

member's attitude is confirmed by reference to the rolls prepared by the Chief Electoral Officer where it is found that the males on the electoral province rolls total 47,000 and the females 14,000. The hon. member wishes to see the wife put on the roll in the absence of her husband on active service, only, of course, when the question of tenancy arises. It seems to me a very proper suggestion. The point raised by the leader of the House is a difficult and delicate one.

The Colonial Secretary: I was reading the Chief Electoral Officer's remarks.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: For my part I believe that in almost 100 per cent. of cases the husband and the wife vote on the one side. If we pass the clause as it stands we shall certainly keep the absent husband on the roll and keep his wife off it. It is difficult to say whether the amendment will carry out what the mover desires, but I think his proposal is one that should commend itself to the Committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am entirely in sympathy with the desire of the mover of the amendment. It does seem that because the soldier is away we should not specifically enact legislation which would prevent his wife from getting on the roll as occupier of the premises. It was because of this that I got the report from the Chief Electoral Officer. I will move to report progress and will try to get the amendment put into proper shape. It is objectionable to have one person voting for another. If the amendment is necessary to allow the wife to be the tenant and exercise a vote as occupier, I think it ought to be made.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 16th November, 1916.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Returns in connection with Assurance Companies.

By the Attorney General: Mines Regulation Act; regulation as to testing winding engines after repairs.

QUESTION—RAILWAY REVENUE.

Increase in goods rates.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Acting Minister for Railways: 1, If he is correct in stating that Class 1 rate for 100 miles is £2 4s., whilst for 400 miles the rate is £6 9s., will not the additional impost of 10 per cent. operate as follows:—To carry one ton of goods under this rate for 100 miles will impose on additional 4s. 4d., whilst to carry one ton 400 miles will impose an additional 12s. 10d.? 2, If the present rate on the articles of food and machinery enumerated in my previous question is £1 3s. 8d. to Northam from Perth, will not the additional impost of 10 per cent. increase this by approximately 2s. 4d., whilst the increase if carried to Kalgoorlie would be 9s. to Albany 9s. 1d., to Leonora 12s., and Meekatharra 14s., similarly to Armadale only 10d.? 3, In these circumstances, does he still consider that such an impost is an equitable method of increasing the revenue? 4, If the old class 1 rate, plus district railway charge on one ton of agricultural machinery and the articles of food, enumerated in my previous

question, from Perth to Nyabing would amount to £3 14s. 9d., will not the increase of 10 per cent., less the district railway charge, amount to approximately, £4 2s. 3d., thus making a nett increase of 6s. 6d. per ton over the rate imposed by the previous Government?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, The additional charge on 1 ton of class "1" goods for 100 miles is 4s., and for 400 miles, 11s. 9d., not 4s. 4d. and 12s. 10d. 2, The recent increases per ton and per pound on first class rates are as follows:—

Perth to—	Per ton.	Per lb.
Northam ..	2s. 10d.	·0111d.
Kalgoorlie ..	11s. 2d.	·0590d.
Albany ..	10s. 6d.	·0538d.
Leonora ..	14s. 2d.	·0751d.
Meekatharra ..	13s. 3d.	·0805d.
Armadale ..	1s. 0d.	·0054d.

3, Yes. 4, The old first class rate, Perth to Nyabing, plus the district rate, was £4 8s. 3d. per ton, and the present rate is £4 16s. per ton—an increase of 7s. 9d. per ton—·041d. per lb.

QUESTION—BRICKS FOR GOVERNMENT USE.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Did the Government require bricks recently to ship to the North-West of the State? 2, Was there difficulty in obtaining the bricks owing to the contractor to supply the Government with bricks being unable to supply them? 3, Were the bricks obtained from another manufacturer? 4, How many manufacturers were able to supply? 5, Did the Government purchase the bricks required? 6, If so, was the price paid 55s. per thousand? 7, What was the price quoted? 8, What was the price paid? 9, Would it not be preferable to again start the Government brickworks to avoid the difficulty in obtaining supplies for Government use?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Contractor was unable to supply the full quantity, viz., 42,000 in time for shipment by the s.s. "Moirá." 3, No. 4, Two manufacturers and one agent quoted for supply. 5, Yes. 6, No; 55s. 6d. per thousand, f.o.r., Fremantle.

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7, 55s. 6d. per thousand, f.o.r., Fremantle. 8, 55s. 6d. per thousand f.o.r., Fremantle. 9, (a) Unless funds are available to permit of the stacking of up to three millions of bricks, it is not considered advisable to restart the Brick Works. (b) The orders offering from the public and plus Public Works Department's needs would be insufficient to keep the works going, and could be produced only at a serious financial loss unless (a) were possible.

QUESTIONS (2)—RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Land for Settlement.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Lands: What have the Government done in the way of setting apart lands for the settlement of returned soldiers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: A number of areas of land in the South-West Division have been allocated for the purpose, and the surveyors are at work classifying the land. Some of these will be made available for selection at an early date.

Poultry Raising.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Agriculture: What is being done to assist the returned soldiers who are being taught poultry raising at Subiaco?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: The scheme through which returned soldiers are instructed in poultry-raising is managed by a special committee operating under the control of the War Council. The War Council advanced £200 to the committee, and the Government made available, free of charge, the 30 acres being utilised for the project, and gave a grant of £550. This was devoted to the provision of barracks, improvement of water, and the procuring of incubators and plant. The services of the Government poultry expert were made available to assist the men in every possible way. When these men have completed their period of training, land will be made available, and assistance given to enable them to start operations on their own account.

QUESTION—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS.

Purchases by Farmers.

Mr. SMITH asked the Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Is it the intention of the Industries Assistance Board to continue the practice of coercing farmers into purchasing their machinery from the State Implement Works?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister) replied: The board's policy is to allow its clients to select their own machinery, except in cases where the circumstances do not warrant the incurring of heavy liabilities to take off crops. In such cases, the board exercises its discretion as to the machines supplied, and will continue to do so.

QUESTION—PERTH TRAMWAYS AND OUTSIDE CONTROL.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to hand over the control of the trams to an outside body? 2, If not is it their intention to dispose of trams to an outside body or bodies? 3, If so, will Parliament be consulted before the matter is finalised?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Government has invited the Local Authorities concerned to submit proposals for the taking over of the Tramways. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, If terms and conditions are agreed upon a Bill will be submitted to Parliament for its consideration.

QUESTION—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT, FINES.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier: 1, What has been the amount of fines imposed, under the Industrial Arbitration Act, for breaches of award or agreement, for each of the past five years? 2, To what funds, if any, have the fines been paid? 3, How many of these breaches have been cited—(a) By inspectors of factories? (b) By secretaries or agents of industrial unions?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Amount of fines imposed by Court of Arbitration for

breaches of award or industrial agreement for—

Year.	£	s.	d.
1912 ..	13	0	0
1913 ..	66	1	0
1914 ..	77	18	0
1915 ..	75	15	0
1916 ..	53	16	6

(to date). 2, Consolidated Revenue. 3, The breaches were cited by—

	Inspector of Factories.	Secy. or Agt. of Union.
During 1912 ..	None	11
" 1913 ..	33	141
" 1914 ..	33	88
" 1915 ..	21	56
" 1916 ..	9	53

In addition to the fines imposed, the court made orders for payment of all costs incurred by unions. These costs were paid to the unions when recovered.

QUESTION—RAILWAY ENGINEERS AND MANUFACTURE OF MUNITIONS.

Mr. GREEN asked Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): 1, Is he aware that the Commissioner for Railways is refusing to grant long service leave to engineers who have volunteered for service in the mother country, to assist in the manufacture of munitions for the war? 2, Is he aware that this refusal of leave will mean that many men who have contributed for years to the Railway Benefit Fund, will not be able to benefit by its provisions? 3, Will he give instructions that long service leave may be granted in similar cases in future, so that the families of the men who are assisting the Empire will not be sacrificed thereby?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, This is a matter between the employee and the Committee administering the Fund. 3, It is not proposed to grant leave to these men; a distinction is made between the men who volunteer for active service and those who serve the Empire in other ways. The permanent men who go to the front are granted leave, and rightly so, as they not only risk their lives, but also, in the great majority of cases, are at a financial loss. Whilst admitting that the men who go to England

for munitions work are to be commended for desiring to serve the Empire, it must be remembered that they do not take any undue risk, and receive adequate payment for their services.

QUESTION—AVONDALE AND YANDANOOKA ESTATES.

Mr. BUTCHER asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to devote the Avondale and Yandanooka Estates to the purpose for which the estates were purchased, viz., Act 60 Victoria, No. 26? 2, If not, is it intended to continue the growing and mixed farming operations inaugurated by the late Government?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes; the question of further subdividing these estates and making them available for returned soldiers and others is under consideration. 2, In the meantime, farming operations will be continued.

QUESTION—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTORAL QUALIFICATION.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked the Attorney General: A householder's qualification for enrolment as an elector for the Legislative Council being the occupation of a dwelling house of the clear annual value of £17, how is this value determined?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, "The Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1899," does not provide any specific system of valuation. 2, *Prima facie* the rent paid—less rates and taxes—represents the clear annual value of a dwelling-house. 3, In cases where no rent is paid, the clear annual value of a dwelling-house is the reasonable and fair rent—less rates and taxes—which a dwelling-house would fetch, if let.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Second Reading.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister—Perth) [4.45] in moving the second

reading said: The subject-matter of this Bill is not new. It is a consolidating and amending Bill. When passed into an Act it will be the only Act on the statute-book dealing with fire brigades. At the present time there are no less than nine Acts in force relating to fire brigades. The present measure is the result of experience gained in the administration of the present Fire Brigades Act.

