

confer with some members of Parliament on the matter. The change referred to was made ten days or a fortnight ago, and on Monday this week another change was made. After the local tradesmen had made arrangements with their employees, had re-arranged their hours of duty, another change was made, and a more preposterous one still—the single train is to leave Perth at half-past three in the afternoon, spoiling a whole day for commercial travellers, not to mention members of Parliament. And we are informed that it will save a few pounds to the department. But that is not the main reason; it will also please a few employees. I have as much consideration for employees as has anyone, but I say the railway service of the State should be run for the whole of the people. What I wish to impress on the Minister is that he should urge on the Commissioner of Railways that all our industries hinge on the railway time-table, and that any change means serious loss and dislocation and dissatisfaction. I hope that Ministers will drop their undue ardour for their own immediate supporters and that they will study the whole of the people, and that above all they will say, "Our primary duty is to facilitate the enterprise of the people and not to enter into competition with that enterprise except when forced to do so by some extraordinary circumstances." Depend upon it, the freest activity of an enterprising people constitutes the soundest basis of prosperity for the nation.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 7.49 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 8th December, 1914.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Report on the working of the Government railways and tramways for the year ended June, 1913-14. 2, Report of the Commissioner of Taxation for the year ended June, 1913-14.

By the Attorney General: 1, Rules and regulations connected with the prevention of cruelty to animals. 2, Supreme Court Rules (Foreign Tribunals Evidence Act, 1856). 3, Prize Fees Rules, 1914. 4, "The Justices Act, 1911" (Scale of fees). 5, Amendment to No. 45 of the Regulations of the Education Department.

By the Honorary Minister: 1, Amendment to Clause 1 of Regulations under The District Fire Brigades Act. 2, Order in Council under "The Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act Amendment Act, 1914." 3, Under "The Health Act, 1911-12"; (a) Model By-Laws; (b) By-Laws of Phillips River Road Board; (c) Establishment of Peak Hill Local Board of Health; (d) Amend-

ment of By-Laws of the Local Health Authorities of North Perth and West Kimberley. 4, Amendment of Swan River Regulations. 5, Amendments to Port Regulations. 6, Police Benefit Fund Regulations. 7, Under "The Jetties Regulation Act, 1878": (a) Amendment of No. 4 of the Regulations; (b) Suspension of Regulation 24. 8, Amendment to Regulation No. 93 of the Bunbury Harbour Board. 9, Report of the Harbour and Light Department for the year ended 30th June, 1914.

By the Minister for Works: Regulations, State Abattoirs and Sale Yards, Midland Junction and North Fremantle.

#### QUESTION—RACING DATES AND W.A. TURF CLUB.

Mr. McDOWALL (for Mr. O'Loughlen) asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the W.A. Turf Club refused the application of the Helena Vale Club to race on a vacant date (December 19)? 2, Is he aware that the latter club offered to give the whole of the profit to one of the National funds now in existence? 3, In view of the selfish attitude of the W.A.T.C., and in order to better control racing, will the Government take charge of the fixing of all dates?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes, I believe so. 3, It is not the intention of the Government to introduce legislation for the purpose this session.

#### QUESTION—TOTALIZATOR, CONTROL BY GOVERNMENT.

Mr. McDOWALL (for Mr. O'Loughlen) asked the Premier: 1, Has he noticed that public demand exists in this and other States for the Government control of the totalizator? 2, In view of the decreasing revenue, is it the intention of the Government to derive more revenue from this source?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Recent events would indicate that it is not always easy to determine public opinion. 2, The matter is under consideration.

#### QUESTION—DISTRESS IN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it true that, owing to the failure of crops, he guaranteed to storekeepers in the agricultural districts payment for stores supplied to distressed farmers? 2, If so, can he state the liability incurred per month up to the end of November owing to such guarantee?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, In order to provide for cases of distress which were said to exist, the actual necessities of life to genuine farmers were guaranteed for about one month. 2, The liability under this heading ceased on 31st October, and the accounts as rendered amounted to £3,400 10s. 9d., covering 720 persons. Any further assistance of this nature will be subject to separate individual applications, which are now being received.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY FREE PASSES.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is the practice still in existence of granting to large payers of freight free passes over the railways? 2, If so, will he consider the advisability of discontinuing same?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No free passes are granted, but a rebate of from 5 per cent. to 75 per cent. is granted large traders, according to the amount of freight paid during the preceding 12 months. 2, The above regulation is common to the whole of Australia, and it is not proposed to discontinue it at present.

#### QUESTION—WHEAT BUYING CONTRACTS, PROPOSED CANCELLATION.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is the Government aware that on the eve of the declaration of war, and before news concerning same had reached the settlers, certain firms purchased large amounts of wheat from the farmers at prices of from 3s. 3d.

to 3s. 7d. per bushel? 2, Is the Government further aware that owing to the drought which occurred since then, many of these farmers reaped practically no harvest, and are consequently unable to deliver wheat in accordance with their contracts? 3, Is the Government aware that the firm of James Bell & Company, wheat buyers, has written to a large number of settlers, through Mr. W. H. Evans, their manager in Western Australia, stating that the said firm intends to stand on its legal rights in regard to the said contracts, and enclosing claims for large sums of money, being the difference in the value of wheat, at prices of up to 5s. per bushel? 4, Is the Government aware that the settlers are already suffering considerable distress through the bad season, and that they entered into the said contracts in good faith, believing the official statements as to the reliability of our rainfall and the certainty of a harvest? 5, Since the settlers are unable to supply the wheat through the unprecedented drought, will the Government introduce a measure to cancel the said contracts, and thus afford a deserving section of our agricultural community relief from any unjust claims which certain persons may seek to enforce? 6, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1 and 2, Letters have been received stating such to be the case. 3, No, but the Government have heard that some firms intend to do as is stated. 4, The Government is aware that the settlers are in distress through the bad season. They have no knowledge of the reasons which induced them to enter into the contracts. 5, The matter is under consideration. 6, Answered by No. 5.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY COMMISSIONER AND DEPUTATIONS.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that recently a number of Liberal members approached the Acting Railway Commissioner as a delegation for alteration of train services? 2, Is he aware that Labour members have been refused this in the past?

3, Will he allow Labour members the same right in the future? 4, If not, what action does he intend to take?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No; they approached the Acting Chief Traffic Manager? 2, Yes. 3, No; it is against the Railway Act. 4, Answered by No. 3.

#### QUESTION — PRESSURE UPON SETTLERS AND POSTPONEMENT OF DEBTS ACT.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Is the Government aware that settlers are being unfairly pressed for amounts due, by machinery firms and others? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission in order that inquiries may be made into this matter under "The Postponement of Debts Act, 1914"? 3, If so, when will the Royal Commission be appointed? 4, Will the Government have the Commission appointed quickly, in order that relief may be given to worthy persons, who are unable to meet their liabilities owing to the combined effects of the drought and the war?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter is under consideration. 3 and 4, Answered by No. 2.

#### QUESTION — POLICE OFFICERS AND EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Is it true that the Commissioner of Police has refused permission for members of the police force to join the expeditionary forces without resigning their positions? 2, Will the Government in future give those brave police officials who wish to do so permission to enlist, and keep their present positions for them on their return? 3, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Since the outbreak of hostilities the police, co-operating with the military, have been working at high pressure, and constables desirous of joining (except Imperial reservists) were informed that if they left

the service it would be absolutely necessary to fill their places. 2, No. The police are doing good service to the Empire by remaining at their posts. Men taken on to fill the vacancies would have to be dismissed on the return of those who enlisted. 3, To do so would dislocate the Force, the strength of which is now at bedrock.

#### QUESTION—MAGISTRATES' RETIREMENT.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Premier: 1, Was the Public Service Commissioner personally possessed of information which made it necessary in the interests of the State to retire Messrs. Roe and Cowan? 2, If so, will he submit that information to Parliament? 3, If the Public Service Commissioner was not personally possessed of that information, will he state the adequate authority which moved him to recommend the retirement of those officers, together with the reasons actuating his recommendations?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The expressed policy of the Government was the information possessed by the Public Service Commissioner which necessitated the retirement of the magistrates who had attained to 60 years of age. 2, It is contained in papers which were laid on the Table of the Assembly last session. 3, See reply to question No. 1.

#### QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Attorney General: 1, Did the Government act legally in enrolling electors without the signing of any claim card? 2, Was the electoral census completed or nearly completed in any district set aside in favour of or supplemented by the method adopted? 3, What amount of money was expended at the time of suspension of the census? 4, What amount of money would have been necessary to complete the census? 5, Did Mr. Stenberg advise in writing or otherwise against the legality or wisdom of transferring names from the Federal rolls to the State rolls?

6, If so, what was the nature of such advice? 7, Has not the value of the card system been completely destroyed by the method adopted in this case? 8, Has the attention of the Government been directed to the repeated evasions of the Electoral Act by accepting for enrolment claims without any address other than the name of the town—such as "John Smith," Geraldton? 9, What action, if any, did the Electoral Department take to purify the Geraldton roll also other rolls, after the exposures in November of last year?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, Where the census was completed, or nearly completed, it was not set aside, but was supplemented by the method referred to. 3, £1,304 was expended on the electoral canvass. 4, Owing to the crisis it would have been necessary to have engaged other canvassers in lieu of police officers to have completed the canvass, and it is not easy to estimate the cost under the changed conditions. 5, Mr. Stenberg recommended the distribution of Commonwealth rolls to officers with a view to the names of persons resident in the district, and entitled to enrolment on State rolls, being inserted thereon under Sections 37 and 40 of the Electoral Act. 6, Replied to under No. 5. 7, No. 8, Yes; as existing provisions are such as to practically prohibit enrolment in certain localities, an amending Bill was introduced last session with a view to making the provisions workable; the Bill, however, did not become law. 9, Electoral canvassers were instructed to obtain new and complete claims in every case where electors were enrolled for insufficient address.

#### QUESTION—STATE STEAMERS AND HARBOUR TRUST.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to retain Mr. Stevens in the dual position of secretary to the Fremantle Harbour Trust and manager of the State steamers? 2, Has Mr. Stevens been able to devote sufficient time to each concern to satisfactorily manage both?

3, Are the Commissioners of the Trust agreeable to the arrangement being continued?

The PREMIER replied: 1, It is the wish of the Government that the arrangement should continue. 2, Yes. 3, So far the Commissioners have raised no objection.

#### QUESTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS, BALANCE SHEETS.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: To save time in the discussion of the various State trading concerns on the Address-in-reply, will he lay upon the Table of the House the long overdue balance sheets in connection with these concerns?

The PREMIER replied: The balance sheets of all trading concerns will be laid on the Table of the House immediately they have been audited and passed by the Auditor General.

#### QUESTION—STATE BORROWINGS AND COMMONWEALTH LOAN.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, In reference to the reported loan to the State by the Commonwealth Government—is it true that a pledge has been exacted that the Government will not borrow except through the Commonwealth Government during the next twelve months? 2, If not, what conditions, if any, have been imposed?

