

**BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

**Legislative Assembly.**

Thursday, 16th May, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

**BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

Third Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [4.35]: I move—

"That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [4.36]: I rise to oppose the third reading of the Bill at the present juncture. In an important measure like this we should see a fair print of the Bill. I am surprised that it has not been made available before now, so that we could see exactly what has been done. Never in the history of this Parliament has a Bill received the same treatment as this measure has received. It is a measure which affects the whole of the people of the State, which involves a great deal of taxation, which places heavy responsibilities and heavy burdens on the citizens of Western Australia, and which taxes people who were never taxed before and were unable to pay that tax, and who are, therefore, unable to pay it now. It is a measure which has been emasculated to such purpose that its parents would never recognise it, or at any rate a great portion of it. It is a measure which has been taken out of the hands of the Treasurer in his absence from the State, and the Treasurer stated that if this measure was interfered with he would not continue to hold his position. This is a measure concerning which the Government have been dictated to and dominated by a party. I could say a great deal on this point if I were not prevented from doing so by the Standing Orders. I could not speak in connection with this measure without rightfully casting reflections in certain directions, if I were permitted so to do, and without saying things which under our Standing Orders it is impossible for any member to be allowed to say in this Chamber.

The Attorney General: How about suspending the Standing Orders?

Mr. HOLMAN: It is a pity that the men who are supporting the present Government in their

unjust taxation, and placing burdens upon the shoulders of the people who should not be taxed at the present stage, do not realise their position, and hark back to their statements of only a few months ago when they reviled the very men to whom they are cringing and crawling at present.

The Minister for Works: You know that is incorrect.

Mr. HOLMAN: It is absolutely right. It would be impossible to see a more degrading spectacle than has occurred during the passage of this Bill. I should like to have heard some of those hon. members speak if they had been in opposition to the present Government. Their wrath would have been boundless, and have involved the Chamber in a scene which it has never witnessed before. We have this measure brought into the Chamber containing 27 clauses, including the title, together with the fact that it had to be read as one with the principal Act. We then find that the Government come down, in the absence from the State of the Treasurer, and place on the Notice Paper 27 other amendments. There is slightly over 100 per cent., on the average, of amendments to this Bill. During the passage of the measure through the Chamber almost an equal number of other amendments was moved in Committee. Here we have a Bill brought into this House containing all these clauses—

Hon. P. Collier: There was only the title left.

Mr. HOLMAN: There was practically only the title left of the original Bill. Yet, after it has been twisted and turned and dragged into some shape, no one in the Chamber knows what has been done to it, because opportunities were taken to force the Government into a position which no Government with any self-respect would tolerate for a moment.

The Minister for Works: The only attempt at force has been from your side.

Mr. HOLMAN: I defy the Minister for Works to say that any opposition has been shown to any just legislation from this side of the House during the session.

The Minister for Works: What do you call the opposition of the last few days?

Mr. HOLMAN: The last few days represented a protest against the prostitution of Parliamentary power. We have witnessed the most degrading spectacle of a Ministry, which is supposed to be governing a self-governing State, swallowing anything which was placed before it for the purpose of keeping in office.

The Minister for Works: We would not swallow you.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister could not do so, although there would be enough slime in him to swallow anything—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOLMAN: Because that is characteristic of him.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order, I object to that statement. The hon. member has no right to talk about slime in any hon. member. It is offensive to me.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the point of order?

The Minister for Works: I want those words withdrawn.

Hon. P. Collier: What words?

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the House has taken exception to the remark by the member for Murchison as to there being enough slime in him for him to swallow anything. I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. HOLMAN: I withdraw the words I used to the effect that *slime is coming from the hon. member*. If the Minister for Works had kept to himself his interjections about swallowing me he might have rested a little more comfortably in his seat.

The Minister for Works: I said I would not swallow you and do not intend to do so.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister could not do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in the Bill about swallowing.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister for Works has already swallowed enough from the Country party in connection with this measure, and there is no room in him to swallow any more. The only time the Minister for Works will swallow anything is when he has to swallow something to keep in office, just as he has done on this occasion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He crucified the member for Sussex.

Mr. HOLMAN: I was dealing with the fact that we have a measure brought down here containing 27 clauses. There were 27 amendments on the Notice Paper and most of them were passed. Clauses were struck out of the Bill and alterations made everywhere. Therefore, we should have a fair print of the Bill before the third reading is passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I might draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that the same procedure is being adopted in connection with this Bill as with every other. I have a fair print of the Bill as certified to by the Chairman of Committees in the same form as other Bills have been certified after they have passed the Committee stage.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am aware that the same procedure has been carried out by yourself, Mr. Speaker, but you know as well as I do that on a number of occasions, when important Bills have passed through the Committee stage and have been amended, the third reading has been held over for some time, at any rate until a re-print of the Bill has been obtained. That should always be done in connection with measures which are of more than ordinary importance. The measure we are discussing now was introduced by Mr. Gardiner, the Treasurer, and Mr. Gardiner has been absent from this State for some time. We were assured by the Treasurer before he went away that it was his intention to carry this measure through. What has been the result? During the Treasurer's absence exemptions have been made in directions where they should never have been made, and relief has been refused those able least to bear the taxation, while benefits have been granted those to whom it was never intended to give it. We do not know now whether the Treasurer will stand by this Bill or not. Hardly one clause in it to-day, is as it was when the Treasurer left the State. No fewer than 27 amendments appeared on the Notice Paper and almost all of them have been carried. There have also been carried amendments which were not on the Notice Paper while some clauses have been struck out. Surely, therefore, we should be entitled to have some consideration shown us. We should have an opportunity of seeing a clean print of the Bill before we agree to the third reading. This is the machinery measure and unless the taxation measure itself is passed, the machinery measure will be worthless. Why should we pass the third reading to-day? There is no necessity for doing that to-day. On previous occasions when the taxation measure, and the assessment measure have been before the House, the third reading

stages have invariably been taken on the same day. Why the haste on this occasion, may I ask? We can go on with the second reading of the taxation Bill and then dispose of the third reading stages of both measures at the same time. Hon. members will not know what they will be discussing in connection with the Taxation Bill itself until they see a fair print of the Assessment Bill. There is a good deal of other business we can go on with, so no harm will follow if the third reading stage is postponed. Moreover, the energies of the clerks of the House have been taxed to the utmost by the lateness of the previous sitting, and in justice to them they should be given the opportunity of perusing a reprint of the measure to see that the amendments have been correctly made.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We must put our trust in the Chairman as well.

Mr. HOLMAN: Certainly, but it is utterly impossible with such a flood of amendments not to expect an error to occur.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member I hope is not reflecting on the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. HOLMAN: Certainly not. I am too well aware of the strenuous duties the Chairman has to perform; but is it not possible for mistakes to be made when we remember that during a long sitting the Chairman has to be relieved on several occasions? The clerks, of course, attend to these matters, but as I have stated every assistance should be given them to see that members are presented with a correct print of the Bill, seeing that it was almost torn to shreds in Committee. That practice has always been followed whenever a Bill has been massacred in Committee as the Assessment Bill was last evening. Were we passing only the taxation measures, and were we at the closing hours of the session, there would be no room for argument. We would make our protest and be content, but the end of the session is still a long way off and the House has a good deal of other business to deal with. Therefore, the third reading stage can well stand over until next Tuesday and hon. members will have an opportunity of seeing exactly what the measure looks like in its unmasculated form. Again, there may be a necessity for the Government to recommit the measure when they have seen a fair print of it. Even the acting Treasurer himself, learned in the law as he is, can hardly be aware of the full extent of the amendments which have been made to the measure.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is quite fair in making those statements because it is a reflection on the Chairman of Committees. As I stated before, I have a certificate that this is a fair print in accordance with the Bill as agreed to in Committee. Now the House is following precisely the same course as is always followed in connection with other Bills. Ever since I have been in Parliament a re-print of a Bill has never been distributed to hon. members on the third reading stage. Hon. members never see it again unless it comes back from the Legislative Council with amendments.