Mr. Angwin: The majority of these deal with finances alone.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): Prior to 1898 when the first Fire Brigades Act was passed each municipality or local body had power to maintain and take its own measures for protection from fire. In those circumstances each local authority constituted a law unto itself. Later on, when settlement became close and the necessity for uniform legislation arose the first Act to which I have referred, namely, the 1898 Act, was passed constituting a board, but such was only applicable to the municipality of Perth. Other municipalities could be brought in and were brought in under the board by proclamation. Under that Act the municipalities of Perth and Fremantle were directly controlled by it. After the Act of 1898 other Acts were passed, namely, that of 1899, 1900, and 1905, all of which we are now repealing, as hon. members will see from the schedule in the Bill. The growth of the suburban areas and other large centres throughout the State created a desire for a more comprehensive fire brigade administration, and so in 1909 an Act known as the Fire Brigades Act was introduced which brought practically the whole of the State within its scope. At the time I myself dealt with it in another place. This Bill, while it is largely an amendment of the main Act of 1909, also repeals the other Acts which I have mentioned. It was anticipated that the Act of 1909 by a simple and uniform control would tend to lessen the cost of fire brigades administration, but this desired effect has unfortunately not yet been attained. I refer more particularly to the cost of the fire brigade administration. For instance, the year before the introduction of the 1909 Act the Government contributed £1,036, whereas

in the following year the contribution of the Government had risen to £6,687, which represented a serious increase. The main object is to decentralise and lessen the expenditure of the fire brigades administration. This expenditure was steadily increased until the Government contribution last year stood at £7,887; and the estimate of the board's expenditure for last year amounted to a sum of not less than £31,550. That is for the whole of the State wherever the fire brigade administration extended. The greater portion of the expenditure has been incurred in the metropolitan area, and the balance practically in large centres where permanent men are employed in that direction. It has been contended, and no doubt with a great amount of reason, that the permanent brigades have been established where previously volunteer brigades existed, to the detriment of the taxpayer. That was the bone of contention when the 1909 Act was passed. Hon. members will recollect the question of voluntary fire brigades in relation to permanent fire brigades. It has been said, and I think there is a certain amount of truth in it, that the permanent brigade men have been thriving everywhere to the detriment of the voluntary fire brigade men, with the consequent raising of the cost to the taxpayer. Many representations were made to the last Government in regard to the oppressive operations of the Act, especially in regard to the local authorities and more particularly the smaller local authority, that is the road board. As far back as 1912 the late Colonial Secretary (Mr. Drew) drew the attention of the then Premier to the fact that the present Act seemed to give universal dissatisfaction, and a promise was then made that an amending Bill would be introduced for the following session. The fire brigades also urged an amendment containing some of the principles which are now contained in the present Bill, and instructions were then given for the preparation of a Bill to be introduced in the 1912 session; but owing to the pressure of legislation this was not done. Similar instructions were issued in 1913 and again last year in 1915, and this Bill is largely the result of these instructions. The financial burden

of the local authorities has been the subject of frequent deputations to the Minister. I gathered that from the files, and I know such was the case when I had the administration of it for the first year or two after it was in force. As late as September of this year a deputation, representative of about 40 contributing bodies, waited upon the Colonial Secretary and urged the amalgamation of the legislation in order to relieve their financial burdens. That was a very important and representative deputation of the local bodies, which found the burdens they were called upon to bear too great. As a result of the deputation of all these contributing bodies, this measure is now submitted. It is largely based, but not entirely, on the representations of these 40 local bodies, road boards, and municipal councils. The main principle of the Bill is to constitute in municipalities and road board districts mentioned in the Bill a separate fire district. That is an important difference as compared with the present Act. This is done with the intent that each local authority shall only contribute to the expenditure within its own district. It is important, especially so far as the local bodies are concerned, and each local authority will only have to contribute to the expenditure within its own district. Hitherto the portions of the State where fire services are rendered constituted one fire district and the funds from contributing bodies were pooled and expended irrespective of the contribution levied in any particular district. This naturally created an injustice, as the centres where the less expensive class of protection, namely, that afforded by volunteers, was levied on the same basis as in the large centres where a more expensive administration, namely that of permanent men, existed. The lesser or more numerous centres were required to contribute towards the upkeep of the larger centres. That anomaly so far as the expenditure is concerned is done away with altogether under this measure. The Bill further provides that the local authorities shall have a say in the class of protection for their own districts for which they are required to pay. That too is an important alteration so far as the outside districts are concerned. If they do not want an ex-

pensive fire station, and to incur a large expenditure there, they need not do so. The Bill further provides that in the case of disagreement between the board and the local authority in this regard the Minister is appointed as final arbiter. This Bill provides a new feature in fire brigade administration. It provides that local or advisory committees shall be committees of the municipal council or road board, as the case may be. True, as several members know, there is provision made in most Australian fire brigades legislation for local committees, but under existing Acts and largely in the other States this has been a dead letter, probably due to some of the Australian methods of fire brigade boards, and secondly to the fact that the appointment of advisory or local committees is subject to a very cumbersome procedure of election. That cumbersome procedure of election is done away with altogether under this measure. The Bill provides automatically for the constitution of these advisory or local committees. Local committees should have the effect of creating an active interest in fire brigades administration in local districts. The system adopted under the last administration had rather an opposite tendency.

Mr. Foley: Would that mean that one or two local committees could combine to have a local body?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): I will deal with that directly. In the old days, under the voluntary fire brigade system, each centre maintained its own brigade. Latterly, the only interest shown in the local authority in fire brigade administration is in regard to the heavy payments which they are required to subscribe to. Those payments they will not be required to make in the future. Two or more of these local authorities may be united, as provided under the Bill, after a month's notice has been given to the local authorities. Objections to amalgamation can be made by any local authority concerned, and the Governor-in-Council will finally determine. Under the Bill the representation of the local authorities on the board is somewhat altered. Under the present Act the local authority

has three representatives, namely one for the City of Perth, one representing Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and Coolgardie municipalities, and and the Kalgoorlie Road Board, and all other centres or local bodies elected one representative. That is how the three representatives of the local bodies are made up under the Act of to-day. They are made up by the representation of voluntary fire brigades, insurance companies and local bodies. This representation is considered very inequitable and too generous as one representative is accorded to four relatively small centres, namely, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and Coolgardie municipalities and the Coolgardie Roads Board district, with an annual valuation approximating £23,000, as against representation from the other 40 districts with an aggregate annual valuation of £750,000. I am free to admit that I was rather surprised, on returning to the subject, to find that the goldfields got such large representation; but then I remembered that when I introduced the existing Act I represented that portion of the country in the Upper House. I suppose I must have looked at the matter with a different eye. To entirely remove this anomaly, the goldfields would have to be excluded from direct representation on the board. We do not propose to go to that extreme. The method of representation provided in this Bill does not pretend to remove the anomaly entirely, but to lessen it, and at the same time to maintain the goldfields representation on the board. If hon. members will turn to the Second Schedule, Part 3, they will see how the representation is made up. For instance there is one representative of the city of Perth, and under Part 2 a representative of comparatively small districts such as the Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and Boulder roads board districts. In order to maintain the goldfields representation, that district is extended. It will be seen that Kanowna, Leonora, Norseman, Southern Cross, Cue, Meekatharra, and Black Range are added. The one representative now covers the Eastern Goldfields and the Murchison goldfields, whereas the direct representation of the goldfields formerly covered only the Golden Mile and Coolgardie. The board under this Bill will consist of three representatives of

the insurance companies, three representatives of the local authorities with that alteration in the district which I have mentioned, two Government representatives, which number the Government have now, and one representative of the volunteer fire brigades. The volunteer fire brigades have a representative under the existing Act, and it is proposed to continue that. The contributions to the finances under this Bill are the same as at present; namely, the Government contribute two-eighths, the local authorities three-eighths, and the insurance companies three-eighths. At the recent conference consisting of 40 local bodies, to which I have already referred, it was suggested that the three members representing the local authorities should be elected by the whole of the local authorities conjointly, the voting power to be on the following scale:—local authorities whose annual contribution to the board is under £500 one vote, £500 or over but under £1,000 two votes, and £1,000 or over three votes. The adoption of that suggestion would eliminate any representation of the goldfields and also direct representation of the city of Perth. I have already pointed out that the suggestion was not accepted. In regard to methods of voting for the election of representatives by the local authorities, the Bill provides that regulations will be prescribed by the Governor-in-Council. These regulations will be made as simple as possible. The same conference of local bodies also suggested an alteration in the basis of contributions; namely, the Government contribution to be altered from two-eighths to three-ninths, that of the local authorities from three-eighths to two-ninths, and that of the insurance companies from three-eighths to four-ninths. That basis of contribution was not adopted by the Government. As I said before, the same ratio of contribution is contained in this Bill as under the existing Act.

Mr. Scaddan: You will never get economy so long as that ratio exists, because it is all to the advantage of the insurance companies to increase the cost of fire protection in preference to paying for fires.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): I quite agree that the insurance companies will spend as much money as they can on fire protection. It is good business

for them, because whatever extra they expend they simply add on to the insurance premiums, while at the same time lessening their risk.

Mr. Scaddan: What do the Government get out of fire efficiency?

Mr. Collier: Nothing at all.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): The precautions I have mentioned are taken, and also others which I shall mention later on. Under this Bill there cannot be extravagant and reckless expenditure as there has been in the past. After the passage of the 1909 measure the first action of the board was to rush up to the goldfields and sweep everything aside, pulling down and rebuilding. There is not the least doubt that the intention of that Act was never carried out. One object of this Bill is to protect the Government and the local bodies from the extravagance of the insurance companies, and the measure has for another of its objects the encouragement of volunteer fire brigades. On the Perth-Fremantle road between Cottesloe and Claremont there may be seen an enormous fire brigade station. The Claremont and Cottesloe municipalities had no say in the erection of that station at all. Such actions will not be permitted under this Bill.