The PREMIER replied: (1 and 2). The conditions under which the Commonwealth Government is raising the money for the State are disclosed in the Budget Speech made by the Prime Minister on the 3rd instant. The States have agreed not to go on the market locally or in London during the next twelve months in which the agreement will be current, but may issue Treasury Bills over the counter, to the amount of their issue in a normal year.

#### QUESTION—STATE SAVINGS BANK AND COMMONWEALTH.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: In view of the reported state-

ment of the Prime Minister that the Commonwealth had absorbed the State Savings Bank, will he inform the House of the nature of his negotiations, if any, connected therewith?

The PREMIER replied: The Prime Minister was evidently misreported, as the State Savings Bank has not been absorbed by the Commonwealth.

#### QUESTION—IRISH BLIGHT IN SOUTH-WEST.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Will he make a statement in regard to the outbreak of Irish Blight in the South-Western District, setting forth the steps taken to combat the spread of the disease; also the origin of the outbreak, if known?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: Yes. Two outbreaks of Irish Blight were discovered on the Busselton road, Busselton, by Inspector Bratby, on Sunday, 8th November, when immediate steps were taken to deal with the same; samples of the haulms of both places were submitted to the Pathologist on Monday, 9th November, who certified that they were affected with Irish Blight. Steps were at once taken to isolate and quarantine these places. During the week samples of tubers and of the seed planted were submitted to the Pathologist, who further certified that they were affected, after which all the potatoes were ordered to be dug and burnt along with all haulms and rubbish; this was carried out by two inspectors of the department, with the assistance of Messrs. Fenner and Hutchens, the owners of the affected plots. There is very good reason to believe that the seed planted on these two plots were carried off the boats at Busselton. Prosecutions have been commenced against those whom it is considered are responsible, one for not reporting the disease within 24 hours after first discovery, and the other for removing two bags of potatoes after having received notice not to do so. Beyond these there have been several scattered cases in various parts of the South-West in the most mild form, only affecting the

leaves of the haulms, and in no other cases were the tubers affected. These slightly affected crops are being dug under the supervision of inspectors, and are being disposed of by being sent to stations north-east of Mundijong, and the eastern portion of the State, and no potatoes are allowed to be planted upon the same plots for the next 18 months, and none of the crop will be used for seed purposes.

#### QUESTION — GOLDMINING LEASES, RENEWAL.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Minister for Mines: Upon what terms have Goldmining leases been renewed by the present Government?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Renewals of Goldmining leases have been granted subject to the Act and regulations relating to Goldmining leases in force at the time of such renewals.

#### QUESTION — AGRICULTURAL BANK, FUNDS.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Premier: 1, If he will supply the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank with sufficient capital from the loan of £3,100,000 arranged with the Federal Treasurer to enable the bank to discharge its obligations? 2, Will he also supply sufficient capital to enable the Trustees to give effect to the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act in the matter of continuing to make new advances?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The present Government's policy of generous assistance to agriculturalists through the Agricultural Bank will be continued.

#### QUESTION—GAME ACT AND KANGAROOS.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Premier: If he will amend the regulations under the Game Act to enable settlers to kill kangaroos for food without the payment of any license fee or royalty?

The PREMIER replied: There is no necessity to amend the regulations under

the Game Act, 1912-13, as settlers are permitted to take kangaroos for food purposes without a license, except within the boundaries of the kangaroo reserve. Even within the kangaroo reserve, licenses are issued without fee to settlers to take kangaroos (the kangaroo proper), for food purposes. Brush kangaroos, etc., may be taken *within* the kangaroo reserve under license B, *for which* there is no fee.

#### QUESTION—ADVANCES ON GROW- ING CROPS.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Premier: 1, Will the Government introduce legislation to enable them to set up a lien over the growing crops of 1915 to secure them against advances to farmers for the purpose of supplying seed wheat and fertilisers, and to cover the cost of putting in the crop, and alternatively to enable the Government to guarantee persons supplying seed wheat, fertilisers, and horse feed at prices approved by the Minister, without the usual legal formalities and expense, and without the necessity of a first mortgage over the property. 2, If so, will the Government arrange to make advances for the foregoing purposes to all farmers notwithstanding the nature of their title, and whether the land was purchased from the Crown or otherwise?

The PREMIER replied: 1, A Bill has been prepared dealing with the subject, and will be introduced at an early date. 2, The intention of the Government will appear from the Bill, when in the hands of honourable members.

#### QUESTION — WHEAT STOCKS, ROYAL COMMISSION'S RE- TURNS.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Premier: 1, What quantity of wheat and the product of wheat was held in this State in September last, when the Commission called for and obtained returns? 2, Is he not aware that the publication of this information is of importance to every one concerned? 3, Is it not a fact that in

the Eastern States information of a similar nature in regard to their holdings was made public at the earliest moment possible?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The approximate aggregate amounts of wheat and flour in the State on 14th September last as shown by the returns received by the Commission, were as follows:—

Wheat—519,904 bushels.

Flour—10,766 tons.

Bran—1,428 tons.

Pollard—724 tons.

These totals do not include stocks of less than the quantities stated in the Schedule to the Foodstuffs Commission Act, viz., 100 bushels of wheat and 1 ton each of flour, bran and pollard. 2, The above figures have now been furnished to the applicants. The Commission did not consider it advisable in the interests of the public to issue this information earlier. 3, So far as the Government is aware, the policy followed in the Eastern States is similar to that followed by the Royal Commission here, viz., to publish such information, when and how, as will best serve the interests of the individual States.

#### QUESTION—FOREIGNERS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

Mr. S. STUBBS asked the Premier: 1, How many persons are employed in the Government Service of the State of German or other Foreign Nationality? 2, The names of such persons? 3, The nature of their employment?

The PREMIER replied: If the hon. member will move for a return to cover private employment, including mining and shipping companies, as well as Government Service, I will treat it as a formal motion.

#### QUESTION—CIVIL SERVANTS' RETIREMENT.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Premier: 1, Did the Public Service Commissioner issue his circular of 10th

November, 1914, which he posted to members of Parliament, with the approval or at the request of the Government? 2, Is the Public Service Commissioner in his statement that the whole of the 19 officers named in his circular retired under Section 66 at their own request? 3, Do the Government agree with the interpretation (as set out in this circular) placed in Sections 66, 67, and 68 of the Public Service Act by the Public Service Commissioner? 4, Has the Government issued instructions that officers reaching the age of 60 are to be retired? 5, Will the Premier give a list showing the officers retired at 60 years of age, and over, since 1909, showing if retirement was at the officer's own request through ill-health, or by reason of being an excess officer? 6, Will the Premier give his assurance that the vacant position of Inspector in the Commissioner's office, or any position analogous to it, will not be filled without the claims of permanent officers being first considered

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, No such statement was made by the Public Service Commissioner. 3, Yes; it is the only practical interpretation of the Act. 4, In some cases—yes. 5, The hon. member should move for a return. 6, Yes.

#### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

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

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) ordered: "That on Tuesdays and Thursdays and on Wednesdays, 16th December, and each alternate Wednesday thereafter, Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day."

## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) Sessional Committees were appointed as follow:—

House Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Mullany, Mr. Male, and Mr. Lefroy, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the House Committee of the Legislative Council.

Printing Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Price, and Mr. Allen, to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members, and all papers laid upon the Table, whether in answer to addresses or otherwise, and with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Printing Committee of the Legislative Council.

Standing Orders Committee.—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. James Gardiner, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any Committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

Library Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Green, and Mr. Wisdom, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES,  
ELECTION.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [5.1]: I move—

*That Mr. John Barkell Holman, Member for Murchison, be appointed Chairman of Committees.*

It is necessary for me, I think, to explain my object in giving notice of this motion. It was to enable members to know that the election of the Chairman of Commit-

tees would take place at this definite period. The usual procedure is to appoint the Chairman of Committees when we first go into Committee, but I thought that in the circumstances it would be desirable for members to know definitely the time when the election of the Chairman of Committees would take place in the same way as we know the time when the election of the Speaker takes place. For that purpose I placed the motion on the Notice Paper, so that all hon. members could be present if they so desired and take part in the election. The Government desire that Mr. Holman, who acted as Chairman of Committees during the last Parliament and gave entire satisfaction to all members as Chairman—I do not know of any occasion when his ruling was even dissented from—should be appointed; therefore we cannot do better, I think, than ask Mr. Holman with his past experience to again fill the position of Chairman of Committees during the present session.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [5.3]: This is, of course, rather unusual. As the Premier has explained, we generally elect our Chairman when we first go into Committee; nevertheless I am not going to take exception to the motion, but to take it practically as a formal one. I recognise with the Premier that Mr. Holman has rendered good services as Chairman during the past three years, and, without in any way meaning to be offensive, he has in every way, I think, exceeded our expectations. Members of the Opposition feel that he is entitled to a renewal of the confidence of members in the honourable position of Chairman of Committees. Therefore, we do not propose to take any objection to the re-election, on this occasion, of that gentleman. Indeed, I have pleasure in seconding his nomination.

Question put and passed.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [5.5]: I desire to thank the members of the House for the honour they have conferred on me, and I am prepared to do as I have done in the past, act impartially in all my rulings and to give all the assistance



I can to hon. members. I shall be only too pleased on all occasions to give any help and I hope my efforts in the future will meet with the approval of members as they evidently have done in the past.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd December.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [5.6]: The hon. member for Geraldton in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply last week said that he would like to see the position of leader of the Opposition settled once and for all. At present, he expressed the opinion, Labour members did not know exactly who really occupied that position. In order that all anxiety may be set at rest, and that members sitting opposite to me in the House may also not be in a quandary in not knowing who is the leader of the Opposition, I take this opportunity of officially announcing that I have been re-elected by the unanimous wish of members of the Opposition to that position.