Mr. HOLMAN: With all due respect to you, Mr. Speaker, I know that Bills on many occasions have been distributed here on the third reading stage. Moreover, and I say this with all due respect, I am addressing the House as I have a perfect right to do as a representative of the people so long as I conform to the Standing Orders. I did not refer to the Chairman of Committees. What I said was that the amendments were so numerous that the Attorney General himself would not be

able to tell us what the effect of them were without seeing a re-print of the Bill. I am surprised, therefore, when a member is doing his duty, to find the Speaker taking up such a stand. I say that with all due humility, and I regret that you, Mr. Speaker, should have interrupted me.

Mr. SPEAKER: My only desire was to help the hon. member.

Mr. HOLMAN: If I require your help, Mr. Speaker, I will not hesitate to ask for it. I will always bow to your ruling and I can assure you that if I am in difficulties I will not hesitate to seek your advice. I am sure that if you, Mr. Speaker had been in my position you would have adopted a similar attitude and spoken in even more forcible language than I am capable of doing. I have already told the House that there were 27 amendments on the Notice Paper, that several were moved by the member for Katanning and others were moved by other hon. members, of which no notice was given. Some were agreed to and some were rejected, yet we are asked to pass the third reading to-day without being given an opportunity of seeing what the Bill looks like in its altered form. I am entering an emphatic protest against such a procedure. This measure will affect the whole population of the State. Some of the amendments which have been passed will materially affect the revenue by thousands of pounds, and in fairness to the Treasurer himself we should hold up the measure now until he returns. I would not be doing my duty if I did not enter my protest against the unseemly haste which is being displayed by the Government in connection with the third reading stage. There was nothing whatever to prevent them putting this Bill further down the Notice Paper, and it could have been reached simultaneously with the third reading stage of the Taxation Bill. We have only half the Government here at the present time and we do not know what their financial policy is.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They do not know themselves.

Mr. HOLMAN: We know full well that there are grave financial difficulties ahead of us and these have to be faced firmly. We know too that the amendments which have been made to the Assessment Bill must put the Government in a very tight corner. We know that without finance the country will soon become bankrupt. The Treasurer himself told us that if the measure which he introduced was passed we would get from it a certain amount of revenue, but there have been so many exemptions made that the financial position will be altered altogether. The difference must run into many thousands of pounds. The "West Australian" in its leading article only this morning drew attention to the fact that as the result of one of last night's amendments the State will lose no less a sum than £30,000 and this is to be practically given back to those who are well able to pay.

The Attorney General: And do you think that is correct.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not know, but where there is so much doubt and when the leading newspaper of the State adopts such an attitude, we are justified in asking for a little further time to consider the Bill in its altered form. I do not know whether they are correct or not, and I defy the Attorney General to say at present how far-reaching all the amendments in the measure will be in affecting revenue. This is a matter of direct importance to the Government themselves. It is not a Government measure. It did not emanate from the Government. It has been torn in shreds

and patched up. We do not know exactly what the patches mean. We do not know what revenue we are to get under the measure, in fact, we do not know where we are. With a view of testing the House to see whether it will blindly accept anything put before it, or demand an opportunity for properly discussing the question, I move an amendment—

"That 'now' be struck out with a view of inserting other words."

I do this, not with the idea of obstructing the passage of the measure, for I realise we must have taxation, but because I have a perfect right to enter my protest against the passing of measures without full consideration. Consider the importance of some of the amendments dealt with last night. One meant a difference of £8,000 or £10,000 and others meant as much and even more. Surely we should be entitled to some reasonable opportunity for closely investigating the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5-3]: I second the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George) Murray-Wellington [5-4]: I do not propose to follow the hon. member's flight of fancy, nor do I wish to deny that if he chooses to think it in good taste, he is at liberty to take the course he has. But I want to enter a protest against his statement that the Bill has been unduly rushed through. A few weeks ago the House decided that we should put the Standing Orders on one side in order that we might take a Bill through all stages in one sitting if necessary. That has been done in this case.

Mr. Holman: You could not do it, for you had to get a new Bill printed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No one who wishes his words to have full credence can say that the discussions which have taken place on the several stages of this Bill have not been full. I am not going to insult the intelligence of the House by supposing for a moment that hon. members did not know what they were doing when they voted on it. Hon. members opposite gave us criticism; some of it was not very relevant, but they gave it to us just the same, and all the points were discussed and voted upon. There is no real reason why the course taken by the hon. member should have been adopted. He has said there is another Bill to discuss upon which this is contingent. If that Bill is cast out by the House, then of course this Bill will not operate; but to say that because there is another Bill which in a measure is attached to this one we must stop our work till we see what the fate of the other Bill may be is to ask the House to come to no decision on any matter whatever. If that course were carried through to its logical conclusion, our proceedings on every measure would be stultified. I ask the House to negative the amendment of the hon. member and let us get through with this Bill and get on to the next. If I felt there had been any undue haste in pushing the Bill through I would not be so confident, but I am not of that opinion at all. I do not wish to indulge in recrimination if I can help it, because I think the consideration of this matter is now beyond the stage for formal speeches. We have gone through it as a business proposition and I hope the House will reject the amendment.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5-7]: The protest made by the member for Murchison was not without substantial justification. Certainly there is no urgent need why the third reading of the Bill should be taken to-day. If another place

were waiting for work to go on with I could understand the anxiety of the Government to get this Bill over there at the earliest possible moment; but a glance at the Notice Paper of another place shows to us that that House has work sufficient to engage them for the next week or two, quite independent of whether they receive this Bill or not. Therefore, if for that reason alone, the Government might well hold over the third reading until a later date. There is nothing to be gained by forcing it through to-day. I am not going to say that any mistakes have been made, for of course I accept the certificate of the Chairman of Committees that this is a true copy of the Bill as amended in Committee, but there are other reasons why time should be given for consideration of the Bill. As a matter of fact, I think the Bill ought to proceed no further until we have the Premier and the Treasurer back amongst us. The two principal Ministers concerned, the Premier of the State and the Treasurer, who is intimately interested in this discussion of the measure, are absent from the State.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Surely that is Ministerial responsibility, not ours.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But we remember very well the attitude adopted by the Government on a former occasion this year when the business of the House was entirely suspended because of the absence of the Treasurer from the State. That in itself is evidence that the Government rely to a very great extent, if not wholly, upon the advice of the Treasurer on financial matters. If the House were unable to proceed with any financial measures whatever during the former absence of the Treasurer, only three or four months ago, then surely the Treasurer has not fallen to such an extent in the estimation of his colleagues and those on that side, that they feel they can now get on, not only without his assistance, but apparently the better for his absence. It is a remarkable change of attitude.

The Attorney General: He had to go to Melbourne on that occasion to find what money was available.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is not my point. I am not arguing that he had no justification for being out of the State then, nor that he has not justification for being out of the State now. He was over there dealing with loan moneys.

The Attorney General: That is why these Bills were then held up.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not at all. It was because the Government were unable to proceed on financial questions during his absence. More particularly should the House refuse to consider these proposals any further during the absence of the Treasurer in view of the manner in which the Treasurer's mature judgment as expressed in the Bill, has been entirely set aside.