Mr. Scaddan: You are altering the method of election for local authorities.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Mr. Scaddan: So long as you have a single representative from Perth and another from the other local bodies, you will leave the insurance companies' representatives in control.

Mr. Foley: Under this Bill the taxation of the 40 municipalities will not be reduced, but their representation will be reduced.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): Under this Bill taxation cannot be imposed on local bodies without their consent, though they may not be better off in the way of representation.

Mr. Munsie: The few who obtained good fire brigade stations under the old system will be all right; but what about the districts that lost their fire stations?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): The conference also suggested that the president of the board should be one of

the Government nominees. That is provided for in the Bill. As the result of experience of the working of the present Act, it is admitted that such a provision is essential in order to maintain a strict impartiality and to secure a maintenance of uniform policy as well as to control the balance of power as against insurance interests. In the past the three representatives of insurance on the board have at times created a block vote against the other divided opinions; and, as invariably happens throughout Australia, every endeavour is made by the insurance representatives to obtain the chairmanship for policy motives. This is prohibited by the Bill. The board meet on the average once a month, and between meetings the chairman undertakes large administrative responsibilities. The Government representative will stand between the local bodies and the insurance companies. The South Australian Act provides that a Government nominee shall be chairman, and a similar provision obtains in New South Wales. In general respects the Bill brings our legislation up to date on the lines of Victorian legislation of last year, and regard is also had to the South Australian Act of 1913. The other matters contained in the Bill are only matters of detail. So far as the machinery is concerned, the Bill largely repeats the provisions of the existing Act. The alterations proposed by the measure are not great in number, but their effect will be great as far as administration is concerned. The principal objects are the better protection of the local authorities and of the public purse in the way of keeping control over expenditure, and curbing the extravagance which has been at times indulged in by insurance representatives. Any other information that is required I shall be glad to give in Committee.

Mr. Carpenter: On what basis have the districts in the Second Schedule been defined?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): On the rateable basis. It is found, for instance, that Kalgoorlie has for £23,000 one representative, as against another group with £70,000 annual value. While that anomaly is not removed—for the reason that its removal would prevent the goldfields from having any representation—it is

amended to a certain extent by the addition to the former goldfields district of the Murchison goldfields. Again, Perth has one representative, and the rateable value of Perth is probably greater than that of the group in the Second Schedule. We have regard to community of interests and community of rating. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Holman debate adjourned.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

Mr. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.17]: The Bill we have to consider for an amendment of the Stamp Act is one which I think should not have been presented to the House until the Treasurer had introduced his Budget and thus enabled members, and through them the country generally, to thoroughly grasp the financial position and the necessities of the Treasurer. At the present time we are all groping in the dark. We do not know what additional taxation will yet be imposed. We do not know whether the Treasurer requires it. We do not know to what extent he is applying that business acumen, the possession of which he recently boasted. As a matter of fact, the grounds upon which the Government ousted the previous Government from office was the lack of application of business methods from a financial point of view, together with a tardiness on the part of the previous Government in introducing economies in the departments. I would remind the House that the present Government, or the members thereof, when sitting in Opposition, consistently opposed the introduction of any form of taxation by their predecessors, notwithstanding that they knew that one of three things was essential. It is now evidenced by the Bill that the present Government were not sincere in their opposition except from one point of view, namely in refusing the previous Government the necessary funds and thus bringing about financial chaos. By such means they hoped to obtain from the people a verdict hostile to the then

Government. Now the Treasurer has to look around in all directions in order to finance the situation. I do not know that the difficulty suddenly arose when he assumed the Treasury bench, that the trouble only occurred when the present Treasurer took possession of the Treasury. If the position was as bad as he makes out, he cannot justify his attitude when in Opposition, nor can it justify his attitude now as Treasurer leading the Government.

The Premier: Why?

Mr. SCADDAN: Because the hon. member is not consistent. It is only a few months since we endeavoured, by an infinitely more equitable system than this, to raise necessary funds for the purpose of carrying on the Government during an abnormal period.

The Premier: You did?

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes, and even at this stage I might recommend to the hon. member the Bill that we introduced and which he was instrumental in defeating in another place.

The Premier: I was not.

Mr. SCADDAN: Of course, there is no connection between the leader of the Liberals in the Assembly and the block Liberal vote in the Council.

The Premier: Have you any influence with the Labour vote in the Council?

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes. Undoubtedly the Council is a partisan Chamber and the hon. member, when sitting here, always gave a lead to his supporters in another place as to the direction in which they should go in respect to taxation measures.

The Premier: I am glad to hear that I have such influence.

Mr. SCADDAN: It is not of the hon. member's own making. It is merely party organisation for party purposes. I believe the hon. member in his heart, when sitting on this side, was just as desirous as any other individual member to promote the best interests of the country; but he was a member of a party machine, and he had to go as the machine drove him, he had to accept dictation from his boss, Sir John Forrest. It was not a matter of his own dictates. As an individual he was anxious to do the best by the country, but it was not to the advantage of the party to permit the then Government to obtain funds for carrying on. His party

desire to prove to the country that we were financial muddlers, as they called us. But what do we find? One of the first acts of the hon. member, while complaining of the condition of our finances, was to add to the deficit; and now he has to struggle week after week. He cannot produce his Estimates, which were in draft when we left office. He cannot bring down his Budget, because he made such a mess of it by larding out sops to our friends on the cross benches, and now he cannot get out of the difficulties set up. He has gone through every taxation Act in existence in an endeavour to improve on it. Here we have the Stamp Act to be amended. When the sum total of all this taxation is known to the community, the responsibility will rest, not so much on the Government as on the third party, who by their support have brought about this taxation which, as a matter of fact, is going to hit those they represent with greater force than any other section of the community. I have already been able to show, by the answers to my questions concerning railway freights, that with one hand a shilling was given to the farmers, and with the other hand 7s. 9d. was taken from them. The Government reduced the fertiliser freight, and immediately afterwards handed the farmers over to the fertiliser manufacturers. The Stamp Act Amendment Bill before the House is a direct blow at the small storekeeper in country districts. Here is a man who, in the past, has had to stamp only receipts on sums of £2 or over; but now every storekeeper who receives a single pound note will have to pay the Treasurer a penny for the privilege.

Mr. Piesse: The storekeeper will gladly pay the extra penny if the farmer will pay his debts.

Mr. SCADDAN: Whether the storekeeper take bills or cash, he will have to pay the additional tax. The Treasurer is not concerning himself about the difference to the storekeeper between bills and cash. I ask my friends seriously, do they consider that this source should be employed for the purpose of adjusting the financial position?

The Premier: Certainly.

Mr. SCADDAN: Of course I did not expect the Treasurer to say otherwise. If only we could get down to the bottom of it, it

would be proved conclusively that every Act imposing a tax on the community has been spread out before the Treasurer for the last five months, and he has been going through them, section after section, to see where he can get an additional shilling—so long, of course, as that shilling does not come from the section of the community which can best afford it.

The Premier: I have been going through your own files.

Mr. SCADDAN: But has the hon. member found my approval as Treasurer to any of these proposals? I introduced the War Emergency Bill in 1914—

The Premier: For the relief of the unemployed.

Mr. SCADDAN: Are they not entitled to some relief?

The Premier: No; they were not then.

Mr. SCADDAN: If a man be unfortunate enough to be unemployed why should he not be given relief?

The Attorney General: There was to have been a 15 per cent. emergency tax allocated to the relief of the unemployed. Do not twist your own Bills. You are fond of twisting other people's words, but you cannot twist your own Bill, because it is down in black and white.

Mr. SCADDAN: I feel quite squashed. I will have to get a tonic. I can assure the Attorney General if he proceeds in that strain I must resume my seat. I could not defend myself against attacks of that nature, because he really looks as if he means it.

The Attorney General: I am trying to keep you to your own Bill.

Mr. SCADDAN: I tried to get the Bill through, and now the Attorney General, by interjection, says it was a tax for the purpose of assisting the unemployed. I do not deny it. I merely ask, are not the unemployed entitled to some consideration?

The Attorney General: But you offered them a 15 per cent. tax.

Mr. Collier: You could not see the lower rate; you could see only the 15 per cent.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am still of opinion that a man who can command £5,000 a year is in a position to pay 15 per cent. to enable the Government to get over abnormal times. Even supporters of the present Ministry

have told me that it was unfortunate the Bill did not pass.

The Attorney General: If you would have then set aside 15 per cent. for the unemployed, what would you want for the general Treasury now? Everything, I suppose.

Mr. SCADDAN: I find there was a general provision that the net proceeds of the tax levied by the measure should be applied to the carrying out of special and necessary public works whereon surplus labour in the State might profitably be employed or such other purposes as might be approved by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. The position then is the position to-day, namely, to provide necessary funds to carry on public works. But for the Government to come along and ask a small storekeeper, who to-day is right in the verge of bankruptcy, to meet the difficulties that the Treasurer is faced with, is an absurd proposition. And not as an actual statement as the Colonial Treasurer claims it to be.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

The Premier: A lot you care about the poor storekeepers.

Mr. Munsie: You are more concerned about the 15 per cent.

Mr. SCADDAN: That is so. The 15 per cent. was the difficulty. Even now I believe that people will be prepared to admit that this is a tiddly-winking Bill which will hit those least able to afford it, the storekeeper or business man who owes a few pounds. It is as well to remember that the Treasurer anticipates receiving an additional £30,000 under this Bill, and I venture the opinion that £20,000 of this amount will come under the provision whereby people have to pay stamp duty on £1 instead of £2. This Bill is not going to hit the big business houses, the big warehouses, or the big manufacturers, but the small trader, the retail man, the man who, as I said, is to-day on the verge of bankruptcy already owing to the existing state of affairs. I would ask the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) whether he, as a small storekeeper in the country, does not appreciate that this will make a considerable additional taxation on him and on other small country storekeepers?