The Premier: What!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: By the unanimous wish of members of the Opposition to the position of leader. I hope, notwithstanding we have on many occasions to use many strong expressions in our criticism, we shall be able to further the efforts of the Government in the control and administration of the affairs of the country. The Governor's Speech, or the Speech which has been put into the mouth of His Excellency, is to be commended for its brevity. That is certainly a good point in its favour, and I congratulate the gentlemen opposite inasmuch as they have seen fit to be brief in their announcement to this Parliament. The statement that no controversial legislation is to be introduced during the present session of Parliament is particularly gratifying, and if the Government keep within the four corners of the Speech presented by His Excellency, I can guarantee there will be no factious opposition so far as the members of my party are

concerned. Criticism, of course, is necessary. I have voiced the opinion in this House during the past three years, that notwithstanding the great numbers ranged on the Government benches we would be false to our principles if we did not criticise when occasion arises, and I think we carried out that determination in a proper spirit, and notwithstanding that at the present time we realise that perhaps some curb should be placed on our desires in that direction, the Government must, of course, expect, as it is our duty, that wholesome criticism which tends to the best interests of the Government's affairs. May I be pardoned for saying that I think that criticism from the Opposition benches, and I include also the cross benches, should be now accepted in a somewhat chastened spirit by the members of the Government, and that they should be prepared, perhaps, much more so than in the past, to listen to the advice offered from time to time from these benches. The Address-in-reply debate which took place in this Chamber last July, not many months ago, was very largely a full debate on questions that appertain to State politics, and I think that it would be admitted by those who consult *Hansard*, if they wish to do so, that the sins of the Government on that occasion were fairly well discussed, and therefore seeing that we have since been to the people—the electors of the State—and have gone on the hustings and freely discussed the sins of omission and commission of the Government, we may well allow the debate to rest and deal with matters that may arise from time to time. At any rate that is my object. My object is to assist the Government in getting through the business of the country as rapidly and as expeditiously as possible, to enable them to give that time to the administration of their departments and the control of the finances of the country which is so desirable at the present juncture. The result of the elections can be seen in the constitution of the House. Your position, Mr. Speaker, enables you to take a bird's eye view of the members sitting on both sides, and I am sure that it must be gratifying to you, as indeed it

is to myself, to see parties more evenly balanced, and we may hope that in the increased numbers and undoubted ability of members on this side placed here by the wisdom of the people, that it will enable the State to derive very great benefit and advantage. If we are to have, and I take it from the Speech, it is the desire of the Government, a short, harmonious, and useful session of Parliament—and the members on this side I am sure endorse that wish—then we must look to the Government to set us an example in moderation, in language, both inside and outside of this Chamber. We look to them to give us that full and frank explanation of their position and intentions which, I am sorry to say, we did not receive on previous occasions when our numbers were very much less than they are to-day. Indeed, I call on them to abandon once and for all the policy of secrecy with which I challenged them on many occasions, and to be open, not only with the members of the Chamber, but to the people of the State who have to bear the burden of taxation which naturally follows the carrying out of any policy. I may say here that I take exception—and as an illustration I take the opportunity of referring to it—to a speech, recently delivered and reported in the daily Press, of the Attorney General. He has been attending social gatherings, condoling with those who have fallen by the wayside—who have not been successful during the recent elections—and his language has been of such a nature as to cause, to my mind, intense bitterness and to stir up hatred between individuals and parties, which is regrettable in the extreme. If one were to glance at his expressions and if it were to become a common rule to indulge in such language, public life would very quickly become unbearable, and that is hardly to be desired not only on that account, but on account of the well-being of the country. I draw the attention of members to the language used by the hon. member in a speech when a testimonial was presented to Mr. Lewis, the late member for Caning. The Attorney General said on

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that occasion—and he seemed to lose control of himself—

The defeat of Mr. Lewis had been brought about by the unfair battle in which he had been opposed. The battle had not been fought on principle, but with a vindictiveness and cowardliness which were only comparable to the conduct of the Germans in Belgium, which had disgraced all civilisation. He had never seen such low-down meanness used to triumph over an opponent as was used in the last struggle. He had known the times when rotten eggs had been thrown, but rotten eggs were sweet to the lies of the Liberal party. They had gone round that very constituency lying about him and other members.

The Premier: One of your supporters last night said the same about the Government party.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. gentleman was not content with that statement, but he went on to say—

He used the word lying because no other word fitted. They could not call them mistakes or misrepresentation; they were obliged to call them by their proper name—lies. They had not always done it openly, but had gone round from house to house like snakes to pour their venom into the homes. The lowest and vilest reptiles were sweet in comparison to some of them.

The Attorney General: It is very expressive.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The report continues—

Those who had been opposed to him had been able to fling gold about, and catch the eye of the public with gaily painted motor cars. Labour won on its merits every time.

Yet he forgets that Labour lost on its merits. The report proceeded—

Their opponents might be able to purchase votes once, but not always.

Then he went on to express a very pious opinion, as follows—

He knew those who looked down upon the labouring class; those who thanked God they were not as other men were, and he (the speaker) thanked God, too. Those were the people who voted for

the downing of Labour, the people who wanted to be distinct from their fellow men. The Labour movement was one that would help the lowliest. Their work lay in education, getting amongst the people. They had to teach these arrogant people that their blood was the same as the blood of those present, except that the blood of the latter might be a bit healthier. The Labour movement was one for equality of opportunity. That was the goal for which they were striving.

For instance, preference for unionists. The hon. gentleman went on to give some grains of hope to the defeated candidate by saying—

If he could only hold on for a little while, they would be able to do something to match those filthy partisan papers, the *West Australian* and the *Sunday Times*.

He also boasted—

They had got £20,000 to start their daily Labour paper, and on Monday night next they were prepared to hand over to the shareholders their responsibility. They could then contradict the lying filth of the papers he had mentioned.

The Attorney General wound up a most characteristic speech—

Mr. Allen: And undignified.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly, to my way of thinking, it was undignified. The Minister wound up by saying—

He could not think it would be long before they had another struggle, and Mr. Lewis would then come forward with renewed vigour. And then, before the rising flood, such midgets as "K.C." Robinson would be vanished out of sight.

The Premier: The Attorney General is the man who made him a K.C.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In the wealth of the absurdity of this extravagant utterance perhaps one would feel very much annoyed and exceedingly indignant, but I think the Attorney General on this occasion, as he has often done in the past, overreached himself by the extravagance of his expressions.

The Attorney General: It is absolutely true.

Mr. George: You could not prove it anyhow.

The Attorney General: I could.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, why don't you?

The Attorney General: I am taking steps to prove some of it.

Mr. Foley: He proved something in Leederville, anyhow.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not concerned about the midget K.C.; by the way, the honour was conferred upon Mr. Robinson by my friends on the Government side.

Mr. Bolton: That was spoils to the victors.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Mr. Robinson is well able to look after himself, and I am sure the Attorney General will find him a foeman worthy of his steel. But I am concerned for the honour and integrity of the Liberal party, and I want to say here at once that I protest and deny the charges contained in this speech, and that the Liberal party as a party did not indulge in lies and dishonourable practices to win the victory which they achieved at the recent elections.

Mr. Munsie: Where is your victory?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Look around the House.

The Premier: You have gone down from 17 to 16.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Seeing that we won seven seats from our opponents, the Labour party—

Mr. Foley: Who did?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Liberals.

Mr. Bolton: You never did.

The Premier: Where did you lose them?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We lost one.

Mr. George: We did not lose it; it was filched from us.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I was dealing with the extravagant language of the Attorney General, and I want to point out to the Premier that he did not indulge in fair tactics when passing through the different electorates in the South-Western portion of the State, and that his method of attack could hardly be considered fair

play on such occasions. In the course of a speech at Bunbury, after eulogising the Labour Government, he adopted this method of casting mud on his opponent, namely, myself—

If the people of Western Australia wanted a period of long hours and low wages they should return Mr. Wilson. He would give it to them sure enough, but he, Mr. Scaddan, declined the honour.

Mr. Bolton: Hear, hear.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier added—

If they wanted to do away with the supply of pure milk to the infant life of the community and thus get the death rate back to what it was before the Labour Government established the system of supplying the Children's Hospital, they should return Mr. Wilson.

Then again—

If they wanted the rich companies like the *West Australian* to go free while the worker was taxed, they should return Mr. Wilson.

The Premier: That is not complete; I mentioned the *Sunday Times* as well.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The report continues—

If the Liberal party with Mr. Wilson at its head were returned the working men of the State could expect with certainty a reduction of their wages by 1s. or 2s. a day.

The Premier calculated the amount that would represent per week and per month, in order to impress his audience, and then he wound up with a characteristic attack—

Mr. Wilson did not consult his constituents when he desired advice, but went to St. George's Terrace financiers, whose representative he was and who gave their orders.

I am quoting this statement as an illustration of what I term unparliamentary and extravagant language, and to force the point home to my hon. friends on the Government side I would say that men who want peace, as they evidently do according to the wording of His Excellency's speech, must practise a peace-

ful, reasonable, and considerate attitude towards their opponents; they must not indulge in wild accusations of all the crimes in the calendar. I think we shall have our hands full indeed during the short session which is outlined; in conducting the affairs of this State in order that we may come through the terrible crisis which the Empire is involved in we shall have our hands full what with the exigencies of war, as is mentioned in the Speech, and with the unfortunate drought, from the effects of which the farmers and settlers are suffering at the present time. So far as the war is concerned, it is not so much what we have suffered up to the present as what must inevitably come with the alteration of our commerce, with the difficulties of exchange, and with the fact that there must of necessity be unemployment in our midst to a very great extent. Notwithstanding that our hearts swell with pride at what Australia has done up to the present and at her response to the call of the Empire it is without doubt that, in the words which His Excellency used, we shall require all the endurance, all the economy, all the patience, confidence, and hope of our race to see this war through to a completely successful issue. I am sure I am voicing the opinions of every member of this House when I say that we have not the slightest doubt as to what the outcome of this unfortunate war will be. All the traditions of our British race, the splendid achievements of the Empire's soldiers at the front, and her sailors on the sea, the bulldog tenacity of our race which knows no defeat, all point to the conclusion that whether the war be long or short we shall at the end obtain complete victory; therefore, being imbued with that feeling, as I am sure we all are, we naturally have to turn our attention to what is our duty as responsible representatives of the people of this State. Are we to continue our party bickering, or to drop it? I say unhesitatingly that our duty at present is to stop party bickerings and to sink personal animosities.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And above all to endeavour to maintain public and private credit. To render the necessary assistance to farmers and settlers who are in dire distress goes without saying, and in addition we have to endeavour to find work for the unemployed, who are becoming pretty evident in our midst. I welcome the applause of the Premier and his colleagues to my statement that we should stop party bickerings. I assure them that if they set that excellent example we shall not be slow to follow it, and in addition I can assure him that members on this side will endeavour to bury personal animosities, and to achieve the other objects I have outlined, namely to preserve public and private credit, to give necessary aid to settlers, and to find work for the unemployed. It is certainly necessary above all things that we should have sound finance, and rigid economy must of necessity be the order of the day in public and private affairs. I say advisedly sound finance, not that I intend at this juncture to indulge in a criticism of the financial position of the Government, as we shall have an opportunity very shortly, when the Premier brings down his Budget, to go more fully into the financial aspect of the State's affairs; but I re-echo the warning which fell from the mover of the Address-in-reply, the member for Geraldton (Mr. Heitmann) that the deficit is attaining very alarming proportions, and is indeed of serious concern to all in this State. A deficit which has been growing month by month ever since hon. members took possession of the Treasury Bench, and now stands at some £537,000, with our small population cannot be treated in an offhanded manner or in the light fashion that one need not bother about it, and that it does not matter whether the deficit goes on increasing or not. The position must be faced. Notwithstanding that members of the Opposition or the Country party cannot be expected to take any share of the responsibility for the financial policy of the Government, I am satisfied their assistance will be given readily if the Government outline a plan which will embrace rigid economy in the different

departments, and in the administration of the public finances. Of course we cannot maintain credit if the Government set an example of extravagant and reckless expenditure, and therefore it is more than ever necessary that the Government should set the example of frugality and economy I have outlined. Our aim should be, as I have often pointed out in this Chamber and elsewhere, to increase the avenues of employment in Western Australia. The establishment of State enterprises, for instance, which serve only to knock out the individual citizen, does not increase the avenues of employment. We may replace some privately-owned industry by State enterprise, but we do not widen the avenues of employment; we simply close the private institution in favour of that belonging to the State. To use the words of Sir John Forrest—"You do not make two blades of grass grow where one blade grew before." I think it will appeal to all right-thinking persons at the present juncture that it is the Government's duty to endeavour to widen the avenues of employment, and to do this they ought to encourage the enterprise of the individual rather than seek to extend State enterprises. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) in his brief remarks referred to the war tax which had been proposed on a previous occasion. The hon. member argued that the workers on the goldfields were in favour of the war tax, because they had shown their willingness to make sacrifices, because they had contributed to the patriotic and Belgian relief funds. I wish here to point out to that hon. member that the fact of contributing to any funds of this description has no direct bearing on the taxation proposal of the Government. If the emergency war tax, as it was termed, had been imposed, the workers on the Golden Mile, or at any rate a certain number of them, would have had to contribute under that taxation in addition to making the subscriptions which they were good enough to make to these relief funds.