The Minister for Works: Would you have accepted the whole of the Bill if the Treasurer were here?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, because I do not accept any responsibility whatever for the drafting of it; but if I had been a member of the Government that discussed and digested it for months and drafted the Bill and brought it to the House, I would have accepted full responsibility for it and would not have deserted it in the miserable fashion in which it has been deserted by the Treasurer's colleagues during his absence. It is only fair to the Treasurer that we should not proceed any further with the Bill until he returns and has an opportunity of viewing the handiwork

of the Committee as directed in some instances by his colleague the deputy leader of the House. Last night we had the spectacle of the deputy leader of the House frequently finding himself in division on the side opposite his colleague the acting Treasurer.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He was very generous, he voted with you sometimes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is all very well, but in view of the radical wholesale departure this House has thought fit to take from the Bill as brought down by the Treasurer, this House led by the Government, who in turn were led by the cross benches, in view of that fact—

The Minister for Works: It is not a fact.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a fact. What were the Government doing for four hours in a meeting upstairs discussing the Bill?

The Minister for Works: Doing their business.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is the place in which to do their business after Bills have been laid before the House, this place and not behind the sealed doors of a caucus, not in following the methods which the hon. member has spent the whole of his political life in condemning. He and most of his colleagues have maintained their political existence by condemning the very methods they have adopted in regard to the Bill.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no denying it. I should like too, that the Premier should have an opportunity of saying whether, after all, he is prepared to accept the Bill as amended by the Committee. I doubt very much if the Treasurer and the Premier would be prepared to go any further with the Bill after the manner in which it has been riddled during the last few days. I take the first opportunity of saying that, viewing the Bill as it left our hands last night, it is highly desirable that we should not proceed any further with the measure. There is another point, and it seems to me that cannot be got over. If the Bill that is set down for consideration this afternoon, the Income Tax Bill, is not passed in this House, where is the Assessment Bill with which we have been dealing for the last two days? It will have to go into the waste paper basket. The Bill of which we are now discussing the third reading is contingent upon the passing of the Income Tax Bill. Unless the Income Tax Bill is passed, this Bill is of no use whatever, is merely waste paper. If the Income Tax Bill fails to pass we of necessity have to go back upon the existing Land and Income Tax Assessment Act. Let us not waste the time of the House by carrying this Bill any further until we know what the fate of the other Bill is to be. When the Land and Income Tax Act was originally passed, in 1907, the third reading of the measure was not taken for something like a week after it had passed through Committee. It remained on the Notice Paper for several days, until the House had had an opportunity of discussing the other Bill. If they were short of work in another place, I would not blame the Government for getting on with this Bill and sending it over. But, judging from the progress being made in another place with certain other Government measures, it seems that members there will not be in a position to deal with this matter for three or four weeks. Again, the conference of Premiers and Treasurers is now over, having concluded its business yesterday; and I presume that the Premier and the Treasurer will be back in this State some time next week, possibly on Monday. Particularly if the Treasurer is going back to

Melbourne to attend another conference in July, he will make his way over here at the earliest possible moment. The Premier and the Treasurer on their return will be able to consider what should be done with regard to this Bill, in the light of the manner in which it has been dealt with during their absence. That is the position, and I shall vote against the third reading.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [5.21]: It appears to me that the Government in asking that the third reading of this Bill be taken to-day prior to the discussion of the other Bill which is to engage our attention as soon as this measure has been disposed of, are putting the cart before the horse. I hold the opinion, also, that it would be wise for this House, no matter what conflict of opinion has been in evidence during the discussion on the measure and its amendments, to await the return of the Treasurer. He is the man responsible for the financial solvency of Western Australia, and it is at a time like this we should be especially loyal to the Treasurer in the matter of any proposals he has to make. He is to-day the financial mouth-piece of Western Australia in the Eastern States. It is quite true that when he attended previous conferences the business of the House was hung up. Personally I do not incline to a one-man Government. Indeed, I remember being rapped over the knuckles by Mr. Scaddan because at one time I, as one of the supporters of his Government, suggested that the business of Parliament could go on in his absence. However, the present Premier, in addition to the Treasurer, is absent from the State. During their absence, the dictators of the Government have run amok. They have taken the business out of the hands of those responsible to this House for putting statements before us, and as a result there is no one in Western Australia to-day could recognise this Bill as it emerged from this Chamber last evening. Consequently, I think we should be most careful, and if time will allow of our exercising caution, we should exercise caution in going on with this Bill, at all events until its original sponsor returns. I know that if the Treasurer were in this House to-day, he would be voicing his protest in the same way as the leader of the Opposition has done.

The Minister for Works: How do you know that?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Because I have been speaking with the Treasurer, and know that he has absolutely no sympathy whatever with the way in which this measure has been hacked about. He evidently had an idea that something was going to be done with it in his absence, and something has been done with it during his absence. The fact is that the acting leader of the House was told a few days ago what he was to do with this measure. There has been no semblance of leadership in this Chamber latterly. We do not know where one Minister stands relatively to another.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the third reading of this Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It may not have anything to do with the question before the Chamber, but the people of Western Australia

will have to groan under the taxation which is being levied, and they have a right to know whether an alternative method cannot be devised to get Western Australia out of her financial difficulties. Very little attention is being paid to this phase of the subject to-day. Unfortunately, Western Australia is dependent on primary production, and every one of our industries, with the exception of the pastoral industry, is reeling under blows received from various quarters—from the war, from climatic causes, and from bad government. Only one of our industries is in a buoyant condition to-day; and yet it is proposed, in spite of our disadvantageous position as compared with the people of the Eastern States, to levy toll on those amongst us who are least able to bear it. The workers of this State are to be asked under this Bill, which is not the Government Bill originally introduced, to find a sum of £75,000 per annum, which they were not obliged to find previously. That sum will have to come out of their cupboards, and very naturally the people will ask whether there is not another method of working out our financial salvation. Personally I think there is no such urgent hurry that this measure could not stand over for its third reading until the return of the Treasurer, the man to whom we look, the man picked out by his colleagues to manage the finances of this country. Even if the Treasurer were not returning within a few days, however, members, whether sitting on this side of the House or on that, if they disagree with a certain piece of legislation, have a right to oppose that legislation at every stage. Is not that admitted?

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is right, of course.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Consequently, I am taking this opportunity of pointing out to the House that it would be instructive to the people of Western Australia if the Treasurer were enabled to give this House—and he is responsible to this House—his opinion as to the effect of these amendments which have been made in the measure during his absence. It would be instructive to the people to learn whether the amendments have the approval of the Treasurer. None of the Ministers can tell us that they have.

Hon. P. Collier: And the approval of the Premier.

The Minister for Works: Cannot you tell us?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Can the Minister for Works tell us?

The Minister for Works: I thought you had discussed the matter with the Treasurer?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister for Works often thinks a great deal that is of no advantage to the people of Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: That is an impertinent statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not in the habit of making impertinent statements, but if I wanted a tutor in the art of making them I would go to the Minister for Works. I have never witnessed during my ten years in this House such a manifestation of helplessness as has been given here during the last few days. Ministers

are not united. They will not take responsibility for a measure. A couple of them pass to the right and a couple to the left. They are all at sea with regard to measures of Government policy.

The Minister for Works: No. We are free.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I heard one national Labour man, Mr. Thomas, say that after the party had been created every man was as free as the air he breathed; that he could go into the House and advocate a proposal or oppose it just as he pleased. We have it in evidence that the members of the Country party the other day entirely attributed their solidarity to their class consciousness.

Mr. Pickering: I refute that. There is no class consciousness in this party.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Absolutely it is so. It is the representative of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association that is class conscious. He knows that the people whom he represents are labouring under certain disabilities, and he makes an open boast of it that he is out to remove these disabilities; and let us give him all honour for it. Perhaps the same thing exists, under party government, on this side of the House, and in every quarter of the House. There may be times when groups of members representing certain interests or certain classes may say, "We will go for this, or we will go for that"; but when it interferes with public policy, and when it means making discrimination by which some people have to suffer penalties while others escape them, it gets beyond good legislation and good government. I am not blaming the members of the Country party for making demands and seeing that they are granted. I am blaming those who lack the ability to stand up against any and every demand. It would be a most interesting position, if the Treasurer had not been called away, to see him standing up in his place here and telling the cross benches, when they issued their ultimatum, what he thought of them.