The Premier: You will not frighten him in that way.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am not attempting to frighten him. I am objecting to this method of taxation. Whatever may be my personal feelings, I hold that the Premier and those who support him are responsible for the position of affairs to-day. I am merely pointing out what is going to happen; and if the people are prepared to tolerate the position of allowing the big merchant to go scot-free while the small people are to be further taxed, then I must admit I do not understand public opinion in this State.

The Attorney General: Who says the big merchant is going to go scot-free?

Mr. SCADDAN: I say so.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. SCADDAN: I say he will go scot-free as compared with the small man. The Treasurer has gone round with a rake and on each tooth of that rake was written, "revenue, revenue, revenue," and wherever he could get 6d., or even 1d., he has got it and has not considered how his doing so would affect individuals in the State, or whether the individuals would be left in a position to live under the continued demands made upon them. Surely the Treasurer must recognise that when the State is having a rough time, the individual members of the community must also be having a bad time, that certain individuals must be suffering, otherwise the State would not be suffering. When the Treasurer proposes to impose additional taxation, he should make his demands in such a direction as will not increase the burden on that section of the community which is already sufficiently taxed. He should take this additional revenue from others who can be fairly called upon to bear an additional tax without feeling it to any extent. If a proposal were submitted to this House calling upon every one to contribute according to their ability for the purpose of meeting a falling revenue or of meeting necessary increased expenditure, I would not protest against it; but I must protest against this piecemeal method of dealing with our finances. I do not do so on party lines. It is, in my opinion, a policy which should be adhered to by all Governments, that before additional taxation is imposed or

proposed the Treasurer shall bring down his Budget showing why he requires the further revenue, and showing also how he proposes to spend the money. The House would then be in a position of saying whether the Government was entitled to the further taxation. Under our Standing Orders and under our Constitution Act no private member in the House may move to increase an item. He may move to decrease. That is in effect saying that when the Treasurer produces his Budget, if members are not satisfied with the manner in which the Treasurer is raising revenue, or if they are not satisfied with the form of taxation he is imposing, they may reduce expenditure by reducing an item on the Estimates. We are asked to grope in the dark in passing this taxation Bill without knowing the position in which the Treasurer finds himself. I recognise that he is drifting.

Opposition Member: He is on the rocks.

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes; he is on the rocks. Like the "Orizaba" he has struck a rock and is now balancing on it and with the first storm that comes along he will make a dive. I am anticipating that that dive will be taken before very long.

Ministerial Member: You sank your ship.

Mr. Nairn: Who put that rock there?

Mr. SCADDAN: Our friends on the cross benches. The Treasurer made a bargain with them so as to enable him to remove us from office. The rock on which the Treasurer has struck is the third party in this House, and it is costing the country £130,000. One cannot complain of the Treasurer in this connection because he certainly has kept faith with those with whom he bargained. But it is apparent that he knew more than they. The astonishing part of the bargain made between the Treasurer and the Country party was, to me, the manner in which the Treasurer agreed to everything. He even agreed that he would adhere to the policy he advocated when in opposition—whatever that might have been. The position then became that the third party moves a motion that the Government shall do this or that, and the Treasurer agreed. Why? Because he, as an old campaigner, realised that while he might be giving them one shilling he could take back five, or, or as the Honorary Minister has said, 7s. 9d. The members

of the Country party do not appreciate these things; I think they will learn a little before they are much older. Take, for instance, the rates on machinery. Machinery is not sent by rail by the pound, but in bulk. The country people will shortly be asking their representatives how this has happened, and the representatives will have to reply that it is part of the bargain, that they bargained with the Government for the abolition of what the Attorney General referred to during the Canning campaign as the "obnoxious terminal charges."

Mr. S. Stubbs: They could not get anything out of you.

Mr. SCADDAN: What! Wherever I went there was a sounding bell. I recollect on one occasion visiting the Wagin electorate, not many months before we left office. The hon. member said then, and he gloated over it, that he had got so much money for his electorate. When the Government deliberately took £130,000 out of the Treasury and scattered it amongst our friends on the cross benches, of course they clearly understood that they would get it all back, and more. As a matter of fact they have got in return something like £150,000.

Mr. Nairn: That is astute business policy.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was. But I am doubtful whether our friends have yet discovered it.

Mr. Nairn: You will have them back with you if you are not careful.

Mr. SCADDAN: I am not casting a net. I have had experience of them, and I can assure the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) that I am quite prepared to let his party retain them.

Mr. Collier: You have them well yarded up.

Mr. SCADDAN: All the time we had the support of the Country party I can truthfully assert that never once did we approach the leader of the Country party and ask him how he proposed acting; never once did we meet them in the caucus room for the purpose of finding out what they proposed doing. We never once asked the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) to come to the Treasury benches and explain the action of his followers because they had the independence to vote against the Government. We depended upon our own policy, and if the

Country party sat behind us they remained there only so long as they were prepared to support our policy. We never bargained with them.

Member: Did you take their leader to the seaside?

Mr. SCADDAN: I admit that I did take the then leader of the Country party (Mr. Gardiner) to the seaside. I also took the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs). We had a most enjoyable time. We understood each other thoroughly, but never on a single occasion in my presence did we discuss political questions or public men; I would not tolerate it. Let me urge upon the Treasurer that before proceeding further with the Bill he produce his Budget. There is no reason why he should wait the passage of his taxation proposals before issuing his Budget. He could come to the House, as is done by the Treasurer in every part of the British Dominions, and say how he proposed to finance for the ensuing 12 months.

Mr. Taylor: And let us know where are the shortages.

Mr. SCADDAN: Just so, and how he proposes to make them up. The House would be then in a better position to say whether the Government is entitled to this additional taxation. When I filled the position of Treasurer I delivered the Budget on every occasion before bringing down a taxation measure, and I made provision in the Budget, subject to the Bills being subsequently passed. Hon. members then knew whether the Government was entitled to extra money. That being so, I hold that for the increased deficit at the end of the financial year every member on that (Ministerial) side of the House is equally responsible with members on this side, because they knew what the position was going to be, and if they had disagreed they had a right to reduce the votes or to give us additional revenue. Four months of the financial year have already expired, and we are now in the fifth month. Notwithstanding the alleged muddling of last year we went to the bad for the whole year to the amount of only £348,000. Our friends opposite have gone back in four months, that is one-third of the year, to the tune of £361,000.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is the result of your muddling.

Mr. SCADDAN: It is not.

Mr. S. Stubbs: The Premier says so.

Mr. SCADDAN: It is not correct, but, of course, if the Premier says so, then I understand that the member for Wagin, as a loyal follower of the Premier, has no right to doubt the Premier's words. I admire the loyalty of the member for Wagin because I do like a loyal follower. The Treasurer is responsible for the position every day he is in possession of the Treasury.

Mr. S. Stubbs: But this debt was incurred before the 30th June.

Mr. SCADDAN: The first act of the Government brought about a loss of over £100,000 per annum.

Mr. Harrison: In what way?

Mr. SCADDAN: By the reduction of the fertiliser freights, to begin with. We have been told by the Commissioner of Railways that this in itself will mean a loss of £30,000 per annum.

Mr. Munsie: And that was not the only sop that was held out.

Mr. SCADDAN: The terminal charges last year amounted to £26,000.

Mr. Piesse: You know full well that they are not on agricultural lines.

Mr. SCADDAN: It is charges on district railways.

Mr. Piesse: What about the timber lines?

Mr. SCADDAN: There is nothing doing on them at the present time, but the timber lines were the only spur district railways that paid. Here we have the position that our district railways showed a loss last year of £68,351, and that too after including £26,000 received from the terminal charge then operating plus the then higher fertiliser freight. These together, which must be added to the loss mentioned, mean that under similar conditions these lines will, due to the action of the present Government, carry a loss of over £100,000.

Mr. Wansborough: There is enough wheat in the country to-day to make up for that.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member must know that wheat is not so profitable to carry and the total which will be derived from the wheat will not make up the loss, particularly under existing conditions where we have to pick up wheat as we get an opportunity to

ship it, and often without back loading. The position is getting worse and the Treasurer proposes to adjust matters by the piecemeal method of calling on those who are already suffering under the abnormal conditions to make up the shortage. Notwithstanding that the loss during the first four months of the financial year came to £361,000, I would like to point out that it would have been very much more had it not been for the much abused trading concerns. I find that in comparison with the first four months of the last financial year, when we were roundly abused about going to the bad with the trading concerns, those trading concerns came to the assistance of the Treasurer in a magnificent way. The net gain for the four months of this year, in comparison with the four months of last year, was something like £37,000, while our railway system showed a loss in comparison with the same period of last year of no less a sum than £36,717. So that our trading concerns, not including railways, have given a net advantage of £74,089.

Mr. Smith: Are you discussing the Stamp Act?

Mr. SCADDAN: Of course I am. The revenue from the Stamp Act goes into revenue account. It is not ear-marked to buy steamers with.

Mr. Bolton: You will soon have to start the two million club.

Mr. Harrison: Do I understand that there has been a big advance in the trading concerns in the four months of the present financial year as against the four months of last year?

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes.

Mr. Harrison: It must be due to better management.

Mr. SCADDAN: I expected that from the hon. member. I think he might have read the speech made by the Colonial Secretary in another place a few nights ago when that Minister told Mr. Holmes, whom he called the honorary minister for the steamship service, that a cattle deal for which we were responsible when we were in office returned a profit of £28,000. That was one item alone. Then there was the "Kangaroo's" trip home with wheat and the return trip with freight for Queensland, for which a £40,000 cheque was paid to the Treasurer

within the first four months of the present financial year. Therefore we have in two items alone no less a sum than £68,000.

Mr. Munsie: And that was the result of the previous Government's management.