Mr. Green: They would have been prepared to do it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I dispute that view. Whilst I admit, or rather whilst I have always contended, that the people of Western Australia will submit to reasonable taxation for legitimate State administration, I am satisfied that they are not going to submit willingly to taxation of that nature in order to make good losses on the hazardous State enterprises which unfortunately we have had inaugurated here. At this point I wish to ask again that the Premier may issue such instructions as will ensure that the balance sheets of our various State trading concerns shall be made available quickly, in order that hon. members and the public generally shall know exactly how these concerns stand.

The Premier: That instruction has gone out long since.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then I do not know why the instruction is not obeyed.

The Premier: As a matter of fact, I am inquiring now.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think the Premier would be justified in taking very drastic action if—

The Premier: You would at once enter a protest if somebody were put out of the service.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I should protest if the Premier did an injustice to any civil servant. If the Premier fired out somebody simply by way of making a scapegoat of him, in such a case I should certainly object. But I certainly should not object if anyone directly responsible for the preparation of these balance sheets and therefore responsible for the withholding of them from this Chamber were hauled over the coals, and duly punished if proved guilty. I need only ask hon. members to turn up the report of the public accounts laid on the Table of the House last week. On page 36 they will find a resumé of the various State trading concerns, and the Auditor General's reasons for not having the balance sheets ready. During the last session of the preceding Parliament we were told—or at least this was inferred by the Treasurer—that the balance sheets could not be produced because the audits were

not completed. The hon. gentleman's answer to my question this afternoon emphasises that position. He said that as soon as the audits are completed we shall have the balance sheets. The report of the Auditor General, however, puts a very different complexion upon this aspect of the affair, and I would ask hon. members just to note one or two of the explanations given by the Auditor General in connection with these accounts. For instance, dealing with the 1912-13 accounts of the Boya quarries, he says—

A statement was received on 21st November, 1913, and returned on the following day, as it was not drawn up in what was considered to be an intelligible manner.

That was prompt enough so far as the Auditor General was concerned. The report continues—

An amended statement was received on 3rd March, 1914, but when an attempt to check was made it was found that the books of the department did not support the statement. Therefore it was returned with a report setting out what was required.

The Premier: Does he say when he returned it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He does not say so. The Auditor General continues—

A statement still further amended was received on the 23rd October, 1914, and sent back for some small amendments on the 12th November, 1914.

The Premier passed special legislation through Parliament, with the assistance of members of the Opposition, in order that the accounts of these trading concerns might be kept on a proper business-like basis, and it was his duty to see that the Act was complied with. He has not carried out that duty. To go on with the Boya quarries, we now pass to the 1913-14 accounts, and here we have the following brief statement—

The statements were received on the 23rd October, 1914, and returned on the 12th November, 1914, for the purpose of having adjustments made.

Then there are the accounts with regard to the aborigines cattle station.

The Premier: Do you appreciate the fact that in connection with the Boya quarries it was necessary to write up books covering a period of several years?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That does not take long. During the Liberal Government's term of office the Boya quarries never sold their product to outside consumers, but supplied it solely to Government departments.

The Premier: What difference did that make?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It made all the difference in the world. The Boya quarries in our time were merely adjuncts of the departments. These quarries were used to supply metal for the Fremantle harbour works only, and it did not matter a rap whether the accounts were made public or not. But now, when Ministers have gone into the open market to compete with private suppliers, it is absolutely necessary that we should have these balance sheets in order to know whether the undertaking is or is not being properly managed. As regards the aborigines cattle station, there is a nice position. The Auditor-General states—

The statements were received on the 9th February, 1914, and an examination was made, but as several matters required attention a memorandum was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary setting out particulars on the 25th June, 1914, in order to give the Department an opportunity of dealing with the points raised before a final report on the accounts was made under Section 19 of the Trading Concerns Act. No reply has been received.

Then we come to the 1913-14 accounts of the aborigines cattle station. The Auditor General reports—

No accounts under the Government Trading Concerns Act for the year ended 30th June, 1914, have been received.

That is a nice position of affairs. Ever since the present Government have been in office they really have had no accounts whatever as to the operations of the aborigines cattle station.

The Premier: We had to square up the muddle of your colleague.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is too thin. Hon. members opposite have been in charge for over three years, and it is too thin for them to try and lay the blame on the shoulders of their opponents. Ministers should take their own responsibility. The decision of the electors ought to convince them that their shrift will be short if they do not immediately mend their ways and accept their responsibilities. Now I come to the State Steamship Service. With regard to this, we have made endeavours on many occasions to get information, but up to the present we have not succeeded in obtaining much light. It is true that after a long delay a balance sheet for the year ended 30th June, 1913 was laid on the Table of the House, but the only note we have to-day with regard to the operations of the State Steamship Service for the twelve months ended on the 30th June last is—

Accounts received on the 9th November, 1914. The audit is almost complete.

I unhesitatingly state that it has taken far too long—from the 30th June to the 9th November—to have these accounts prepared and presented for audit. The extracts which I have quoted from the Auditor General's report prove conclusively that the blame is not attachable to that officer or to his staff, and that the lame excuse which the Treasurer has put forward from time to time, that the balance sheets could not be produced in this Chamber because they had not been audited—thus practically accusing the Audit Department of the delay—is not substantiated, not borne out.

The Premier: You have been to the Auditor General.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is the Premier's usual style of suggesting by a query that I have been discussing the matter with the Auditor General. In point of fact, I would be perfectly justified in asking the Auditor General any question in regard to the condition of these accounts; but I have not done so. I prefer to go to the Premier himself,

who is the head of the department; and who cannot shirk his responsibility by placing it on the shoulders of his officers.

Mr. Foley : Did Mr. Colebatch do that recently? Where did he get his information from?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Here is another statement contained in the Auditor General's report—

As regards the Government Refrigerating Works, Abattoirs, North Fremantle Sale Yards, Perth City Markets, Albany Cold Stores, Land Clearing Operations, Perth-South Perth Ferry Service, Milk Supply, State Implement Works, and State Saw Mills, statements have not been received. With the exception of the last very little checking work, from the point of view of the Trading Concerns Act, has been performed by the Audit Office, as it is considered more economical to wait till the receipt of the statements.

How on earth is this House ever to get a grasp of the position of these great undertakings, which possibly may mean very heavy loss to the State, and which may to a large extent be responsible for the deplorable state of the Premier's finances at the present time, if the hon. gentleman does not insist upon having the books balanced and the balance sheets prepared promptly after the close of the financial year? No statement whatever has been seen in regard to these various trading concerns, and they are trading concerns dealing with the outside markets of the world. They are not operating only for Government departments in our State. The sawmills are engaged on very large contracts, cutting sleepers for South Africa, I understand, and having also taken considerable contracts for the supply of sleepers to the trans-Australian railway. It is essential that we should have these balance sheets promptly, and it is essential, further, that they should be based on true business lines, and that they should state the position accurately, in order that hon. members may criticise them

and see whether it will profit the State to continue these undertakings.

The Premier : When saying that, I suppose you except the last four?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I recognise the fact that these large undertakings have been started since the Premier took office—

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And without Parliamentary sanction—

The Premier: That is not correct, either.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In absolute defiance of this Parliament. The State steamships were purchased without Parliamentary authority, and carried on without Parliamentary authority; and half the capital has been lost in the venture and yet we cannot get the accounts up to date. I want the Premier to realise his responsibility, and to see that the instructions which he says have been issued are carried out. If those instructions have been flouted, as the hon. gentleman would infer, then those who are responsible for disregarding the instructions must be brought to book and made to pay the penalty of their disobedience. It may also be pointed out to the Premier and his colleagues, if they have not read this in the Auditor General's report, that the methods are not suitable according to the Auditor General. He says—

At least from an audit point of view the provisions of the existing Act are not simple in their application, and this, combined with the method of giving effect to the statute, also the matters not provided for, throws many obstacles in the way of giving a certificate as to true accounts having been compiled.

If the Act requires amendment, why not bring down the necessary amending measure? I want to say, nevertheless, whether the methods complained of by the Auditor General are right or wrong, it does not excuse the different officials concerned from compiling their accounts properly. I would suggest to the Premier that his method of fixing up the trading accounts is very haphazard; it does not convey any true idea to the public generally, or to the members of the House, as



to the condition of the enterprises concerned.

Mr. McDowall: The *Monthly Abstract* showed the same condition when you were in power.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Nothing of the sort. If we are going to enter into competition with our own citizens by the employment of public funds, as has been done in these different trading concerns, if we are going to compete in the open markets of the world, then we are entitled to provide a reasonable capital for our undertakings and keep them absolutely distinct, so far as accountancy is concerned, from the ordinary revenue and expenditure of the different State departments. It is one thing to enter into a speculative, hazardous undertaking, something which depends on the condition of the market, on the supply of labour, on the means of transit, on the very difficulties which we are now facing, the difficulties of war, as to whether we can make it a profitable undertaking, and quite different, I say, from an industry which is established wholly and solely for providing State requirements.

Mr. James Gardiner: Are you suggesting that the net results should be brought into revenue?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly. Take our State sawmills. I suppose we have spent £250,000 on capital account. We are now operating, not for our own requirements, but in the world's markets. We are sending timber to South Africa. We have contracts with the Commonwealth Government. I would provide that undertaking with sufficient working capital, in addition to the capital expenditure, to supply the necessary mills and treatment works, and railways, and I would let it stand as an ordinary private individual's business. The capital should be kept apart in the Treasury, if you like, and interest charged upon it, and ordinary depreciation can be provided for. Then let a proper commercial balance sheet be brought forth and let us see exactly how each undertaking stands.

The Premier: Exactly what we are doing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, you are not doing that. If there is a profit on the working of the concern, let the profit be brought into revenue account, and if a loss is made let the loss also be shown. But the account must be explicit. I appeal once more to the Government to see that those accounts are so arranged that at a glance at the balance sheet which should be provided any one may see the true position of the concern.