Mr. Maley: Mr. Sanderson thinks the Treasurer is well away and ought not to come back.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Mr. Sanderson may have that opinion, but I have a very high opinion of the Treasurer and of his ability. I do contend, however, that the Treasurer and his colleagues should stand together on a Bill after it has passed the second reading. They should take responsibility for such a measure, and not allow it to be sniped at from every corner of the Chamber, nor allow a wedge to be driven into the Ministry so that we do not know where we are.

The Minister for Works: We know where we are.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Where were you last night? Were the Attorney General and the Honorary Minister for the North-West right last night, and were you wrong?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss what happened last night.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We are discussing the measure, and the effect it will have.

Mr. SPEAKER: What happened last night has no effect on the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I certainly think it has a very big effect on the third reading, because

it shows the demoralised state of the House when there is no leadership, inasmuch as Ministers are divided and cannot tell the country exactly what they want. And that position is aggravated by the fact that the two leading members of the Government are away. Although their substitutes are doing remarkably well in many ways, they are not in a position to tell us whether the measure, passed as it is, will meet with the approval of their colleagues when they return.

The Minister for Works: I am satisfied.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But there are others to be considered besides the hon. member.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a National Parliament.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is a National Parliament, we are told, and I have every consideration for others.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that the Treasurer is not under discussion. It is the third reading of the Bill that is before the House.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: With all respect to you, Mr. Speaker, I have a perfect right to claim that the third reading of the Bill should not be passed until the Treasurer's return.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the hon. member is not in order in repeating that fact more than is necessary. He has now repeated it 15 times.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If that is so, I am surprised, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not. I am allowing the hon. member every latitude.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: As long as I am not repeating myself, I am in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you are.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: This is the first time I have been told during the 10 years I have been here that I have repeated myself. I have, during the last three years, only spoken about five times and yet, you Mr. Speaker, make this intrusion to tell me that I am off the track.

The Minister for Works: There is no intrusion by the Speaker.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We do not all possess the originality that some members do. Members have to follow in the track of many speakers and sometimes matter is repeated a dozen times. This is the first time I have been told that I repeat myself unduly when I make a few observations to the House.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.33]: The member for Murchison used a very forcible argument for the postponement of the third reading of the Bill. I have had some few years' experience of Parliamentary life, not only in this State but in an Eastern State, and I have never known a Bill undergo so many alterations at the hands of the authors of a Bill as this measure has undergone during its progress through Committee. The previous speakers are correct in saying there is not a single member of the House, unless it be you, Mr. Speaker, who has a fair print of the Bill, who has a knowledge of the Bill in its entirety, and who is able to see the relationship of its parts, and appreciate the full value of the alterations that have been made; and it is certainly the important Bill of the session. That is to say, it is the important Bill in conjunction with the Bill

which is to follow, that is the Land and Income Tax Bill; it is the preface, the prelude and part, and the legislation is not complete and as has been pointed out, this portion is of no value whatever until the succeeding Bill becomes law. We cannot one of us appreciate the instances and relationships of all the alterations that have been placed on the business paper. It is only fair that we should see the Bill in print and be able to follow it clause by clause before we assent to the third reading. I say so all the more because this Bill has a remarkable history. Its history does not even date from its introduction to this Chamber. It is anterior to that. The life of the Government was given to them by the people for the purpose of constructing a financial policy that would place the State on a solid footing, and presumably this is no other than a national financial policy. The people gave the Government a mandate to act nationally and financially and after mature consideration, after all kinds of expedients, the Treasurer introduced the measure. That measure reached a certain stage whilst the Treasurer was with us. He stayed while the principles of the Bill were being discussed. He was here all through its second reading debate and no one who heard the speech he made in reply can doubt the fact that he pledged himself, his honour and integrity, indeed his position as a Minister of the Crown, upon the principles enunciated in the measure. He turned with wrath on those who suggested the very amendments that now the remnant of the Government have adopted.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The House may have done it.

Hon. T. WALKER: It is here we are treading on dangerous ground. If the House had done it and the Minister stood to his guns, we should have known where we stood. If the House had done it in the teeth of the Minister's opposition the Minister would have interpreted the vote as it ought, in honourable assemblies, to be interpreted. But when the House is not allowed to do that, and the Ministers behind the back of the responsible Minister who introduced the measure—when the Ministers themselves back down and desert the principles that he defended and go behind his back, so to speak, and adopt what they are told to avoid, that very moment there is an end of Responsible Government. It is no longer Responsible Government. It is not Parliament in its old, honourable sense, where a Minister introduces a policy and stands or falls by it. If we are to have government of this kind, the institution has gone. We can in no way bring a Minister to book in this Chamber. We can in no wise punish the offender.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You never did, the individual Minister.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have known in my experience individual Ministers who have resigned and their places have been filled by others because it was recognised that individual Ministers were the offenders, but in

this particular case it is not an individual Minister who is solely responsible. This is distinctly a Government measure, introduced by the Government through its responsible Minister in charge of the department which deals with finance, and the Government had to take the full responsibility of it. But at the same time we had to judge what that responsibility meant by the confidence expressed in this Chamber itself, and if we are to judge by what the Minister said on the conclusion of the debate on the second reading of the measure, then everything that has been done in his absence is directly the antithesis of what he then advocated, championed and declared his determination to stand by. One wants to know what it all means. Nothing happens in this world without a cause, and without a cause sufficient to produce it. I want to ask what is the desire for haste in the third reading now; what special emergency is there to get this before the Legislative Council? Why do it before the Minister, who has made such strong statements on the floor of the House, has time to return? His work is over and he should be back soon, as was stated by the leader of the Opposition. Why this haste? Is it possible that those human frailties that sometimes beset men and lift them up in the lofty atmosphere of distinction, those frailties that cause one to become light headed and vain, is it those who are now running the affairs of this country in the absence of those truly responsible, want to do it off their own bat and want to show how clever they are, and get the thing done before the others have a chance to get back.

Mr. Davies: That is not confined to one side of the House.

Hon. T. WALKER: It is not confined to one side of the House; it is a common, human thing. I have heard of it at Midland Junction. There are instances of that kind everywhere.

The Minister for Works: You need not worry about that. Get on with the Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER: I object to these stupid, unseemly interruptions.

The Minister for Works: Get on with the Bill now.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am going on with the Bill in a manner in which the hon. member evidently does not like, and the hon. member feels it, or ought to feel it if he does not. I am pausing because I want the House to have the full benefit of the dramatic rehearsal on the part of the leader of the House, which should not be seen in a dignified Assembly.

The Minister for Works: Get on with the Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER: It shows what we may expect whilst matters of the State are left in the hands of such irresponsible people. There is evidently a desire on the part of Ministers to get this Bill out of the way before the Premier and Treasurer return, and I am objecting to that. I did not entirely approve of the Treasurer's proposals. In fact I made my position clear from the commencement of this measure. I do say that he has a right to give his imprimatur to his own measure, that he has a right to comment upon the conduct of the Bill, and upon its management while it is before the Assembly, and that he has a right to know where he stands, not only with the House,

but with his own colleagues. I say, moreover, that the country has a right to know what is the meaning to be given to the conduct of the business so far as this Bill is concerned, and have a right to know how this is to be interpreted. The Bill, for which the Government was created and christened a National Government, has gone through this Chamber with the Government absolutely divided against themselves. We have had members of the Government voting against each other whilst the matter has been proceeding. Have we not the right to hear what the Treasurer himself will say upon conduct of this kind? Where principle has been concerned the Government have been divided, and we are supposed to have a responsible Government. Who are and who are not responsible for this measure?