Mr. SCADDAN: I know the Treasurer will claim that the existing position of the finances is due to the increased interest bill. The increased interest bill for the four months is £40,447, so that the increased net difference brought about by the trading concerns alone pays the increased charge on interest and leaves a balance of £25,000. Yet the Treasurer goes to the bad at a greater rate than ever we did.

Mr. S. Stubbs: What would you advise him to do?

Opposition Members: Resign.

Mr. SCADDAN: I would not like the hon. member to break faith with a definite compact which he made with our friends on the cross benches. I hope he will remain in his present position long enough to carry out the promises he has made and then our friends from the country will wake up. It will then be not a matter of resigning—it will be a matter of getting out. What I advise is that we should introduce taxation on the basis that, as times are not normal, we should call upon all in the community, according to their ability, to pay.

Mr. Bolton: We did that.

Mr. SCADDAN: We tried to do it, but did not succeed. We introduced a Bill but it was defeated. I suppose the present Government's idea of taxation will be to reduce the income tax exemption to £100 in order to make the man who is least able to bear this additional impost pay it. Is that a fair proposition, having in view the increased cost of living and remembering the fact that the man in receipt of 9s. a day at the present time is in the same position as the man who was receiving 7s. 4d. before the war started. Are we going to ask this section of the community to pay the additional amount?

Mr. S. Stubbs: Who has asked them to do it?

Mr. Bolton: Your Treasurer.

Mr. SCADDAN: Let me ask the hon. member who are the customers of the store-

keepers if they are not the wage-earners. The hon. member knows very well that when he is forced to raise the price of some commodity he must put the increased price on to the consumer and the consumer is the wage-earner. The wage-earner is the only one who feels the increase in the prices of commodities to any extent. I do not desire to labour the matter any further, except to say that personally I feel the Treasurer has not grasped the position as he should have done. I am prepared to take the responsibility of saying that something must be done for the purpose of adjusting our financial position. There are only three ways open to us to do that. One is additional taxation, and I claim that the taxation should be on the basis of calling upon those who are fortunate enough to be in the position of earning large incomes, to contribute additional revenue to the State. The second way is by increasing the charges for services rendered, but not in the manner proposed by the present Government. In this direction it is easy to inflict a hardship on that section of the community who can least afford to bear it. The Government ought to adopt a sliding scale, as we did, and although our friends organised public meetings in opposition to our proposition, we never intended to carry out such a proposal as is suggested now, namely, to charge one shilling only for the carriage of a ton of food supplies for the community to Armadale and fifteen shillings to carry them to Meekatharra. Thirdly, reduce the services rendered to the community and if we reduce services, we bring about wholesale retrenchment. In my opinion we should impose additional taxation and not restrict the services rendered to the community any more than is absolutely essential—due to the falling population owing to the war—and introduce economies wherever they can be effected without inflicting undue hardship. We should not increase charges for services rendered in the direction proposed by the Government unless everyone in the community is made to bear the impost. It is no use the Minister for Railways saying that these charges are not a tax, because we know very well they do amount to such. Why should the people in distant places like

Meekatharra have to pay 15s. to the Treasurer while people at Armadale only have to pay 1s. for the same article? That is not taxation of a reasonable nature. If there is to be taxation, let us have it in the manner in which I have mentioned. Begin, if you like, with the very small amount of £1 per annum, and increase to as much as 15 per cent. or 20 per cent. to apply to the man who is receiving £5,000 or £6,000 a year income. We should bear in mind the whole time that we are going through the greatest war in history, and in imposing taxation we should make it fall as far as possible upon every section of the community, according to their ability to pay, but we do not want to put additional burdens upon those who are already over-burdened. Twelve months of this sort of fiddling with our financial position will not improve the situation, but it will create undoubted difficulties, particularly in those parts of the State which should be assisted. The whole fabric of the State rests largely upon our banking system. Unfortunately we are continually hearing about people coming into the cities.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And that is more pronounced now than ever.

Mr. SCADDAN: It is simply because the banks operate readily and without question in the cities and neglect the country districts, because as a business proposition it is preferable to do that. Production in the industries of mining, agriculture, and timber is falling. Yet the man in the City, particularly the man who is keeping a rag-shop, is making bigger profits than he ever did before the war. The Treasurer is not going to touch that man who is in the fortunate position of being in the metropolis and reaping the benefit from the circulation of money which is taking place there only. That is the man who is to escape taxation, the man who is making bigger profits to-day than he ever did before. We have got to recognise that, sooner or later, we shall have to do more than has been done in the way of organisation. We have to re-organise our business so as to send capital out into the country instead of bringing it into the City. One thing that stands greatly to the credit of Mr. Woodrow Wilson, indeed stands more to his credit than anything else, is the al-

teration which he made to the banking system against the advice of all the experts. From time immemorial we have claimed that the banking system of Great Britain was perfection, but when this big war came along we found that it was absolutely rotten at the basis. It was like a telegraph post which had been eaten with white ants a foot below the ground and when the first gale came along was blown out of the earth. Mr. Woodrow Wilson recognised the fact that it was no use asking people to go out into the country if at the same time capital was brought out of the country into the cities. One of the greatest burdens upon the man on the land is that he cannot get ready cash in order to carry on his farming operations, and yet because I may happen to own a property in the City I can go along to-morrow and raise a loan on it within twenty-four hours; in fact one can borrow money in Perth without any security at all.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): At what address?

Mr. SCADDAN: I want to ask the House seriously, are we going to continue doing this sort of thing, or are we going to grasp the problems with which we are faced and find a solution for them?

The Premier: As you grasped them.

Mr. SCADDAN: As we attempted to grasp them, but as the hon. member would not permit us to do for party purposes. It is a matter which means the general welfare of the community of all classes, and all parties in the community. It is a matter which affects everyone. It is absolutely no use asking people to go out into the country and to populate it, and at the same time centralise capital within the cities under the existing banking system and the present method of carrying on the treasury and the finances of the State. It is a well known fact that where capital goes, there the people will follow. In the early days of Western Australia where did our population increase most? It increased most on the goldfields because capital was pouring into the goldfields and the people followed it. When money is put into the agricultural districts and where the public funds are expended in the interior of the country the public will follow it.

Mr. Harrison : Did you know that four years ago ?

Mr. SCADDAN : I did. I said it four years ago and I tried to carry it out four years ago. The hon. member ought to read up *Hansard*, and look up the list of Bills which were introduced by our Government but, which were not passed. He had better look up the revenue and the loan expenditure of the previous Government, and he will find that the bulk of our money was pouring into the country districts, although unfortunately the conditions prevailing in Western Australia were such that we had no control over them and the hon. member, amongst others, would not permit us to get it. Nothing has been done except to urge the people to go out into the country districts, and all the time money is being centralised in the metropolitan area. Notwithstanding that the population is increasing to-day in the metropolitan area, although so many of our producers have left the State to go to the war, still we can go on building magnificent properties in the metropolitan area while the farmers are leaving their homes. Are we going to put away our party differences and do what we can unitedly to relieve the situation ? There are certain questions which affect everyone in the community and this is one of them. This is a question which should be removed from all party consideration, and should be considered for the purpose of trying to readjust our social fabric. Under the conditions which exist here this is absolutely rotten. The metropolitan area is increasing in population and increasing in wealth. We find magnificent residences and shops going up while our population in the country is decreasing, farmers are leaving their homes, and mines are being closed down because we do not grasp the problem. The Treasurer comes along with this miserable taxation Bill, but our friends from the country districts cannot appreciate the fact that it is undoubtedly a tax upon the people whom they represent. With regard to the 1d. tax it is not a matter of the value of the article sold, but it is a question of the money received. If a man receives a pound in the country districts for an article which only costs fifteen shillings in Perth, the cost is to him plus handling

charges and the freights on the railways, and he will pay a tax to the Treasurer to centralise further funds in the metropolitan area to the detriment of those who are trying to open up the agricultural and mining industries.

Mr. Harrison : I thought the country storekeeper would pay that.

Mr. SCADDAN : It is the farmer who finds the money eventually. All these taxes are passed on and the business people do not pay them at all. They pass them on to the consumers, their customers.

Mr. S. Stubbs : That has not been my experience. I have never passed anything on to anyone in the store yet.

Mr. SCADDAN : The hon. member has told us something which is not correct. I do not make that reference individually. He may not have deliberately passed it on, but we know that the increased cost of running his business must be passed on to someone, or else he must go bankrupt. He must close his business or get additional profits.

Mr. S. Stubbs : Or additional capital.

Mr. SCADDAN : The existing conditions are not such that the storekeeper in the country districts can get additional capital. He has to get it out of his turnover. The result is that we impose an additional tax upon the man who cannot easily bear it but neglect our opportunities in calling upon those who can well bear the tax to do so. Men to-day are making bigger profits in the metropolitan area and should not be permitted to escape scot-free as they are under the Bill, notwithstanding that we are told that the Government are there for the purpose of attending to the interests of the general community and to develop our industries.

Mr. Collier : It is not decentralisation.

Mr. SCADDAN : No, it is centralisation. Let not hon. members imagine, as too many hon. members do, that if we spend money on works in the metropolitan area this is centralisation and that nothing else is. That is not so. Centralisation is a system of Government which causes not merely the erection of works in the central districts but a flow of capital and a flow of population to the City. Public works in any district will not mean decentralisation,

but that means taking capital and putting it into those particular districts. Where we send capital there will the population follow. If we are going to withdraw the capital under this measure and similar taxation proposals of the Premier, our position will be worse than ever. It will not be long before our friends opposite will discover this fact. The time is not far distant when these problems which must arise will have to be solved by statesmen and not by tiddly-winking methods of this description.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [6.10]: The leader of the Opposition has endeavoured to belittle our party as much as possible. His remarks and the interjections from the other side of the House show that members opposite have endeavoured to convince the country that we are not awake. We have not done badly in the circumstances. The leader of the Opposition has been at much pains to convince the House, and no doubt the people of the country through the House, that his Government did everything that was possible to help the man on the land.