The Premier: You forget that we passed a Trading Concerns Act.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No; I am blaming the Premier because he has not been able to enforce that Act, has not properly administered it, and I am asking him to see that this is done. I say that if we are to have mutual forbearance and assistance on both sides of the House, the Government must see that these particulars are afforded to members promptly. Then I say unhesitatingly that if that desirable state of affairs is to continue we must not have any preference to unionists in the expenditure of our public funds. Seeing that all contribute alike to the revenue of the State, all should have an equal right to any work that is going. This is a blot on the Federal Labour Government, and equally would it be a blot on our Government if they insisted upon this attitude. In this connection I have only to refer to the action of the Tally Clerks' Union of Fremantle. A man who had secured a job made application to enter that union, announcing that he had a job to go to but that the employer would not allow him to start work until he had become a member of the union. The reply was that the union was closed, that they could not receive any further applications until May of next year. And this poor individual, who had secured a job and was, presumably, well qualified to do the work, was turned out on the streets to starve, or at any rate to swell the ranks of the unemployed, because the union refused to permit him to join its ranks.

Mr. Foley: Do not the lawyers and doctors do the same?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly not. This sort of thing must be stopped,

and I ask the Government to be frank in stating to the House that they intend to stop it, and give every citizen an equal right to what work may be going.

The Premier: But your statement of the case is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is perfectly correct, and the correspondence has been published.

Mr. Bolton: It is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Has the hon. member read the letters published in the Press?

Mr. Bolton: I know the union.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The reply was signed by Robert Harris, secretary, and addressed from the Trades Hall, Fremantle.

Mr. Bolton: You said this man had work to go to. I say he had not. The members of that union had averaged two days' work per week.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Let me read the letters. Here is the first—

To the secretary, Tally Clerks' Union, Fremantle. Dear sir, Please let me know at your earliest convenience the expenses and mode of becoming a member of your union. I am desirous of joining the same. I have secured a job as tally clerk conditionally on joining your union. By giving me full particulars as soon as possible you will greatly oblige.

And the reply, addressed from the Trades Hall, Fremantle, and dated 16th November, 1914. reads—

In reply to yours of even date re membership of the Tally Clerks' Union, I have to inform you that at present our union is closed, and we shall admit no new members until 15th May, 1915. If, after 15th May, you desire to become a member, it will be necessary for you to deposit with me the entrance fee of two guineas, together with your application signed by two financial members of our union, and also supply me, for the information of the committee, with some details as to your ability and previous experience.

Does that not prove my contention? This gentleman was told that the union was closed until May and, therefore, until that time he is to wander about the streets

waiting for them to consider his application. And thus the job which this man had secured, and presumably was well fitted for, was lost to him.

Mr. Bolton: He never secured it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This is a sample of the tyranny being exercised by the Trades Halls of Western Australia, the tyranny I now ask the Government, in view of the recent elections, to put down with a strong hand and insist that every citizen shall have absolute freedom so far as work is concerned, no matter what his political or his religious opinions, that he shall have the right to enter a trades union, if he is qualified to do so. Then the system of drawing for jobs in Government work is one to be condemned, and the action of the Government in making the unemployed apply to the Trades Halls at Perth and Fremantle is also reprehensible in the extreme. This is an institution which has already been wrongfully subsidised from public funds by the present occupants of the Treasury benches. It is the centre of their political organisation, and to instruct the unemployed to go there is simply assisting the Trades Halls in their proselytising political work, so that they may increase their influence. If the Government will insist upon these unfair methods of handling this great question our party, when they reassume control of the Treasury benches—than which nothing is more certain—will assuredly be justified in considering whether they should not follow the example so badly set.

The Premier: Is that a threat?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member may take it so, if he likes. Why should we not subsidise the Liberal League and the Farmers and Settlers' Association from public funds? Why should we not make all Government work available through those institutions, even as the Labour Government makes Government work available through the Trades Hall?

Mr. Foley: What did your party do as regards the managers of the State batteries? Those managers were electoral agents for the Liberal League wherever one went.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Nothing of the sort. The manager of the State batteries was appointed by the first Labour Administration, headed by Mr. Daglish.

Mr. Foley: One had to be a good Liberal to get a job at shovelling.

The Premier: Did not your party engage "Yarloop" for organising work?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Who is "Yarloop"?

The Premier: The police want to know that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think he must be a creature of the Premier's fanciful imagination. I have not the slightest hesitation in stating here that the Trades Hall of this State has unfortunately prostituted its usefulness by becoming a huge political machine, and all except those in the Labour ranks must, I think, condemn and fight the tyranny of that institution. Those faults of the Government which I have pointed out are faults against the public generally, and not against us individually; they ought to be and must be remedied by the Government if they wish to have that peaceful and harmonious session which they prophesy in His Excellency's Speech. I can understand the Premier's jubilation on his return from the Eastern States with his £3,100,000 loan money in his pocket.

The Premier: That is not correct. I did not bring back any money with me.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I thought, from his expressions, that he had it in his pocket. He actually said that if a Liberal Premier had come back with that loan, as he had done, the Press would have been writing leading articles for weeks afterwards congratulating him on what he had accomplished. I thought, from the hon. member's expressions, as contained in an interview, that he had the loan in his pocket at the time. I accept the statement that the loan has not yet eventuated.

The Premier: You did not think it was there or you would have been hanging round the office for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: At any rate, owing to the financial pinch one can congratulate the Premier upon having been already helped over the stile by both the

Imperial Government in the first instance, and the Commonwealth Government in the second.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I want to point out that the Premier is not correct; it was actually the St. George's-terrace financiers who found the money. I refer him to the Prime Minister's speech which was reported in the newspapers, as having been delivered on the 3rd December. Mr. Fisher states that he has conferred with the Associated Banks, who have readily given him the assistance which he required of them, and have made ten millions of money available in gold, in exchange for notes, and that this has enabled him to assist in financing the various States of the Commonwealth. Does it not come home to the Premier that his foolish sneers in the past against the so-called St. George's-terrace financiers were absolutely uncalled for?

The Premier: Not at all. I will have something more to say.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And as a matter of fact that as to his flotation of an internal loan, or, to use his own expression, an "infernal loan," he owes it entirely to the assistance of the St. George's-terrace financiers who helped him over the parlous times in his financial career.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Apparently nothing is correct.

The Premier: All the story has not yet been told, even by the Prime Minister.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier will have an opportunity of telling us how it is incorrect.

The Premier: It is not desirable. It will all come out in history. Just be patient.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I hope at all events it will be more accurate than was the statement made when he returned to this State from Melbourne.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I thought you were going to stop all this party bickering.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is just his restrained and helpful criticism.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This is a sort of heavy criticism that the Government must expect, notwithstanding that we desire to work in harmony with them. Now, the Premier will have to remember that, when we have this money expended, our national debt will be something in the region of £110 per head of the population. The question we have to decide is as to how this money which we are getting from the sources I have mentioned is to be utilised in the best interests of the country. It is a question we have to consider fully, and to decide it definitely. I say we can utilise it in two different ways; we can spend it on necessary works, works which are reproductive, or we can spend it on unnecessary works, which I class as non-productive.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Motor cars, for instance.

The Premier: Would you call the Margaret River railway reproductive, or not?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The most necessary work in the country at the present time is that of helping our farmers and settlers to put in their crop for next season, and to open up—

Mr. Foley: The mining industry is the backbone of the State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And open up the southern-western area of Western Australia, and in conjunction with that to afford railway facilities, and the Margaret River railway line would supply a much-needed want. Another matter upon which money might be spent is in regard to the water supply of the metropolitan area, which has been hung up for years. This area is now threatened, according to the statement in the Press by the responsible Minister, with a water famine, before many months have gone by. I would point out that the proposal to increase the expenditure on workers' homes—so called workers' homes—does not appear to me to be either necessary or of a reproductive character.

Mr. Bolton: Workers' homes never did, in the hon. member's opinion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I join issue in that statement, because the hon. member knows very well that workers' homes—I mean proper workers' homes

—were part and parcel of our policy; and had we embarked upon the scheme which we outlined three years ago, the workers' homes themselves would have been a benefit to all who would have been living in them. I know of a house to-day which has been erected by the Government, and which has cost nearly one thousand pounds to build. The gentleman who is to own that house—he has apparently plenty of money to spare—has evidently been able to pay money over and above the £500 limit which it is stated in the Act may be advanced for a workers' home. I hear also that he has not only purchased the freehold of the land on which the house stands but that he is now negotiating to purchase the block adjoining.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Then he must have got it under false pretences.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know about that. These are not the class of workers that the Workers' Homes Act was passed to benefit. The genuine workman, the poor workman, who wants to build his own home, in the suburban area, is the man for whom the Act was intended, and it was not intended for the man who could command a thousand pounds.

Mr. Foley: What about pocket-handkerchief blocks now?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Many gentlemen including hon. members sitting opposite, have had these palaces erected, and have contributed towards the first cost from their own pockets.

The Premier: The Act provides for the definition of "worker."

Hon. FRANK WILSON. I know all about that, but the Act has not been administered in a right way; it has not been administered properly.

The Premier: What is the definition of "worker?"

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The person that the Act was intended to assist should have the benefit of the Act, and not gentlemen of the description I have referred to, and not the class that that gentleman represents.

Mr. Foley: I am in a workers' home; would you call me a worker?

Members: No.

Mr. Foley: Come right out into the open.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member has proved my contention up to the hilt.

The Premier: The hon. member will remember that it was his party in another place which increased the allowance of income to enable higher salaried men to come under the Act.

Mr. Bolton: The income restriction was increased from £300 to £400 a year.

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition is addressing the House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There are many houses which are empty in the metropolitan area at the present time. An advertisement recently appeared in a newspaper showing that there were 250 houses to let in that area and amongst these were some half dozen which were owned by the Government. But this does not represent anything like the number of empty houses in the metropolitan area. To make the work reproductive it is not necessary only to show that the scheme will return interest on the money which is expended, but you want to go further and show that increased wealth will come to the State, and that it will provide further employment for the people of the State. I want to say that the proposal to build some fifteen new workers' homes, I think, per month, is not calculated to increase the avenues of employment, more especially when we consider that only a few months ago we had to pass special legislation in view of the war to relieve the present occupants of those homes of the necessity of paying interest and sinking fund contributions which were calculated under the Act.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That only referred to special cases.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: To build houses for people who cannot afford to meet the small payment of interest demanded under this Act at the present time is folly, and to build the classes of houses which have been built in the past, just now is also absolute folly.

