tolerance, kindness and consideration was extended to one and all. That spirit is a tradition of this House which entitles it to the respect of the general public.

I want, to associate myself, too, with the expression of thanks to the officers of the House for the work they have done. They always have an especially difficult job towards the end of the session, but in Mr. Leake and Mr. Sparks we have two men who rise to the occasion and push the work through with celerity and efficiency. The "Hansard" staff has to be specially considered. I have not known for many years—I would say for 25 years—so heavy a session as far as Royal Commissions and Select Committees are concerned. It is a great tribute to the faithfulness and attention to duty of those officers that they have covered those inquiries so well and, at the same time, kept up with the work of the House.

This session has been characterised by another departure from the general practice. We have, I think, more new members here than we have had for many years. Unfortunately the hand of time has been laid on many of those who were associated with this House, and they are sadly missed. But we find the new men taking their responsibilities in the same conscientious manner, and I feel sure the House will benefit by their presence. I wish all members the very best for the New Year. I trust that a pleasant and happy time will be spent by all, and that our country will experience increased prosperity in 1948 and that we, ourselves, will be blessed by Providence with a return to the peaceful conditions that we have missed so much during recent years.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 18th December, 1947.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.