Hon. P. Collier: Nobody is; it is homeless and fatherless.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It has no parents at all.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is improved in some respects.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am surprised at the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) defending such conduct. I have never agreed with him in all his political principles.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He will always stick to his colleagues.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have always known the hon. member to be a man who is a stickler for strict constitutional Government. He has been a man who all the time I have known him has had the courage to stand by the Government of which he is either a member or is sitting behind, and one who never would desert what he believed to be a principle, whether it be right or wrong, for the sake of currying favour or winning a vote. I am, therefore, a little surprised to find that he is taking exception to my commenting upon the attitude of the Government. The country has a right to know who are responsible for this measure.

Mr. O'Loughlen: His environment on the cross benches is having an effect upon him.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Treasurer introduced the Bill, but this is not the Treasurer's measure, the third reading of which we are asked to pass to-night. It is not the measure of anyone of those Ministers sitting opposite. There are two Ministers now on the Ministerial benches, and during the discussion they have been cut in twain, one sitting on one side and one on the other, on matters which involve a principle. Where was the responsibility while that phenomenon was occurring, Ministers voting with the Opposition on their own measure? We have a right to know where we shall ultimately saddle the responsibility, and that is why I am asking that the third reading shall be postponed. When the Premier comes back he may say, "I cannot adopt this as my measure. It was never my intention either through the suavity or the threats or the cajolery of others, or any other psychological machinery to yield."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier will take anything so long as he can keep in office.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not like to think ill of anyone.

The Minister for Works: You are not justified in saying that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have proved all that over the Hon. Frank Wilson.

The Minister for Works: You have no right to say that.

Hon. T. WALKER: Be that as it may we have a right to know whether he adopts this measure as it stands, pounded out of shape by an influence not of the Government but behind the Government.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which they were not strong enough to resist.

Hon. T. WALKER: And which the Government were not strong enough or courageous enough, and I was going to say honest enough, to resist.

Mr. Pickering: You do not accuse us of dishonesty, I hope?

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not accuse them of dishonesty. Whatever may be said of the Government, this can be said of the Farmers and Settlers' Association. They have never hidden their light under a bushel, or concealed their pretensions one iota. They have declared that they are out to get all they can for themselves.

Mr. Pickering: And others.

Hon. T. WALKER: And others incidentally.

Mr. O' Loughlen: If there is anything left.

Hon. T. WALKER: The others can have the crumbs which fall from the table, but they are out to get all they can, and declare that they will support that Government which gives them the greatest concessions.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is no blame attachable to them.

Hon. T. WALKER: How can we blame them in view of the way in which politics are run in the scratchy sort of style of this country? They are all right, but what shall we say of the Government, which pretend to be National and take under their wing every phase and section of the community, yielding to one section?

The Minister for Works: Is this a motion of no confidence?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will have it yet.

Hon. T. WALKER: So far as my vote is concerned, it will be to convey the want of confidence I have in the Government while we have such a history as has been played before us in connection with this Bill.

The Minister for Works: Why not give some argument against the third reading of the Bill?

Hon. T. WALKER: My arguments against that are found in every word that I have said. The Bill has upon it the very aroma, the very stink, of bargaining. The Bill has upon it the stamp of the desertion of responsibility. The Bill has upon it the very opposite of all that has been deemed honourable and noble in the history of British politics. That is why I am opposing this third reading.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And they are not proud of it.

Hon. T. WALKER: Its impositions affect the people, it is true, and on this ground alone one might be justified in reiterating the argument which has been used at every stage up to date. But that is not all. There is the revolution that it means; there are the



possibilities of Government in the twentieth century in this enlightened State of Western Australia. There are the depths to which we have descended in our political existence.

Hon. P. Collier: Where are we going, and how will the people stand it?

Hon. T. WALKER: How will the people tolerate this?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is why they want to rush it through.

Hon. T. WALKER: How will the people tolerate this method of dealing with Bills of the utmost public importance?

Hon. P. Collier: The public are helpless.

Hon. T. WALKER: The public are utterly helpless.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not make any mistake about that; they will smash them up directly.

The Minister for Works: I suppose this is the first stage of the smashing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes.

The Minister for Works: It does you credit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member proceed?

Hon. T. WALKER: I am endeavouring to speak as I feel. I am speaking as I am because I feel that a duty impels me to do so. It is not the language of a novice in that sense. From my earliest day of entering into political life I have had an ideal, and I could think of nothing more deserving of respect and veneration than this time-honoured institution, which gave that instrument to the people whereby they might express their will, and which we have christened Parliament. That institution I have always tried to preserve with all its privileges, rights, and sense of honour that history has clothed it in. How can I help feeling humiliated and degraded when I contemplate the history as seen in this measure? It is the very ultimate point of degradation of everything we call political.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It has no breeding or pedigree at all.

Hon. T. WALKER: The longer we are given to think over this, to study it, to contemplate it and possibly to again amend it, the wiser we shall be acting in the interests of our constituents, and of the people at large. I should very willingly, if the Treasurer were here to-night, ask that there should be a re-committal of this Bill—

Mr. Green: Or a Royal Commission.

Hon. T. WALKER: In order to consider particularly one portion of it with a view to having it altered. I refer to that portion which deals with the taxing of the poorer section of this community while giving concessions, remittances and exemptions to others who can well afford to pay, or, if they cannot well afford to pay, have less need to squeal than this, the great body of the people that I have in mind. I want this measure printed from its title to its conclusion in order that I may give an apt and just comparison between the firm insistence of the Government on some portions of it and their jay-like yielding on other portions. I want people to compare what is taken up and what has been, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, made fixed and unalterable and pushed on with set teeth

and determined mein. I want to see by making a comparison, as the measure stands in print, the effect of the tout ensemble. Good as my memory is usually, it is impossible for me to recall the verbiage or the context of the amendments that were made last night. On all great matters we get an opportunity for the full and complete consideration of a measure. This is supposed to be a deliberative Chamber, not a rush Chamber. We are supposed to think over what we are doing. We are supposed to bring our brains to bear in a mature sense after we have digested the facts, then to think carefully and not to be precipitate. Here we cannot act more inconsiderately if we were passing laws in the street and were asking the crowd to vote upon the measures submitted to them before having the facts given to them. The Government absolutely want, metaphorically speaking, to club the measure through. They come down at half-past four as the bell rings and throw on our desks 27 amendments to the most important measure of the session, in fact, the most important measure of the period, and they say, "Discuss them, we will give you no time to read them," and then they refuse to re-print the measure which contains these amendments. They expect members to piece the amendments together and to see the effect of them as best we can by taking the Notice Paper and reading the old Act and the Bill and trying by straining all our mental powers to acquire the knowledge we ought to have.

Mr. Davies: Is it usual to circulate a Bill amongst members on the third reading stage after many amendments have been made?

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, it has been repeatedly done, and in this case it ought to have been done. In ordinary cases a Bill is re-printed after it has been amended in Committee and it is sent to the other Chamber printed as it leaves this Chamber after the third reading. It is different of course when we suspend the Standing Orders so as to pass measures through all stages in one sitting. When a Bill leaves the Committee stage, the clerk has to put it in order and a print has to be made, and when Mr. Speaker announces that he has a certificate from the Chairman of Committees that the Bill then to be read the third time, is a print of the Bill as it left Committee, it pre-supposes that all these amendments have been put in their proper places, and that the Bill has been re-printed and that the Bill is a complete and full and exact copy of the measure as it left the Committee.

Mr. Davies: Is it customary to circulate that Bill amongst members?

Hon. T. WALKER: If that be not done it is because we have got into a slipshod method of doing things. It ought to be done.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It has been done.