Money can be undoubtedly much better and more wisely expended in affording necessary assistance to our farmers and settlers, and in opening up the south-west district of the State. The artisans and others for whom it is desired to find employment by the erection of workers' homes could be very much better employed in erecting some of the homesteads which will be necessary in the south-west—

Mr. Foley: In your electorate, I suppose.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Which will be necessary in the settlement and development of the dairying industry in Western Australia. I think it will much more largely affect the Nelson and Collicie electorates than my own.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The artisan then is not entitled to a decent house?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not think that a man who is earning no more than £3 a week should expect to have a palace to live in.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Oh no; he ought to live in a tree.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We should be doing him an injury by helping him to occupy a house of that description; but the hon. member will not understand that point of view.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You want to keep him down.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. Will the hon. member kindly resume his seat. I have called the Honorary Minister to order three or four times, and I want him to keep order. He must restrain himself.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I only wish briefly to outline these matters instead of going into detail, and to emphasise the necessity at this present juncture of insisting that all money is spent on absolutely reproductive works in every sense of the term. We must not spend money upon works which are helping to clog the State and to be a burden instead of an assistance to the men for whom the homes are being built. I wish to say here that the administration of the

Water Supply Department, which I understand has been transferred to the Minister for Mines, requires very careful attention. The fact that many of the houses in the metropolitan area are without meters has accounted very largely for the shortage of water, which is likely to make itself very apparent in the near future. The policy of putting meters in houses having been abandoned is perhaps to a considerable extent not only accountable for the shortage of water-supply at the present time, but also the disorganised finances of the department by allowing occupants of houses to use water as they have been doing in the past for garden purposes without payment. It is simply robbing the taxpayers who have to pay for every ounce of water that is drawn through the meters and which is for the benefit of those who have no meter. It is up to the Minister to look into things. I regard with some degree of satisfaction the transfer of this department to his control. I say it is up to that Minister to do something, and I think he will take the hint and see that this very serious difficulty is remedied, and remedied promptly. To-day we are told that our supply from the Canning Hills has failed, and that the Victoria reservoir is dry. We are, it seems, absolutely dependent upon bore water in Perth, with the exception of some small supply which we draw from the Mundaring Weir.

Mr. Taylor: I understand that there are some thirteen feet of silt in the reservoir.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then it ought to have been cleaned out. If that is the position, it is a very parlous one indeed, and ought to have been foreseen months ago, and when foreseen action ought to have been taken upon it.

The Minister for Mines: We could not have foreseen months ago that there would be no rain.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Months ago, a year ago, even three years ago, the hon. member could have foreseen, and must have known as well as I did, that there would be a shortage of water in the metropolitan area very quickly.

The Minister for Mines: The hon.

member brought down a proposal for a bills scheme some years ago, but he did nothing up to the time he went out of office.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But in this case Parliament would not sanction the scheme, and it shows how right I was at the time. If the hon. member will turn up *Hansard* he will see the truth of what I am saying.

The Minister for Lands: Under a normal rainfall there would be ample water for the metropolitan area at the present time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think not; there is very grave danger.

The Minister for Lands: There is no danger at all.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister must know as well as I do that he is largely dependent upon bore water during any summer.

The Premier: Our extravagant expenditure in providing a reservoir at Mount Eliza and Mount Hawthorn has saved the position.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And there again I may say that we provided the reservoir at Mount Eliza, and the hon. member only finished its construction. He is wrong once more.

The Minister for Lands: No, the Premier is right.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Before tea we were discussing the question of the expenditure of loan moneys which the Treasurer has been able to arrange for through the good offices of the Federal Treasurer, and I was referring to what I consider were unnecessary works, inasmuch as it was proposed to continue the erection of workers' homes. There are many avenues of employment which the Government might well open up and encourage at this juncture. For instance, I see in response to the inquiry made by Sir John Forrest in the Federal House the other day, the reply was given that 400,000 sleepers were still to be provided for the Trans-Australian railway. I suggest here with all due deference to the decision already arrived at by the

Government that the Premier might reconsider his attitude which will have the effect of bringing all the timber hewers into one concentration camp, and instead give the men freedom to tender for those 400,000 sleepers. I cannot for the life of me understand the attitude of the late Minister for Works, for instance, in this connection. He desires to take away from this class of our community the right to work for themselves. It is against all their tenets.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: The Federal Government are cutting down the orders now.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not aware of what they are doing, but the reply which I have just quoted was given in the Federal House, and it was to the effect that there were still 400,000 sleepers required for the Trans-Australian railway.

The Premier: I do not think that was the answer given.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That was the answer given to Sir John Forrest.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: The order of the Federal Government was cut down from 4,000 to 2,000 per man.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That does not matter. The fact remains that the Federal Minister announced that 400,000 more sleepers were to be called for. I am protesting now, not in connection with the action of the Federal Government. The sleepers are required. I am protesting against the action of the present Government in refusing that freedom which the timber hewers consider is theirs, the right which I believe is theirs, the right to tender for these sleepers.

The Minister for Lands: You are making a special plea for Lewis and Reid; why not say so?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I hope the Minister for Lands will withdraw that offensive expression.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

The Minister for Lands: I withdraw.

The Premier: I think the question is what quantity was left, and what was proposed by the previous Government to let to small cutters, and the Minister's

reply was 400,000. The Minister assured me when I was in Melbourne that he did not know what to do with the sleepers already provided.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think I have read the question and the answer correctly. There was a direct question put as to the number of sleepers still to be provided in connection with the undertaking, and the reply given was 400,000. Be that right or wrong, be the number greater or smaller, the fact remains that our hewers are not permitted by the present Government to tender for these sleepers. The hewers have to work for the State Government, and I suggest with all humility that the Government are on the wrong track. They should give the men the right to work in the jarrah forests, and thus allow them to obtain the full result from their labours. To drive them into huge concentration camps and get a profit from their labour is special taxation with a vengeance which should not be inflicted on that class of labour. Then there are harbour extensions which might be put in hand.

The Premier: You are talking economy, and you are telling us how to spend millions.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I advise the Premier to sit quietly and listen and perhaps he will get some grains of wisdom out of the speech I am delivering. The harbour improvements are a class of work which might be undertaken if the Government have the means with which to carry them on. They are works which have been promised for the past three years, and which have been hung up for that period. The member for Bunbury, if he were here, and the member for Albany as well would bear me out in that respect. Promises have been made and the works have not been put in hand. We know that accommodation is lacking, but I want to advise the Government that if they desire that harmony they are asking for they must be frank with us and produce the plans and specifications and show us what they are going to do. What are the works to be carried

out at Albany and Bunbury? The people want to know what these works are, and their representatives are entitled to know. So far the information has been withheld, and I ask again that the plans and specifications of the harbour extensions should be placed immediately before Parliament so that members may be in a position to criticise them and perhaps suggest improvements. For instance, the extensions proposed at Bunbury are not filling the requirements or demands of that port. I know well that, although the plans were taken down there by the late Minister for Works in the shape of a pencil sketch of some description and placed before the municipal authorities, the authorities only fell in with them for the want of something better. The provision of one or two berths behind the sea mole—which the Minister has declared in a charge against us has swallowed up £200,000 of public money—is totally inadequate. I want to see the plans, and know what has been proposed, and I am only asking for the undoubted right of this Chamber to be conversant with the whole of the details of these proposed Government works. The main business is undoubtedly to assist our settlers and I understand now, whether rightly or wrongly—and the Premier will correct me if I am wrong—that the Agricultural Bank is refusing new applications from our settlers for assistance. This should not be the case, and some endeavour should be made to meet the legitimate requirements of the settlers who have not already approached that institution, as well as those already indebted to it. I should like to see the recommendations of the reclassification board acted upon promptly. These have been before Parliament, but have not been printed. The document was placed on the Table of the House last session, but nothing was done. The Premier announced that nothing would be done until the matter had been put before the electors. They went before the electors, and what was the result? There was no mention made of the reclassification board's recommendations.

The Premier: That is not correct. Your paper did not feel disposed to report Mr. Bath.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not own a paper. One at any rate expects the Premier in his policy speech to deal with a matter such as this, and not leave it to a colleague.

The Premier: Have you read the reclassification board's report?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes.

The Premier: Is it right?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In the main, yes, but I want to see it printed.

The Premier: We do not propose to adopt that course.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course the Premier does not propose to adopt anything suggested by this side of the House. I hope he has learnt his lesson, and that now he will adopt a more conciliatory spirit and be in a more chastened mood.

The Premier: Do you advocate the adoption of the report?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have told the Premier what I advocate. I come now to one great blot on the administration which raised a lot of controversy during the election campaign. I refer to the necessity for electoral reform. It is the duty of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the preparation of the rolls during the recent elections. The Commission should also go further and report upon the State of the rolls as we find them at the present time, and also to make recommendations as to the necessary steps to be taken in the direction of economising and rectifying all the errors we have suffered from. Without labouring the point the Premier and his colleagues must admit that the very fact that there were some 23,000 more names upon the rolls than the total adult population of the State shows clearly the necessity for a full inquiry. There were thousands of duplications and the figures for Geraldton showed many duplications.

Mr. Heitmann: Oh!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: So much fault was found with the rolls, which is only typical of other electorates—



The Premier: What is wrong with Canning and North Perth?

Mr. Foley: What is wrong with Perth itself?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Many votes were cast at Geraldton which ought not to have been cast. In the by-election in February, 1913, there were on the Assembly roll of that electorate 2,416 names. In the municipal census taken in the following May there were 2,583 adult men and women.

Mr. Heitmann: In the municipal boundary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: On election day, 21st October, there were on the roll 3,882 names, and let me emphasise the point that undoubtedly there were hundreds of names on the roll which ought not to have been there, by the fact that over 1,000 letters addressed by the Liberal candidate to addresses shown on the roll were returned, marked by the Post Office "left" or "unknown." That should not obtain in a small place like Geraldton. There ought not to be a single name on the Geraldton roll which cannot be found by the Postal Department, and yet over 1,000 such people could not be found.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Who was organising to put them on?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not matter; the point ought to be inquired into. Take North Perth; over 2,000 circulars were addressed to North Perth to names shown on the roll and were returned marked "left" or "unknown." This, too, out of a total of some 8,000 names. Surely that is sufficient justification for a searching inquiry, notwithstanding who may be to blame. I know full well that the Attorney General, in his controversy, blames me to some extent. I want to say that he is absolutely in error. As far as I was concerned I was not responsible in the slightest degree for the abandonment of the electoral census. I was not consulted in connection with it, and I think the statement made by the Colonial Secretary in the Upper House, when he introduced the amending clause providing for compulsory enrolment in the Bill at

that time before another place, bears me out in this contention. He said—

Owing to the war, the police in fairly large numbers have had to be called from the task of canvassing and placing people on the rolls of the State; consequently the electoral canvass was stopped, and the Premier approached the leader of the Opposition, and placed the position before him. It was agreed that the introduction of a measure for compulsory enrolment would be a good way out of the difficulty. If this course had not been taken the State would have been involved in the expenditure of £6,000 or £7,000 if private canvassers had had to be employed. The compulsory enrolment system appears to have worked well in the Commonwealth, and it would save a large expenditure in this State. At any rate, it will be of great assistance to the police force, in their efforts later on, when there is no war raging, in obtaining the enrolment of voters.