Mr. Scaddan: I say we attempted to do so, but did not do so because of the circumstances.

Mr. PIESSE: I will give the House some idea of the way that his Government set about this. He made a special reference to farmers leaving their holdings. The reason for the farmers leaving their holdings in the great majority of cases was undoubtedly the unbusinesslike methods followed out by the Industries Assistance Board, under the direction of the late Government.

The Deputy Speaker: This is a motion for the second reading of the Stamp Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. PIESSE: I thought I might be permitted to reply to certain statements made by the leader of the Opposition.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member can make comparisons.

Mr. PIESSE: In so far as this Bill is concerned, I join issue with the leader of the Opposition, and say that it will not bear so heavily upon the country people as stated. In the first place, the 1d. tax will not result in such a big burden even upon the country storekeeper, for the

simple reason that the business conducted by the storekeeper to-day is largely done through the Industries Assistance Board or under guarantee by that board. There is, unfortunately, very little in the nature of receipts given by the storekeeper for debts paid because there are very few paid, so the storekeeper will say. So far as the other items in the schedule are concerned, it is true that bills are not used commercially, or at all events to such an appreciable extent as to cause a serious burden to be placed upon the people. I have maintained that, in the face of the finances of the State, the Treasurer is justified in bringing in a measure to enable him to adjust them. No doubt there are circumstances which would necessitate the line of action which he has taken.

Mr. Thomas: Would it not be better if we had all the taxation proposals brought down together so that we could understand what we were doing?

Mr. PIESSE: I recognise that it is difficult in consequence of the State's accounts to bring down the Budget just at the moment. So far as extra burdens imposed upon the community are concerned, I hope that they will be introduced with due regard to fairness upon all the classes of the community. I would like to make one reference to a remark of the leader of the Opposition in regard to his assistance to the primary producers. We are certainly grateful to him for the help which he gave to the primary producers. We are indebted to him for many considerations, but I may say he was also responsible for much taxation of which under the change of Government we are likely to be relieved.

Mr. Bolton: And the country is the sufferer.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex—in reply) [7.34]: I have only one or two remarks to offer, and I wish first to express my astonishment at the heat displayed by the leader of the Opposition in his condemnation of my actions in connection with this measure. He went out of his way to blame me for having introduced a taxation Bill before hon. members had the Budget figures before them, in order

that they might know whether I was justified in introducing it. In the course of a forcible speech, which will not mislead hon. members who are as well acquainted with the leader of the Opposition as I am, he referred to the Bill as a great financial question. He wanted something more glorious, more grand, something in the nature of the War Emergency Tax Bill which he introduced immediately after war broke out, and in connection with which he now complains he was prevented by the action of another place from securing required finance. Hon. members will remember what the War Emergency Tax Bill was, as they will also recollect, if they throw their minds back, the reason and the period it was introduced. War broke out on the 4th August, 1914, and about a month later, on the 9th September of that year, this Bill was rushed in. It was headed "War Emergency Tax," and was introduced for several purposes outlined by the Treasurer of the day. War had just been declared and the suggestion was that this taxation Bill should pass providing taxation ranging from one per cent. to fifteen per cent. on incomes. I do not wish to weary the House by referring in detail to it, members can turn it up for themselves; but it was for the purpose of raising between £400,000 and £500,000 per annum in taxation. I want to say here that there was no justification at that time for any such proposal. I said then that I was prepared to assist the Government in any reasonable measure they might introduce, any reasonable steps they might consider it necessary to take in the public interest or for the public safety. We were not at war at the time—at any rate we had not to carry the burden of financing the war then. The leader of the Opposition has taken me severely to task to-night because I presumed to ask the House to consider a measure of taxation in this Amending Stamp Act Bill before members had the Budget before them. I want to say at once I should have much preferred to have delivered the Budget first, but circumstances over which I have no control, over which, possibly, to quote the hon. member's own words, I may have had some little control, prevented my doing so up to the present. Had I refrained from introducing any

legislation until after the Budget had been delivered, the business of the House would have been hung up for weeks. Whilst the hon. member belaboured me so roundly, he adopted the same practice himself in the past. He has not followed in every case the practice of first introducing the Budget before introducing taxation proposals. The Budget of 1914 was delivered on the 22nd December.

Mr. Scaddan: There was an election that year.

The PREMIER: And the war emergency tax was introduced on the 9th September previously.

Mr. Hudson: That was before the election.

The PREMIER: There have been elections this year.

Mr. Hudson: Yes, but not in October.

The PREMIER: Here we had the late Treasurer rushing in with a Bill in which it was proposed to raise between £500,000 and £600,000 immediately on the declaration of war, before he had produced his Budget.

Mr. Scaddan: What will the figure be next time you mention it?

The PREMIER: In one part of the hon. member's speech to-night he said the sum proposed to be raised was between £400,000 and £500,000 and in another part he said between £500,000 and £600,000. He himself admitted that he did not really know how much taxation the Bill would yield, but that it would be a very large sum. Yet he takes me to task, and asks if my actions are statesmanlike, in asking the House to pass an amending Stamp Act to bring in £15,000 before I have delivered my Budget speech. Yet two years ago he introduced taxation proposals calculated to yield between £500,000 and £600,000, and his Budget was not delivered until three months later.

Mr. Hudson: He could not bring in his Budget before the election.

The PREMIER: Yet to-night the leader of the Opposition is making all sorts of charges. On many occasions he has taken me to task, more especially because I object to long adjournments. I want to show his attitude on another occasion.

Mr. Hudson: His actions are no justification for yours.

Mr. Scaddan : To what long adjournment are you referring ?

The PREMIER : We had a division last night on the point, when the hon. member made a terrible noise because he wanted two days. On the occasion referred to in 1914 the Bill was sprung on the Table of the House. I had no notice of that most important Bill and when I asked for an adjournment the then Premier said we should agree to meet at 10 o'clock in the morning. I had only asked for an adjournment until the next day. The usual meeting hour was 4.30, but the then Premier wanted us to meet at 10 o'clock in the morning to discuss a Bill of this importance. He demurred against the adjournment until the usual meeting hour and after a lot of argument compromised ; he came up to 2 o'clock and I asked him to make it three o'clock, and eventually we agreed on meeting at 2.30.

The Minister for Works : And he was not satisfied then.

The PREMIER : And even then he complained. I notice that I used almost similar words to his to-night on that occasion. I said that we were justified in asking why we had not been given more time, and taken more into the confidence of the Government with respect to the matter. I then said—

We are justified in asking why we have not been taken more fully into the confidence of the Government in respect to the finances. Even to-day, with a proposal of this sort before us, we have no direct information as to what the exact position is. . . . We have not had any account ; we have had no figures of any moment put before us to show what the financial position actually is, and apart from the fact that it is easy to give the House a full and complete financial statement before proposing any extraordinary method of raising revenue to make up any deficiency, it certainly appeals to me that members were entitled to have, at any rate, some statement from the Treasurer when he proposed this measure to show us exactly how the finances of the country stood.

So I am following the worthy example of my worthy friend who was my predecessor in office. Hon. members opposite do not

like to have it pointed out clearly how inconsistent they are and how unfair they are. They do not like to have it proved that they are, on the Opposition benches, very different men from what they were when on the Treasury benches.

Mr. Scaddan : That is a case of the pot calling the kettle black, all right.

The PREMIER : The hon. gentleman says we are responsible for all the financial difficulties—four months in office, and £360,000 deficit. We took office at the end of July, being sworn in on the 27th July, a Thursday, close to the end of the month. And the deficit for July was £133,000. Yet the leader of the Opposition wants to hang round my neck the responsibility for that amount. As I have previously pointed out in this Chamber, there is a sum of £93,000 which the leader of the Opposition as Premier expended in the previous financial year, and which he had not brought to account, which he had not paid ; so that this amount must be added to the £133,000 of deficit for July. There is a respectable sum of about £230,000 that the hon. gentleman is directly responsible for, even if he takes credit up to the very first minute of my assuming office. Yet the hon. gentleman has the audacity to attempt to castigate me, to take me to task, to point out the gravity of the action of the present Government, to call attention to our financial drift. He wound up these unfair charges by making an attack on my friends of the Country party. Those hon. members he treated with scorn and contumely. He said there had been an iniquitous or a pernicious compact—I forget which word he used—

Mr. Scaddan : Both words are applicable.

The PREMIER : By which the railway revenue was decreased to the extent of £120,000 per annum. In that figure he was wrong by half ; but it does not matter. We had abolished the terminal charges, and we had actually reduced fertiliser rates. It is true that we took off the terminal charges—a duty which, by his own utterances, belonged to my predecessor in office. The hon. gentleman had pledged himself to the country that he would abolish those terminal charges, and he did take them off for a few weeks, and then he put them back. I ask, is that the hon.

gentleman's idea of keeping faith with the electors, of keeping his word to a section of the community whom he now abuses? We said that we would remove those iniquitous charges.

Mr. Scaddan : Which you first imposed.