Hon. T. WALKER: In all my political life I never knew it otherwise. I will admit that we are getting exceedingly careless. We ignore what is obligatory upon us. What is the object of the third reading but to enable us again to review a Bill when we see the whole thing in its exact proportions?

Mr. Davies: You could not amend it again.

Hon. T. WALKER: It could be re-committed if necessary. When we see a reprint of the Bill, and we are satisfied with it, no further debate will be necessary, but it is just at that stage when we may find that we have made mistakes in Committee, how we have knocked the Bill into shape or out of shape. Then if necessary we can ask for its re-commitment. Again, a Bill of this kind should not be passed through the third reading stage until the people have had time to consider it. In matters of such importance we take second place to the public. It is the public who have to bear the burden, and at the present time there is not one member of the community, except the Speaker, and the Chairman of Committees, who actually know what the Bill is. The Bill is to be sent to another Chamber and if possible to be got out of the road and become law without even the author of it knowing what the Bill is.

Mr. Holman: He does not know one clause in the present Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER: Even the Premier, who is responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the country, does not know what the Bill is. We are to be asked to rush it out of this Chamber and give no time for its review, and no time for the public to make themselves acquainted with its provisions, with its enormities and its abnormalities, and with its strange mixture of oppression in one case and extreme and criminal neglect in other cases. I wish to enter my protest against the third reading being taken at this stage. I shall vote for the amendment so that the public may make themselves familiar with all the provisions of the Bill. I do not hesitate to say that I am championing in this Chamber one section of the community particularly, but that section is the basic foundation of the whole community; that section is the one which is the bottom rung of the ladder which carries every other rung above it by its own sheer strength and endurance.

- Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.30]: I support the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), on the ground that the Bill is not as first introduced and has not been on the Table sufficiently long to allow people in the country to know what Parliament was dealing with. The Bill contains a number of amendments which the people have had but little opportunity of learning anything about. None of the country Press has had time to show the people what the taxation proposals of the Government are as contained in the Bill. It might be said that the taxation proposals really come under another Bill, but just the same this Bill provides for the assessments and exemptions. Again, I think the amendment is only fair, seeing that on many occasions in this Chamber when a Bill of this description has passed the Committee stage some time has been allowed to elapse before the third reading has been taken, so that the people of the State might know, through the Press, what Parliament has done. To push through the third reading immediately the Committee stage is passed is a new departure. I honestly think, after the statements made by the Colonial Treasurer, members

should have an opportunity of knowing his views on the Bill as amended. We were previously told that without the provisions in the Assessment Bill, as originally introduced, it would be impossible to carry on the affairs of the State. We were told that the State required money and that that was the sole object of the introduction of the measure. The Colonial Treasurer said he was there to see that his proposals were given effect to. But in his absence the Bill has been entirely transformed. It is now a new proposition altogether, and I think we should await the Colonial Treasurer's return in order to ascertain whether the Bill in its amended form meets with his approval. I have been surprised at the action taken in his absence. I am of opinion that what has been done in his absence will not meet with the approval of the people of the State, and I fully expect them to ask Parliament to re-consider the decisions arrived at. A Bill of this description is quite different from ordinary Bills. It can only be introduced by special permission from His Excellency the Governor. No member has a right to move amendments, except by way of reduction. No member can increase the taxation proposals in the Bill. No new form of taxation can be introduced nor anything which would be an impost on any section of the people, unless first recommended by His Excellency. It might be said there is no necessity for this; but we had a clear proof of it last night when an hon. member tried to impose increased taxation on a certain section of the community. It will be seen, therefore, that this measure is entirely different from an ordinary Bill. That being so, I think we have good solid grounds for asking that opportunity should be given to the people to peruse the Bill. I do not know what words the member for Murchison intends to insert in lieu of the word "now." Personally I would prefer that the only words introduced should be such as would give time for the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer to return to the State. It is not my idea to vote that the Bill be read this day six months.

Hon. T. Walker: I would not object.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can only say that in my opinion time should be given to enable the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer to return to the State and peruse the Bill in its new shape, so that we might have their views before proceeding further. I should be satisfied with so much delay, which would mean also the giving of opportunity to the people generally to learn what is being done. We cannot get away from the fact that there is not unanimity amongst the members of the Government in regard to the Bill. The acting Treasurer is not satisfied with the Bill, nor is the Honorary Minister for the North-West. They disagreed with the Honorary Minister for Lands and with the Minister for Works, who, by their votes, declared that the Colonial Treasurer did not require the amount of money which he said he did when introducing the Bill. In effect they said the Colonial Treasurer was wrong in his calculations. Personally I agree with the action of the acting Treasurer in trying to carry out the views and desires of the absent Colonial Treasurer. Once the Government lay down a financial policy it is their duty to stick to it as

far as possible. I do not know how any Minister can consistently vote against the Bill, because we realise that a Bill of this kind must have been agreed to in Cabinet before being introduced here. Obviously all the Ministers then acquiesced in it, and that being so the Bill should come here with the agreement and support of every member of Cabinet. When we were discussing the second reading of the Bill recently the Minister for Works tried to make it a personal matter, regarding the Colonial Treasurer as a private individual and not as a member of Cabinet. I then interjected, "This is not a personal Bill, but a Government Bill; this Bill represents the policy of the Government." No one had a right to deal with the Colonial Treasurer personally in the matter, because he is only one of the Cabinet of Ministers. Consequently, this Bill is a Government policy Bill, and not a Bill representing the Treasurer's policy. Thus it is clear that the Cabinet must have been in accord with the Treasurer when this Bill was introduced. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether during your long experience of this House, an experience longer than that of any other member—you are not only the Speaker of the House, but also the father of the House—you have ever known of a case where the Treasurer presented the financial policy of the Government and pointed out the urgent necessity for increased revenue, where he laid it down in the Chamber that it was impossible to carry on the affairs of the State unless Parliament granted him the money he asked, and where he got so warm, because the policy of the Government in that matter had been criticised, as to turn round and tell those opposing him, "I have a good mind myself to pay the taxation that you object to paying." I glory in my friend the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering). He honestly admitted in this Chamber that his party are proud of the position they have taken on this Bill. The hon. member said, "We are here to fight for a certain party."

Mr. Pickering: No. I said "a section of the community."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is just the same thing. I was merely putting it more shortly. The hon. member said, "We are here to fight for a certain section of the community, and I am proud that we have been successful in reserving to them certain rights which we think should be granted to them." The member for Sussex is the only member who has been candid enough to admit the truth, the only member who has dealt with the question openly. When I made that statement the other night, I was told that it was incorrect and that I did not know anything about the matter. But shortly afterwards the member for Sussex rose and corroborated the statement I had made. In the circumstances I think we shall merely be acting fairly and justly by the people of the State if we demand that the third reading of the Bill should be postponed for at least one week. The conference of Premiers and Treasurers finished yesterday; and our Premier and our Treasurer should be back here early next week. Of, course, it is possible they may be staying away on purpose; I do not know. They may have had a telegram desiring them to keep away. Indeed, one member of Parlia-

ment has said that Western Australia could do very well without the Treasurer altogether. The request of the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) is one which, under the special conditions obtaining to-day, and in view of the special action taken by Ministers, who have not been united among themselves, ought to be granted. Ministers have been two and two; honours have been easy. There was not even a casting vote given by any colleague of Ministers. Therefore the motion of the member for Murchison should be carried. I ask the House to realise the position, and to say whether this Bill, of which we are asked to pass the third reading to-night, is or is not a policy Bill of the Government. Have they the knowledge or information needed in order to put the finances of the State in proper order? The acting Treasurer said last night that the State could not afford to lose an amount of £8,000 which was being voted away. And the hon. gentleman has been acting for only a fortnight or so as Treasurer. That brief experience has enabled him to realise the necessity for extreme financial measures. The acting Treasurer pleaded that a certain amendment should not be passed in the Treasurer's absence. And then we on this side are told that we are now doing wrong and blocking business. I have no desire whatever to delay business, but I do wish to have it declared openly in this Chamber whether the Premier and the Treasurer agree with the action of the Assembly regarding this Bill. And it must be remembered that it is the Premier who is responsible for his Ministers. If the Bill in its present form does not meet with the Premier's approval, and if he is dissatisfied and hands back his commission to the Governor, then every other Minister goes with him. The Bill could as well stand over for a few days to allow us the opportunity of hearing publicly in this Chamber the opinions of the Premier and the Treasurer on it.