That is the position in a nutshell. The Premier will bear me out in this, that the only matter on which he consulted me was as to whether we should introduce a clause for compulsory enrolment into the measure then before Parliament, or transfer *holus-bolus* the names from the Federal rolls to our State rolls. He saw the danger and I saw the danger and objected to that course being adopted. Ultimately, however, that course was adopted because the measure which we passed in this Chamber, and to which a new clause was added in another place, was rejected by the late Minister for Lands without any words of explanation. I do not want to weary the House by going into details but we are in a hopeless muddle in the Electoral Department.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: Your organisation paid thousands of pounds to engage wasters to put people on the rolls.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the hon. member would look after the wasters in his own party, instead of making such statements, he might do some good. We have no wasters in our party.

Member: All the wasters and dead beats seem to get a job for you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Members of the Government should realise the responsibility of their position to the extent of seeing that the Electoral Department is properly organised and that the rolls are purified. We ought not to be asked to contest another election under the present condition of affairs, and no hon. member in his inmost heart would disagree with me that we should have a clean sweep out and a reorganisation of that department. The very fact that there were 23,000 more names on the rolls than there were adults in the State is sufficient argument in favour of a searching inquiry being instituted. When that inquiry is being made I would respectfully submit that we might go further and ask the Royal Commission to consider what methods might be adopted for the purpose of economising. Economy is the order of the day at the present time, or it ought to be. It seems to me that with some proper understanding, an amalgamation with the Federal Electoral Department might be made.

The Premier: You prevented that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I did not. The Premier makes all sorts of rash assertions.

The Premier: It is correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I suggest that there should be a Royal Commission to consider the question, and when going into the details it might be possible to suggest amalgamation which would work economically and save thousands of pounds to the State as well as to the Federal Government.

The Premier: Did not you say that economy should be the order of the day? A Royal Commission costs money.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It would be money well spent if it resulted in the saving of thousands of pounds. The Premier prefers to go muddling on in his own spendthrift way; he does not understand the rudiments of economy. His public declarations are all to the contrary. He does not care what happens. The deficit might be double the amount, and what cares he so long as he can maintain the rates of wages which he thinks ought to be paid?

The Premier: While I am here they will be maintained.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier has no consideration for laws of any description. It does not matter to him what the supply or the demand might be, whether there is work or not, whether it is reproductive or necessary; so long as he can obey the behests of the Trades Hall and bolster up his deficit, he does not care for the finances of the State. I want him in his calmer moments to think carefully over this matter.

Mr. Heitmann: In order to bring about an amalgamation between the Federal and State rolls, will you be prepared to wipe out the disabilities under which the State electors at present are?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know what the hon. member means.

The Attorney General: Would you give the Old Men's Depôt a vote?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the Federal Government would behave fairly and give them old age pensions, so that they could pay for their subsistence I think they should have a vote. If this were done they would be doing something for which we could give them credit.

Mr. Foley: Would you give them a vote? That is the question.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have pretty well thrashed out all the questions I wish to touch upon this evening. I desire to call the attention of the Premier to a paragraph in this morning's paper in connection with the war and trading with the enemy. The president of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce in an interview said—

There was a suspicion that a considerable portion of cargo may filter through from Germany to Italian ports of shipment . . . Italian tonnage was being offered to the State Government for the freighting of sleepers . . . . to South Africa.

I want the Premier to make inquiries into this statement and ascertain whether it is true, and make his position clear that the State Government, in common with the Federal Government, will support British vessels every time against any outsiders.

We cannot afford to take any risk. A circular has been sent around—

The Premier: Who made that statement?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Mr. John Stewart, the President of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce.

The Premier: I suppose you know he is connected with an Asiatic firm?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know and I do not think it is proper on the part of the Premier to make a statement of that sort; it is an insinuation. It may be quite honourable to be connected with an Asiatic firm. The question is whether the Government are negotiating with Italian steamers to convey sleepers to South Africa. I do not know whether it is true.

The Premier: I tell you it is not true.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I ask the Premier to make inquiries. According to the president of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce there is a serious danger of these vessels bringing contraband of war from Germany, if they are encouraged by the offer of return freights from the Government and citizens of this State.

Mr. Foley: You do not believe in employing Britishers in the mines, anyhow.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Hon. members know very well that I am British from head to foot.

The Premier: Where are the regiments from Kurrawang?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would be sorry to have my patriotism gauged by the hon. member.

Mr. George: The question is, is the hon. member's statement a fact?

Mr. James Gardiner: If this is peace, what is war?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not like this indication of the Kaiser's mailed fist. The Premier might also direct attention to the statement under the heading of "Finance and Commerce—In direct touch with Germany," that a circular letter has been received from a firm in Holland to the following effect:—

We beg to remind you that up till now Holland has been able to remain neutral. . . . We are very well situ-

ated in one of the largest shipping ports of the Continent, from where steamers leave for all parts of the world. Even now, during the war, ships under Dutch neutral flag are sailing to all parts of the world. Our splendid position enables us to be in direct touch with Germany, and at present we are able to communicate with all parts of this country.

The circular goes on to state that the writers represent certain firms and can get certain goods from Germany for shipment to Australia. This circular shows the reason for the comments made by the president of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Read that portion about the Italian ships carrying sleepers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier should give close attention to the matter and if any of our departments are doing anything which may open the door to assist contraband goods from Germany or other of the Empire's enemies to reach Australian shores, he should put a stop to it.

The Minister for Mines: Surely the hon. member takes it that a warning of that kind is not necessary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think it my duty to draw the attention of the Premier to this matter. I do not think that the experience of Ministers during the past three years has been such as to warrant us in sitting silently by and being convinced that their actions would be conducive to the best interests of the State.

The Premier: To what do you refer,

Hon. FRANK WILSON: To everything. I do not think there is one agreement, one contract, that they have entered into which has been for the benefit of the State. There is not one financial transaction that the Government have carried out that has been for the benefit of the State.

The Premier: The hon. member is trying to make it appear that we are not loyal, and that he is.

Hon. FRANK WILSON. The Premier is trying by innuendo to make it ap-

pear that I am disloyal, and I challenge him to pit his loyalty against mine.

Mr. Foley: You are unpatriotic enough when the war is on.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is marvellous how hon. members squirm in their seats. One may not speak for five minutes upon any of the important subjects which affect the whole of the people of this State without hon. members opposite squirming in their seats and squealing and biting like hyenas. I recommend, as I said before, that they should restrain their tempers and their extravagant language, and that they should set an example to members on this side of the House by their considerate and conciliatory manner. I should then be able to guarantee in return that courtesy, that consideration, which I ask members opposite to give us. I do not wish to dwell, as I said before, on the State finances, though they are in a parlous enough condition. We shall all have an opportunity of discussing them when the Budget comes along. I hope it will be brought down early, as early as possible. Five or six months of the financial year have already gone by, and notwithstanding a general election in the meantime, I think Ministers ought to have been ready with their Estimates in order that they might bring them down early. If the Premier wants a short session, a harmonious session, and a useful session, then my advice to him is to be prompt in bringing down his financial proposals, so that the House may be able to discuss them. With these words, I leave the question of the Address-in-reply and His Excellency's Speech. The Speech itself is an excellent one. It now remains for the Government to so administer and carry out that Speech that they will be able to increase the confidence of the people in them and the confidence of old members and those new members who have been returned to the Assembly.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [8.3]: The small party which I have the honour of representing was returned at the polls with a definite charter. That charter was to remain a separate party, to be known as the Country party. Now,

if we void by any act of ours that charter we will be betraying the trust which has been reposed in us, and we will be violating our own honour and the corporate honour of our party. This plain statement will, I hope, silence those interested and disinterested people who are trying to influence our attitude in this House. Whilst that is our party attitude the Government and the members of the House have a right to know what our intentions are. We believe that, at the present juncture, and in view of the extraordinary circumstances under which this State finds itself, it is the wish of the people of this State that there shall be a legitimate truce, and the people are looking to the collective wisdom, integrity, earnestness and work of this Parliament as a whole to get Western Australia out of her present difficulties and put her again on the high road to prosperity. In London at the present juncture, and during the present crisis, the common sense of the people insisted that there should be an elimination of all party lines. We are here with a very large and growing deficit—and it seems to me that that deficit is developing some of the proclivities of Jonah's gourd, in that it seems to be growing in the night time—and with an almost immediate cessation of public borrowing, or limitation of public borrowings, and with the worst season this State has ever known, and as a result of that season the earning capacity of many of our public ventures must be diminished, owing to the worst war the world has ever known. In these circumstances, therefore, I think the common sense of the community is going to demand from this Parliament the elimination of party lines, and ask that every man in this House shall give the very best that is in him in order to meet the difficulties in the interests of the State. Now, on the hustings I and other members of my party made this promise: that whether a Labour Government or Liberal Government were returned to power, in all these measures which had for their object the betterment of this State they could rely upon our earnest and hearty assistance in every

way. The country in its wisdom has returned the Labour party to power, and we are willing, so far as we are concerned, to respect and keep the promise that we made. We are not concerned with the faults of the present administration or those of its predecessors, other than where with riper experience those altered circumstances have shown their faults—real faults, not imaginary faults—to use these faults as finger posts of danger in order to prevent their repetition in the future. But to-day we recognise that we have to take our share of the responsibility for any acts of this House. In the future whatever acts of administration are brought before us, or of legislation which are brought before the House, it will be our duty to criticise them fearlessly and faithfully, and, I hope, justly, recognising behind these acts honesty of intention. I think our obligation at the present juncture goes even further than that, for that is only destructive criticism. Now, I say that in the present circumstances, in making this promise to the House and when the particular circumstances have been overcome, if there is any fighting going on I wish it to be known that I want to be in it. At the present juncture we recognise that if amongst our party there is any special knowledge that can be used for the betterment of any of the acts of the Legislature or of administration that are brought before this House the Government of the day have a right to come to us and ask us to give that knowledge fearlessly, and rely upon our giving it to them as straightforwardly as if we were members of that party. This is an obligation in a crisis such as this, where littleness is not going to count, and when men are trying to be men in the full stature of their responsibility. The supreme test of any Government's capability is this, not only that they shall be able to borrow and spend in prosperity, but that they shall be able to administer in times of adversity. In ordinary times in preserving strict party lines, we would be fully justified in allowing Ministers and their followers to be held re-

sponsible for every act committed by them and in judging them accordingly. But these are times when it is not fair to put any Government to the supreme test—not fair at all. There has been a combination of circumstances forced upon us, and at the present juncture to put any Government to that supreme test would be asking them to do something supreme and almost superhuman. Therefore, we recognise as a party that under the circumstances in which the State is placed the obligation falls upon us to put our shoulders under some portion of the load and help the Government to carry it. That is our obligation. If we are in fact honest and sincere—and if our promises are not lip promises only, but have something substantial behind them, and we intend to fulfil our promises—in our intentions we shall all be willing to place our obligations to the State before our obligations to the party. If we do this, then there is an equal obligation thrust upon the Government to take us, this House, and this country into their confidence and tell us what they are going to do on these material points. They have got to tell us what their attitude is going to be with reference to the industries, and what their attitude is going to be in relation to the unemployment question. They have also to present a clear and faithful statement of the condition of the State finances. These are the obligations which I am sure the Government will admit is a fair thing for those of us to expect who are willing to take our responsibility and to do what we can to assist them. Dealing with the industries I think the Government are quite seized of the fact that if we are going to get out of our present position it will be through the development not of one particular industry, but of all our industries. I think the Government realise that if, at the present juncture, these industries are given careful assistance, so that those concerned in them should be able to a certain extent to husband their resources, because they are producing the world's supplies, supplies which have a world market, when the war is over they will be able to take full advantage

of the depleted markets of the world, and that any risks which we take at this time will be amply repaid by the profits that will come to the general community as a result of that assistance. I want to mention the industries which are, at the present juncture, entitled to the consideration alike of the Government and of the State. There is the agricultural, the pastoral, the timber, the pearling, the copper, the fruit, the tin, and the coal industries, and last, and by no means least, the gold industry.