The PREMIER : We were further pledged to see that the pernicious increase of fertiliser rates imposed by the hon. gentleman was removed, and the rates reduced to their old level. He had increased them threefold or fourfold. We were obliged to keep faith with the electors of this State. We had been pledged to this policy long before ever we passed any word to our friends of the Country party. Both inside and outside this House we condemned the hon. gentleman for his action in the matter of fertiliser freights. Thus there was no question of any illegal compact with the Country party in this connection. Let me point out, too, that the terminal charges did not wholly fall on the farmers and settlers. By far the greater proportion of the terminal charges was paid by the timber industry. The leader of the Opposition forgets that he is laying on the shoulders of the producer the whole of the rebate, which by the way, in round figures, amounts to £50,000 or thereabouts. Instead of the whole of that rebate going to the farmers and settlers, other sections of the community share in it. The hon. gentleman wound up his masterly criticism of this little measure by saying that the Government ought to act like statesmen, that we ought not to play with the thing, that we ought not to introduce tiddly-winking measures of this sort, that we ought to tackle the question in a large way, and strike huge chunks from those able to pay. I suppose he meant that we should take something like three quarters of a million from those who have perhaps somewhat larger incomes than members of this House, and who necessarily have greater responsibilities. I do not propose to follow the hon. gentleman in his arguments, except for the purpose of showing how again he revels in the grossest inconsistency. Whilst he charges me with scraping round to find all possible methods—here I interjected the word "legitimate"; I say "all legitimate methods"—of raising increased revenue, whilst he says

that he left pretty well all these proposals on the Treasury files, it is plain that he himself was groping around and scratching and scraping to see where he could obtain additional revenue. When he went out of office, I took up the running as his successor at the Treasury. But let the House mark the hon. gentleman's attitude in 1913, when he was introducing measures exactly similar to those which he condemns to-night. In 1913 he said—

So far as increased taxation is concerned, this is, of course, the direct method of deriving further revenue. By increasing taxation, I mean more particularly so arranging our present system of taxation in order to cause those in our community who are able to contribute more towards the cost of revenue to do so; also to raise additional revenue, perhaps by increasing the stamp duties and similar forms of taxation.

Exactly what I am doing to-night. A little further on the hon. gentleman is reported as saying—

It is proposed, therefore, to submit fresh taxation proposals by amending the Land and Income Tax Act and the Stamp Act. From land and income tax and totalisator duty I estimate that we will receive an additional sum of £24,000 during the current financial year if the proposed Land and Income Tax Bill is passed this session.

Twenty-four thousand pounds to square a great financial deficit. I want to prove the hon. gentleman's inconsistency and unfairness, and I am doing it pretty successfully.

Under services rendered, in some directions we have already increased the tariff at tourist resorts such as Rottnest Island and the Caves House, but not sufficiently, I claim, to make those places unpopular. Again, we propose to revise railway rates, more particularly as affecting coal, fertilisers, and perhaps at a later date timber. From these additional rates I estimate for this year we will probably receive £25,000 to £30,000, which, together with the increase in taxation, should amount to approximately a total additional sum of £60,000 for the balance of the year.

Mr. Scaddan : When did I say that ?

The PREMIER : On the 16th October, 1913.

Mr. Scaddan : On what Bill did I say it ?

The PREMIER : In the course of the hon. gentleman's Budget speech.

Mr. Scaddan : I thought so. That is what I am urging you to do, bring down your Budget.

The PREMIER : I have proved that the late Premier brought down taxation proposals for £500,000 or £600,000 three months before delivering his Budget speech in 1914. Now I am proving that he was tiddly-winking with taxation just as he accuses me to-night of doing, and exactly on the same measures as I have introduced.

Mr. Scaddan : But that was on the Budget.

The PREMIER : What it was on does not matter. I propose by this little measure to raise an additional sum of £30,000 per annum from stamp duty. I propose to get half that sum, £15,000, during this financial year ; I cannot get more, as half the year has gone. After the Budget has been introduced, as I hope it will be on Tuesday next, there are other taxation measures to be brought down. I propose to go further in regard to income tax and dividend duty, and propose also to bring down amusement taxes and to submit other methods of raising revenue. These are not tiddly-winking methods, by any means. If hon. members opposite consider an amount of £30,000 per annum tiddly-winking, and therefore to be rejected, as the leader of the Opposition says, then I want to know why that hon. gentleman introduced a similar measure in 1913 to raise a similar amount, and got that measure passed. Surely I am justified in following the example of the Eastern States. Every other State of the Commonwealth has adjusted its stamp taxation or stamp duties. Every State of the Commonwealth has increased its stamp duties, and in nearly every instance increased them more largely than this Bill suggests. The main contention of the leader of the Opposition was that we propose to tax the poor man. The hon. gentleman is always out for "the poor man," as he calls him. But it is not the poor man that the hon. gentleman wishes to protect—it is the rich working

man he wants to protect, the man that can earn far better wages than can hon. members opposite. That is the class of worker the hon. member would protect, and he argues that because we propose to follow Queensland's example and take a stamp duty on the sum of £1 instead of £2, we are putting a tax on the poor man.

Mr. Taylor : That will catch the rich man.

The PREMIER : Yes, every time. The hon. member has cried out about the country storekeepers, and he says this will tax the poor man because the storekeeper will pass the id. on to his customers. Anyone to whom an account is being paid is only too glad to put a stamp on the receipt. Any business man knows that the stamp duty is paid by the man who receives payment, not by the man who pays over the money to his creditor. I do not wish to take up any further time. I simply wished to seize the opportunity of showing the hon. member up in his true colours, of allowing other hon. members to judge of what value was his terrible tirade against my action and against this measure, and of convincing them that they can safely pass the Bill without injustice to anyone, knowing indeed that our people will still be better off than are residents in the Eastern States.

Question put and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	17
Noes	16

Majority for .. 1

AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Vervard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. F. Willson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Male
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. W. D. Johnson	(Teller.)
Mr. Lambert	

Question thus passed.
Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Carpenter in the Chair ; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Repeal of Section 19 of the principal Act :

Mr. SMITH : Reference has been made to the power vested in the Commissioner of Taxation to remit fines inflicted in respect of offences against the Act. It is provided in the Act that the Commissioner may recommend to the Minister and, from him, to the Governor in Executive Council. The clause provides that the Commissioner shall have power in himself, not merely to recommend, but actually to remit fines. Is not this somewhat dangerous ? Will the Premier explain the reason for it ?

The PREMIER : In the past, if reasonable grounds have been shown for any neglect, the penalty has been remitted on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Taxation. Under the English Act the Commissioner deals with the remission of penalties. In this State the practice has been for the Commissioner to forward his recommendation to the Minister. But, as a matter of fact, the Minister is not in a position to query that recommendation. He must depend on the Commissioner. We now propose that the Commissioner shall adjudicate on claims for remission, but instead of sending them on to the Minister, and from the Minister to Executive Council, the Commissioner shall have power to decide the question himself.

Mr. SCADDAN : I am afraid the Treasurer has not placed the position fairly before the Committee. Only recently has the Commissioner of Taxation been placed in charge of stamp duties. The point is that the Commissioner, in making recommendations to the Minister for remissions or reductions of fines gives his reasons and, naturally, takes precaution to see that there are good grounds for his recommendations. But if we remove the control from the Minister and the Executive Council there are possibilities that the same care will not be taken by the Commissioner in the remission of fines.

I found that the greatest number of applications for remission of fines came from firms of solicitors in the City, and almost invariably they based their claims on the plea that some poor unfortunate office boy, not knowing the value of the document in respect of which the fine had been inflicted, had placed that document among other papers.

The Premier : The Commissioner would not accept that plea.

Mr. SCADDAN : It was accepted wholesale until eventually I submitted a minute to the effect that, in my opinion, firms of solicitors, who ought to know the law, should be the last to make request for the remission of such fines. There are scores of such pleas on the files.

Mr. S. Stubbs : Do you suggest that they did it on purpose ?

Mr. SCADDAN : Oh no, I would not suggest that ; I suppose they did it without any purpose at all. I think that, instead of making this drastic change, the Treasurer should effect a compromise and repeal the provision for sending a recommendation from the Minister on to Executive Council.

The Premier : It has been the practice in the Eastern States.

Mr. SCADDAN : The man who can get the ear of the Commissioner has a better opportunity of securing a remission than the man in the country. I suggest that the Government agree to the addition of the words "with the approval of the Minister." Then it would mean that the Commissioner with the approval of the Minister could remit fines and the whole trouble of sending the matter on to the Executive Council would be disposed of. This also will guard against the Commissioner, without control, being able to introduce methods which might be detrimental to those living far from the City and being of advantage to those in the City. I move an amendment—

That after the word "taxation" in line 3, the words "with the approval of the Minister" be inserted.

The PREMIER : The hon. member is exaggerating to some extent the danger. I have already pointed out that this is the practice in the Old Country and I have lately found out that it is the practice in the Eastern States as well. It is only

on good grounds that the remission of fines is approved. I am not so wedded to the terms of the clause that I would object to the suggestion, but what I do wish is to relieve the Minister of a good deal of work. If we have a proper Commissioner of Taxation, a responsible man, it is seldom that a Minister will interfere with the assessment notices.

Mr. Scaddan: Under this you will not know anything about it.

The PREMIER: It will be included in the annual report.

Mr. Scaddan: No.

The PREMIER: It would be a most essential thing to include in the annual report some reference to the remission of fines and the amount. So long as the Commissioner is a trustworthy man he should not be relieved of the responsibility.

Mr. Scaddan: We should keep the responsibility with the Minister.

The PREMIER: The Commissioners in the Eastern States, I am assured have this power.

Mr. TAYLOR: The clause proposes to amend Section 19 of the principal Act by omitting the word "Governor" and inserting "Commissioner of Taxation." It is transferring the power from the Executive Council to the Commissioner and the amendment wants to place the responsibility on the Minister. The Commissioner will make recommendations to the Minister and the Minister will have to approve of them. Then the House will deal with the Minister who will hold the responsibility.

The Premier: Is the Minister held responsible in connection with the income tax assessments?