The Minister for Works: That would not alter your opinion one jot; and you know it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do know that during this session I have done nothing but help the Treasurer in every way I could. Before going away, the Treasurer gave me credit for that. On the second reading of the Bill I upheld in many instances the proposals of the Treasurer, and during the Committee stage I endeavoured, as far as practicable, to have those proposals passed into law. In other words, we on this side were supporting the Government, and they sold us a pup. I do not know what position we shall take when we go before the country. On the hustings we made a promise that, no matter who held office, if they brought down measures necessary to put the finances of the State in order, we would give them our support. And the present Government have brought down a financial policy which we supported except as regards one or two items.

The Minister for Works: What would your opposition be like if this is support?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We are supporting the action of the Treasurer and of the Premier. In this instance the Treasurer is the mouthpiece of the Government. We gave our support because we believed the Treasurer's statements. We told the people from the platform that

there was absolute need for increased taxation, although the Treasurer was, perhaps, a little severe in some matters. But we also said that we believed in taxation being distributed equally over the community. We do not believe in putting land tax and income tax on one man, and relieving another man of one of those taxes if the other happens to be a little higher. It is only due to the Opposition, who have supported the Treasurer on this Bill, that we should know whether the Treasurer also is going to turn dog on us. I do not think he will.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Treasurer said that if he did not get his Bill he would resign.

The Minister for Works: Do hon. members opposite know what the Treasurer's opinion is?

Hon. P. Collier: It is given in his second reading speech.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: As to that, I only know what the Treasurer said in moving the second reading of the Bill. But I also know that in the Treasurer's absence two of his colleagues have turned him down.

The Minister for Works: But the Treasurer does not know that.

Hon. P. Collier: But we want him to know it, and before the Bill goes through.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Treasurer is honest enough to believe the records of Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is not under discussion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not intend to delay the House. Let me say again that my principal objection to passing the third reading of this Bill is that the measure we have before us for the third reading is not the measure which passed the second reading, with the exception of the clause containing the short title.

Mr. Nairn: But you helped to alter the Bill in the way you desired.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We stuck to the Treasurer right through. As regards Clause 2, I told the Treasurer at the time that I thought the original exemption should be retained. I said that on the second reading. While that was the clause to which this side of the House raised objection chiefly, objection was also taken by us to certain other clauses after the Bill had passed the second reading.

Hon. P. Collier: The Treasurer said he had spent 50 hours on this Bill, too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes; a week-end—Saturday, Sunday, and Monday.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In reply to an interjection, I said that the present Bill contains clauses which this side of the House strongly opposed. One proposition only was introduced by this side and that was to make the incidence more fair, and this proposal was lost on the casting vote of the Chairman. That is the only proposal which we brought forward after the Treasurer left. I hope the motion will be carried so that the Press throughout the country, not only the metropolitan Press, will have an opportunity of discussing this Bill as it passed through Com-

mittee. The Press throughout the country know nothing whatever about it. That being so, we are justified in having the third reading postponed until next Wednesday or Thursday to enable the Treasurer and Premier to say if they give their approval to the Bill as it is now before us.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.1]: I say\* as a member of the Country party that when I stood for election I retained to myself the right to exercise my voice and vote in the House; and as long as I am returned on that understanding I intend so to do. I resent the imputation of members of the opposition that I should be pledged to follow blindly any Government. If I find the incidence of taxation unjust to the people I represent, whether they are members of my particular party or members of my electorate, I shall fight in the House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We do not expect you to follow the Government; the Government follow you.

Mr. PICKERING: Replying to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, I do not hesitate to say what the members of the Country party supported in regard to the Bill on the second reading. Members cannot get away from that. What I fought tooth and nail against has been struck out.

Mr. Green: What about the exemptions on the higher incomes?

Hon. P. Collier: We want to know what took place upstairs behind the door.

Mr. PICKERING: So far as what took place upstairs behind the door is concerned, the members on this side—the National party—retain to themselves the right to exercise their vote at all party meetings.

Hon. P. Collier: Caucus.

Mr. PICKERING: Caucus if you like to call it.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought you were opposed to the word "caucus."

Mr. PICKERING: Not at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must speak to the motion before the House; Caucus is not under discussion and it is just as well for members to know that.

Mr. PICKERING: I rose to support the third reading of the measure. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has stated that the Bill was a good Bill before the Treasurer left this State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that.

Mr. PICKERING: I beg the hon. member's pardon, but he did say that. He said the Bill was a good measure before the Treasurer left the State. I took note of what he said.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I never said that.

Mr. PICKERING: If it was a good Bill before the Treasurer left I do not hesitate to say it is a better Bill as far as the Opposition are concerned now.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a reflection on the Treasurer.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not care if it is or not; I say that. What is wrong with the Bill?

Hon. T. Walker: Tell us what is right.

Mr. PICKERING: When the measure was brought before the House there was in the

parent Act an exemption to the tune of £10. What is the position in the Bill? That exemption has been increased by 100 per cent. is that not an advantage and is it not an inducement to populate the State? Let us turn to the Bill again. There has been a further extension to the opposition, that is the exemption on account of dependants. Yet members of the Opposition do nothing but condemn those who fathered the amendments. The only thing the opposition really have at heart is the removal of the £200 exemption. I come from one of the poorest districts in Western Australia. I have lived in that district for years and most of the people are struggling for existence. What is the trouble as far as we are concerned? The Opposition object to the retention of Section 17 of the parent Act. This would have been unjust had it been passed. In some instances older settled people of the State are better able to pay than those struggling to make good, and who want as little taxation as possible. If we want to open up the South-West and develop it properly, this House must be prepared to extend every possible concession to the primary producer and the pioneer. I am a pioneer. I took up virgin country. We must make the taxation as light as possible on those people who have the courage to go into the country and open it up. It has been stated that I voted simply for the farmers and settlers and the Country party of which I have the honour to be a member. We as primary producers are a down-trodden section of Western Australia, and it is only because we realise that fact and that there is a necessity to fight our own battles we take on ourselves the responsibility of representing our people in Western Australia. We retain our identity in this Chamber tonight as a party.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought you were a National party.