Mr. McDowall: Which ought to be first.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: We will agree to differ on that point. Everyone of those industries at the present juncture has some claim upon the Government, due to the circumstances which prevent it from taking full advantage of that which is produced. I want to say quite clearly and quite emphatically that no one industry at the present juncture has a right to expect Government consideration and assistance to the exclusion of other industries. I said to the workers the other day, and I am going to say it here to those people who represent industries, that there is no obligation upon the Government to give any industry ideal assistance under ideal terms and guarantee the industry ideal results. Here again I shall give exactly the same advice. Each one of these industries, and the members who are interested in them, must, as far as possible, protect the Government against the loafer. I tell those members just as I told the working men, "Eliminate those men, and let it be clearly understood that it is not the obligation of any Government to provide money for the purpose of giving ideal assistance to individuals." Each industry must be treated fairly, but it must be treated in a relative position. It must be treated in accordance with its relative value to the State and the State's prosperity. That is with regard to primary industries. Then we have the subsidiary industries, the industries which rely upon the primary industries, and then again we have the secondary industries. I believe there

is a general desire to keep all the wheels of industry going in this State, and consequently those subsidiary and secondary industries are entitled to consideration, just the same as are the primary industries; but the former are entitled to consideration only in their relative position as regards the future prosperity of this State. I hope that the House will agree, and agree unanimously, that if there is any future for this State of Western Australia, the Government can take a fair amount of risk in helping all the industries; because their markets, as I say, are the markets of the world. If seasons turn, and we sincerely hope they will turn, then the Government will get back all the money they are advancing. They will have assisted to keep the people in their avocations, and probably get full interest. When we take into consideration the responsibility of assisting the whole of these industries, I do not care how capably the Government benches may be filled, the Government will find that they are called on to perform a stupendous task.

The Premier: Hear, hear.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I do not care how capable the Ministers may be, their task is a stupendous one. I do not want to see the industries assisted in any spasmodic fashion or as the result of importunity. Believing that there is honest co-operation in this House, I shall offer a suggestion which I hope will meet with the approval of the Government, and of the House generally. We have in this Chamber 50 members. As I look around, I see that each one of the industries of Western Australia has a representative here. Now, I assume that at the present juncture the Government ought to have the right to call on the representative of each industry to give the assistance of his expert advice towards propounding a scheme, in conjunction with the Minister controlling the industry, for its assistance.

The Premier: But where would a man be as Treasurer under those conditions?

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Please hear me out for a minute. I am assuming that when the Government have obtained the

full results of such assistance they are going to make some sort of allocation among the various industries.

The Premier: If I consult a member and do not accept his advice—

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Kindly hear me to the end, The position would be this. Those members would go to the Minister, but only as consulting members. The Minister would check each of the schemes, and as the result the Government would see exactly what it was going to cost them to meet the circumstances and to advance the necessary funds. Then the Government would submit their proposals to Parliament, and Parliament would take the responsibility of granting the assistance. May I say that this is the plan which is being followed almost everywhere? In South Australia, on the wheat question the Government called in all the assistance they could get; and anyone reading the debates in the South Australian Parliament will observe with pleasure how members on both sides of the Chamber offered their assistance and how that assistance was welcomed by the Government.

The Premier: That is ideal.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I am saying it is ideal, but I think this is the time when, if we are to do anything, we must work together, and offer practical assistance to the Government. Let us pay this House the compliment of saying that we as 50 members here can select from amongst us sufficient representatives of each industry to make suggestions that will serve to keep the industry alive with the support of the Premier behind it.

The Premier: That point is vital to the issue. You have heard only one member to-night, and he proposed an expenditure of 10 millions.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Now we come to a non-party question, and that is the question of the unemployed. So far as they are concerned, we will gladly give any assistance; but I say in a spirit of absolute candour that we will be most uncompromising opponents of the spend-

ing of money merely for the purpose of giving employment.

The Premier: Hear, hear. So are we.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: We shall be absolutely in accord with this arrangement, and the Premier can rely on our supporting him to the last in that respect. If I may say so, I am inclined to agree with the leader of the Opposition on the question of workers' homes at the present juncture. I do not say that workers should not have homes. I did not say that workers should not have homes in the times when the homes were started, in view of the rents that workers had to pay. However, having regard to the position of the property market of Western Australia at the present time, a position which is within the knowledge of every member representing a suburban constituency, I think it would be a wise proceeding if the workers' homes were for the present discontinued, except to this extent, that the Government have a right to complete homes for which they have entered into an arrangement.

The Premier: Will you agree, on the other hand, to a board to fix rents?

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I do not think that would be an unwise thing.

The Premier: I am prepared to stop the erection of workers' homes immediately, if you will guarantee that we can protect the workers who have to pay rents.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: At the present time I am inclined to think rents are going to fix themselves, and fix themselves very low. There are certain instances, I know, where the rents that have had to be paid by people who were—

The Premier: A rent of £1 a week was paid by a man getting 4s. 6d. a day.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: On the other hand, though, could a man getting 4s. 6d. a day afford to live in a comfortable house?

The Premier: He has to live somewhere.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: But is it fair to him, or to you as Treasurer, that

he should pay a rent of £1 a week? Would you perpetuate that?

The Premier: No, certainly not.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Then we are agreed there, too.

The Premier: I want you to keep to your bargain, though.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The Premier need not worry about that. I think that is one of the few proclivities I have, to stick to my end of a bargain. I think that the object both of the Liberal and of the Labour party was that workers should have homes at reasonable rents.

The Premier: Will you put them to the test?

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I do not want to go back into the past and get into trouble over things that do not now concern us. I do honestly think, however, that the intention was to erect workers' homes, not palaces. However, do not let there be any controversy over this. I do not deny the workers' right to live in a comfortable home.

The Premier: That is all the homes are.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Some of them are more elaborate, I think, than they ought to be.

The Premier: That is where you find the difference in the cost of construction. The whole of the security belongs to the Workers' Homes Board, and where the board has advanced £500 it has as security a house worth £1,000.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: That is excellent security. I do not want to worry you, but I ask you—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to address himself to the Chair.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I do not wish to labour the question, because we shall be able to deal with it on the Estimates, and probably more fully. So far as the unemployed are concerned, we want this, that every relief work shall have in it the germ of bringing back some prosperity to this State. I do not suppose that any work the Government have in hand is likely to pay interest and sinking fund from the word "go."

Mr. S. Stubbs: Why not?

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Will the railway that the hon. member interjecting wants to construct to Lake Grace in a few days pay interest and sinking fund?

Mr. S. Stubbs: Yes, if you clear the land in the vicinity.

Mr. Bolton: That railway will not pay axle grease, for a start.

Mr. S. Stubbs: If land is cleared in the vicinity, the line will pay from the very jump.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I am satisfied that there is a lot of public works that will not pay from the word "go." We recognise that, and must recognise it. Subject to the reservations I have indicated, we are prepared to assist the Government in every possible way upon this understanding. We must have a clear understanding that the Government will state what measure of assistance all the industries are going to receive, and that the Government tell us what that assistance will cost; then, in addition—and it is an absolutely necessary reservation—that the Government place before this House a clear and complete statement of the finances, showing what balances of loan money remain, what commitments there are, and the nature of the works in hand, and the liabilities on them. I presume all this will be done in the Treasurer's Budget speech. We desire also to be informed which, if any, of the works authorised at present the Government think can wait for a better time. When we come to the Estimates of revenue and expenditure, I would strongly advise the Premier to realise that the earning power of the Government departments is going to decrease enormously. Therefore, in any Estimates that the hon. gentleman may place before this House, he should not allow any glamour to be in his eyes, but rather let some of our friend's pessimism enter into the consideration. In addition, we want to know what means the Government intend to adopt in order to stop the present drift. After all, it need hardly be pointed out how serious this is. Every Treasurer feels the seriousness of his position; and, after all, the Treasurer is only a director of the affairs of this State. I may point out,



further, that some of the shareholders are getting just a bit panicky. They want to know when this drift is going to stop; and I think the present a fitting time, whether this Ministry or another Ministry is in power, to impress on Ministers that, after all, the revenues of the State are only trust funds held by Ministers in trust for the people of the State. Those funds are not royal largesse to be distributed at the sweet will of any person, or for any purpose other than that of the general welfare. Next, we want balance-sheets of the trading concerns.

The Premier: You will get them, too.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The excuses which the Premier has given up to the present do not satisfy me, or, I think, satisfy the people of the State. I am prepared to make this offer: if the Government have not got in their trading concerns men capable of preparing a balance-sheet, I will go down and get it out for them myself. If the Government claim that these things have been a success, let them prove that to us and we shall stop our criticism at once.

Mr. Bolton: But they will always dispute the figures.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If they have been a success, we say, let us examine them.

The Premier: Those people over there will argue with headstrong language even with Knibb's figures.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: We say, let us go into these concerns and if there are any of them which show any legitimate chance of success under probably altered circumstances, continue them, but if there are those that are conclusively proving themselves unprofitable ventures, let us do with them what we would do in our own businesses, cut our loss. I can assure hon. members that we are not harassing the Minister for Lands so far as our own industry is concerned. I do not believe that is the best way to get information. I think it is our right to go to the Minister and try to assist him, and I know that at the present juncture the Minister for Lands is confronted with some of the knottiest problems it has been his good or bad luck to be up against,

and he is doing his best to meet them. But we want to know clearly and exactly where we are, and I am sure the Minister will tell us later on. If the Government places before this House a clear financial statement, a statement such as we feel our honour says shall be placed here, then I venture to say the people of this State will insist that we shall all take a hand in assisting the Government to make the position of the State absolutely right, and if we fail under those circumstances to do so we are going to put such an indelible stain on our own competency that the State will be perfectly justified in clearing out the whole 50 of us and putting in 50 who are more competent. If I sense the temper of the country to-day, it is this: they do not want legislation, they want administration. They do not want members to be obsessed with the difficulties confronting them; they rather want them to be impressed with the bigness of the country's possibilities, and I honestly believe that the temper of the people to-day is that they do not want any narrow party outlook or loyalty to be a shibboleth to interfere between this State and its obvious destiny, and its obvious destiny is the development to the full of her primary, subsidiary, and secondary industries.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.35 p.m.*