Mr. Scaddan: That is different on account of the secrecy.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is an entirely different matter. This is to relieve people of fines on account of breaches of the law, and we desire that the power of granting remissions should not rest with the Commissioner. It seems to be the desire of the present Government to shirk responsibility in every direction. The section in the original Act provides that "No instrument shall be stamped at any time after the execution thereof except as herein provided or with the sanction of the Governor." The effect

of the amendment will be to make it read "With the sanction of the Commissioner of Taxation, and with the approval of the Minister." If any complication is likely to arise out of that, I fail to see it. Ministers should certainly be held responsible, and I hope the Committee will pass the amendment.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Minister for Works wants to know whether we propose to make the Minister a court of appeal. Under the existing law, not only is the Minister a court of appeal, but the Executive Council itself is made a court of appeal. When the original Act was introduced, the matter was thought so important that remission of fines would not be granted except by the sanction, not only of the Minister but of Executive Council.

The Minister for Works: Do you think that is desirable?

Mr. SCADDAN: No, and that is why I am prepared to agree to insert the word "Minister." I would not remove it from the control of the Executive Council and Minister as well. It is absurd to pass all these schedules through Executive Council.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Sections 70 and 73 of principal Act:

Mr. TAYLOR: The object of the clause is to provide that stamped receipts shall be given for £1 and over instead of £2 and over as at present. This is one of the most objectionable features of the Bill. This revenue will come from people who can ill-afford it and will not reach the big man at all. I hope the Committee will vote against the clause.

Mr. SCADDAN: The provision contained in the clause looks a very innocent one, being the substitution of the figure "one" for the figure "two," but an examination of the Stamp Act reveals the fact that it is much more serious than it appears to be. Under the Act the Commissioner of Taxation, with the approval of the Minister, can fine a man up to £10 for a breach of the law. This Bill also provides that the control of the Stamp Act will now be under the Commissioner of Taxation, whereas previously it was under the Treasury. The Treasury have no power to inspect books under the Stamp Act but can take

action if a receipt is brought under its notice which has not been stamped. There is also to be provided authority for the appointment of inspectors of stamps. The department would therefore be able to demand of any person any document that has passed to another person. When we introduced an amendment to the Stamp Act we provided that, where it was by law stated that a stamp should be applied to a receipt or any other document, a receipt should be given. The previous law did not make it compulsory to give a receipt. A receipt is evidence that an account is settled. A man who pays by crossed cheque also has evidence that he has paid his account. People frequently pay their accounts with crossed cheques and do not worry about receipts at all.

The Premier: The auditors worry.

Mr. SCADDAN: There are too many persons in the community who can pay their accounts by cheque, and who thus evade the stamp duty, whilst the poor man, who only draws his wages in cash, has to have a stamped receipt furnished. I want to make everyone who receives money give a receipt. I do not think that, in the circumstances, this is a desirable form of taxation.

Mr. Smith: You have been accusing business people of evading the stamp duty by giving cheques.

Mr. SCADDAN: Not at all. One of the Ministers told me he never looked for a receipt but paid his accounts to the value of hundreds of pounds by means of a crossed cheque. Scores of crossed cheques are being paid to-day, and the only receipt given is on the butt of the cheque-book. The time has arrived when everyone should obey the law, and this can only be done by the Commissioner of Taxation insisting that everyone who gives a receipt shall pay the stamp duty. It is not a desirable thing to inflict this penny tax upon those who cannot afford it. It is the poor man who is most affected.

Mr. NAIRN: I cannot follow the leader of the Opposition. The responsibility is cast on the person who receives the money to give a receipt and not on the person who pays it. His statement that men use their cheque-books in order to save the stamp duty has no foundation in fact.

Mr. Scaddan: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. NAIRN: The only other alternative is that the man uses his cheque-book in order to protect the one who should have given the receipt.

Mr. Scaddan: I did not say that either.

Mr. NAIRN: I believe that the big business men will pay most of this penny stamp duty. Many of the large traders in the City could easily evade the duty by making an article £1 19s. 11d. instead of £2.

Mr. Scaddan: That does not end it, because he gets a penny less for the article and saves a penny stamp. Where is the advantage?

Mr. NAIRN: He is giving an inducement to people to buy an article which they think is costing less than £2, and also simultaneously saves a penny. From 60 to 80 per cent. of this tax will be paid by the big business people. I hope there will be as rigorous an inspection as possible under this Bill. There are many who do not pay their stamp duty. I do not say the practice is universal, but if there is a close supervision not only will the revenue benefit but the honest man will be protected as he should be.

Mr. SCADDAN: I did not accuse anybody of issuing cross cheques with the object of evading stamp duty, but explained merely that by the system of cross cheques receipts become unnecessary, consequently stamp duty has not to be paid; and I pointed out that the man who pays in cash is forced into the position of obtaining a receipt.

Mr. SMITH: Provision should be made in the Bill for exempting salaries from stamp duty. At present all salaries above £2 have to bear one penny stamp. I have been so advised by the Crown Law Department. On the other hand, the wages of artisans, even up to £4, £5, and £6 per week, are exempt from stamp duty. Under this Bill an office boy in receipt of £1 per week, would be called upon to pay 4s. 4d. a year in stamp duty.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	18
Noes	15
	—
Majority for	3

ATTS.

Mr. Allen
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Connolly
Mr. George
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Hickmott
Mr. E. B. Johnston

Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Nairn
Mr. Plesse
Mr. Smith
Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Veryard
Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male

(Teller.)

NOBS.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Chesson
Mr. Collier
Mr. Foley
Mr. Green
Mr. Hudson
Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Lambert

Mr. Mullany
Mr. Munsie
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Bolton

(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Schedule to Act No. 20 of 1905 :

Mr. SCADDAN : The amendment suggested by the member for North Perth would be relevant to this clause. It might be inserted among the exemptions in Subclause 8, though I do not think it would be advisable to exempt salaries above £4 per week.

Mr. SMITH : I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be inserted after the words "sailors" in Subclause 8, "receipts given for salaries not exceeding £5 per week."

The PREMIER : I am aware of the hon. member's object in moving this amendment. It is to remove the anomaly now existing that whereas wages are exempted salaries are liable to stamp duty. I contend that wealthy wages men ought to pay stamp duty on the receipts they give for the emoluments of the offices they hold. But there are many anomalies in the Acts which have been passed from time to time amending the original Act. Those anomalies would be rectified if time permitted. I do not want the amendment inserted ; it will do no good at all. If a receipt has to be given—and, by the way, many thousands of pounds are paid in wages by pay envelopes, without receipts being given—stamp duty should be paid. This is one of the anomalies which the leader of the Opposition, when in office, promised to

consider, and to amend in a consolidating measure, which, however, he forgot to bring down. I now promise to introduce a consolidating measure next session.

Mr. Scaddan : You cannot do that from London.

The PREMIER : I am not going to London.

Mr. ANGWIN : I hope the member for North Perth will press his amendment, which is only fair. It was never intended that, for instance, a young person receiving 25s. per week should pay stamp duty.

The Premier : What about the old person getting 25s. per week ?

Mr. ANGWIN : It was a surprise to many people when the Crown Law Department issued notices that persons receiving salaries must pay stamp duties. Since then, auditors have required stamped receipts for wages. I think the only difference between wages and salary is that the one is so much per day or per week, the other so much per annum.

Mr. S. STUBBS : I have two daughters working in a bank, who receive 35s. per week. Are they on wages or on salary ?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister) : That is weekly wages.

Mr. Scaddan : No ; that is salary. A bank pays wages only to its caretaker.

Mr. S. STUBBS : A person receiving more than £4 per week should not be exempt from this stamp duty.

Amendment put and passed ; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Inspectors :

Mr. ANGWIN : Does this clause mean the placing of stamp legislation under the control of the Commissioner of Taxation ?

The Premier : Yes. It is now under his control.

Mr. ANGWIN : It should be the duty of the Commissioner of Taxation to make the purchase of stamps as convenient as possible to licensed vendors. Formerly vendors could obtain revenue stamps at the Fremantle court house, but that facility has been denied them by the Commissioner. The commission on stamps does not pay the train fare to Perth ; and to send down parcels of stamps by post costs the Commissioner 9d. per parcel.

However, I understand that instructions have since been given to the Commissioner to resume the sale of revenue stamps at the Fremantle court house.

The PREMIER: On representations made to me by the hon. member (Mr. Angwin), I issued instructions to have the sale of stamps resumed at the Fremantle court house; but the matter will take some little time to adjust. Hon. members can rest assured that the public will be afforded every facility for obtaining stamps.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the the report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 21st November, 1916.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Municipal Corporations Act. By-law No. 3 adopted by the City of Perth.

BILL—FRANCHISE.

In Committee:

Resumed from the 16th November. Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2 —Preservation of Franchise:

[37]

[Hon. J. W. Hickey had moved an amendment that Subclause 3 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"Where any person on active service with His Majesty's Naval or Military Forces at the commencement of such service was enrolled and qualified to vote for a member of the Legislative Council as a householder, his wife (except where she is enrolled as the owner of the same premises) shall be entitled to vote in his name."]

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government are fully in sympathy with the object of the hon. Mr. Hickey but the objection I have to the amendment is that it provides that one person shall vote on behalf of another person. The same result can be achieved better by adding the following proviso to Subclause 3 as it stands at present:—

Provided that if such person is a married man and absent from the State and his wife remains in occupation of the dwelling-house she may on application to the Electoral Registrar be registered as an elector on the household qualification in the place of her husband.

The objection to the clause as it stands is that it would create this anomaly, that in the event of the wife of a soldier remaining in the house she occupied at the time of the soldier's departure he would still be regarded as the occupier and his name would remain on the roll, and hers could not, even if she wished it, be placed there; but if she left the house which they occupied at the time he volunteered for service and went to another house across the street she would become the occupier of the other house and could register. On the return of the husband the provisions of this Bill would no longer apply to him and consequently he would again register as the occupier. I ask hon. members to vote against the amendment striking out the clause, and I will then move the addition of the words I have just read out.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: There is a good deal of principle in this matter. The vote of a person on the Legislative Council rolls is a different thing from that of a person on the Legislative Assembly rolls. The votes for the Legislative Council represent