Mr. PICKERING: There is nothing I esteem more than the word "nationalism"—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will keep to the motion before the Chair. Nationalism is not being discussed. I have allowed a lot of latitude but the debate is getting beyond all reason.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not going to unduly waste the time of the House, but if I am led away from my argument by interjection it is hard if I cannot reply. I want it to be clearly understood that what I, as a member representing the Sussex electorate in the House, have done is to fight a clean fight to get a Bill that will meet the particular circumstances in which we are placed to-day. No one will contend that the time in which we are living is normal and there are very few people in Western Australia who are so disloyal to the country who are not prepared to pay their just portion to the taxation of the country. The people are prepared to do their just share in this time of tribulation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [8.12]: I congratulate the House that on discussing a measure so vital to the country as this taxation Bill we are able to extract so much fun and humour out

of it as we have been able to do to-night, and I congratulate members who are able to discuss such a Bill as this in a bantering fashion because it prevents during late sittings some of the ill-feeling which is likely to arise; and I am glad to see at the conclusion of a long debate members are able to enjoy the humour of the situation. I have listened to the members who have contended for various reasons that the Bill should not be read a third time, but I have not heard a reason which has appealed to me in the slightest. I think hon. members have been twitting us just as they did on a former occasion. When the Treasurer went away previously members twitted us that there was no one on the Treasury bench who could carry on the financial proposals. Now when we do carry them on with the full consent of the Premier and Treasurer, members say we should not do it. So that there is no pleasing our friends in any way. The arguments given against the Bill, against the third reading, have not impressed me. We have given every latitude to the discussion. Right from the beginning to the end of the discussion advantage has not been taken by the Government of the fact that the Standing Orders have been suspended. The discussion has been fair and full. We have adjourned from time to time and all reasonable consideration has been given to the Bill. Members cannot say it has been rushed through. It has been discussed to the full, argued, voted upon and finished with, and the job is over. Our business is now to send the Bill, after it has been read a third time; to be discussed in another place. I hope hon. members will see that the third reading is carried.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [8.15]: I wish to support the amendment moved by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman). I have purposely refrained from addressing myself to the Bill in its earlier stages, because I had hoped that the good sense of the House and the sense of justice which permeates even some hon. members sitting opposite, would have placed this Bill in a somewhat modified form before us, and consequently one would have been able to vote for the third reading without any debate at all. I am hopeful that the amendment will mean that the operations of the Bill will be suspended for a period of a few days. Unless some precaution is taken in order to regulate the price of commodities which the workers require in order to live, they will be unable to meet the demand which this taxation measure will place upon their slender resources. If this Bill is forced upon the toilers of this community, it will in turn force them to take out the amount of their taxation inside the Fremantle gaol. There will be no other course open but to advocate passive resistance by the toilers of the community, rather than that they should be forced to meet the extortion which this Bill will place upon them. Unless the Government are prepared to institute some regulation, or to force the Federal Government to do so, regarding the cost of food and living generally, the imposition of this tax at the low exemption which is being allowed for, it will be absolutely impossible for the workers to meet. We find that, according to a quotation which has been

placed before me from the text-book on Sociology by the Rev. Dr. James Quayle Dealey, P.H.D., Professor of Sociology and Political Science in the Brown University, of the United States, dealing with the question of the "Flexibility of Life"—

Life is very flexible. It adapts itself to circumstances. Its preservation is so essential that it cannot be destroyed by reducing the amount of nutrition. In the history of life there have been wide vicissitudes in this respect, and the organism has been adapted and adjusted to these vicissitudes. If food is abundant, the organism comes up to that standard and is correspondingly robust. If the supply falls off, the standard is lowered to correspond, but life goes on. Unless it stop suddenly, a great diminution of the supply can thus be sustained without destroying life. The creature becomes what is called "stunted," but does not perish.

I submit that the imposition of this tax upon wage earners, those earning £2 or £3 a week, unless some corresponding reduction is made in the cost of living, will only result in making the oncoming race and the children of this State, as Professor James Quayle Dealey says, "stunted." There is no doubt that this tax will be a heavy burden upon those earning anything below £4 a week, if they are forced to make the payment, and that every penny that the State demands from a man on £3 a week will have to be taken from the food and the nourishment that are required for his family.

The Minister for Works: Nothing is claimed from a man earning £3 a week.

Mr. JONES: A tax is claimed from a man earning over £156 a year. The leader of the House knows this.

The Attorney General: This shows that you do not understand the Bill. A man on £157 a year will not pay anything if he has children.

Mr. JONES: I have made no mention of children.

The Attorney General: You said that we should be taking away their nourishment.

Mr. JONES: I am prepared to work the thing out for the Attorney General if he is unable to follow my line of reasoning. He knows full well my reasoning, and is well aware of my line of argument. He has shut his eyes, even as he has turned his back upon you, Sir, to the vital effects which will result from this extortion from the workers and toilers of the community. Unless the Government are prepared to face boldly a reduction of the cost of living, the toilers of the community will be unable to pay the tax. I hope that hon. members are fully seized of the fact that with the present price of commodities it will be impossible for the workers to pay any such imposition. I trust the amendment will be carried, and that the Bill will be placed quietly on one side for a few days at least, because I am satisfied that with the wonderful speed with which the Attorney General is able to turn out legislation, he can regulate the cost of commodities within that time. If he will tackle the question boldly, and guarantee that the workers of

the community can buy their commodities at a reasonable rate, there will be no opposition from this side of the House to a proposition for taxation which will not press heavily upon the toilers of the community. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	26
Noes	..	..	13
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Majority for	..	..	13
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#### ATES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Broun	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Davies	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Durack	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Foley	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Maley	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Money	(Teller.)
Mr. Mullany	

#### Noes.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Luley
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roche
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

### BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

#### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th April.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.30]: The House has been engaged for the past three days in the consideration of taxation measures, and during that period practically every phase of taxation, particularly that of income tax, has been, I may say, debated threadbare. I doubt not, therefore, that the House has become somewhat wearied of the subject, and perhaps, is not in such a happy frame of mind as would induce members to listen with any degree of pleasure to a further debate upon this question. Nevertheless it is a most important measure, in fact infinitely more important than the one we have just disposed of, because, after all, while we have been dealing with a Bill which is essentially a machinery one, we now come to the consideration of the Bill which is going to extract the payment of the tax from the pockets of the people. I was just wondering what are the feelings of the taxpayers when they read morning after morning and will again read to-morrow morning, and on the days

that are to follow, about the load of taxation which Parliament is imposing upon them. I propose to vote against the second reading of this Bill, because I feel that there is not much chance of amending it in Committee in the direction I should like to see it amended. It is quite clear, of course, that increased taxation as stated by the Treasurer in his second reading speech, has become absolutely necessary, but, after all, while every member of the community will agree upon that point, there is a wide divergence of opinion regarding the incidence of taxation that ought to be imposed. I feel certain, having looked through this Bill and having regard to the fact that it is extending the sphere of taxation at both ends—that is to say, it proposes to reduce the minimum upon which taxes have been levied in the past and extend the tax at the other end so much, taking this in conjunction with other taxation measures which have been passed during the present session—we shall be imposing a burden upon the people which, in the present condition of affairs they will be unable to carry. It is interesting to recall, if I may once more do so, the events of the past 18 months. It was contended 18 months ago by the Government now responsible for the introduction of this Bill, that no additional taxation was necessary in order to meet the financial exigencies of the State, and the Attorney-General was most emphatic in the expression of that opinion, particularly during July or August, 1916, when he was opposed by my late leader, Mr. Scaddan. The Attorney General declared that absolutely no additional taxation was necessary to restore the financial equilibrium of the State.

The Attorney General: I advocated a graduated income tax.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It may be true that the Attorney General was in favour of an income tax if taxation was necessary, but he contended then that taxation was not necessary. He was of the opinion, perhaps being somewhat new to Ministerial office at that time, that all that was required was, to use the hackneyed phrase, business acumen and business principles to restore the finances and to set everything in order. The hon. member no doubt has had a rude awakening since then, and particularly as the result of his Ministerial experience of the past 12 months. Not only did the hon. member and his leader and the party with which he is associated take that view, but even the Colonial Treasurer who has been responsible for the introduction of this Bill, was also most emphatic in expressing similar opinions, and at a much later date, too. I think I am justified in reminding the House that the Treasurer—who now informs the country that he cannot possibly meet the financial situation unless he is conceded all these measures of taxation which he has introduced—took an entirely different stand at that time. He was a private member then, and that was the time when Mr. Wilson was Premier, and it is not so very long ago. We remember when the Wilson Government introduced a series of taxation Bills, the member for Irwin, who is now the Treasurer, was one of the members of this House who fought hard against those measures, and who afterwards prided himself upon the fact that he was

responsible for those Bills being thrown aside for the time being. He stated then that he for one was not prepared to agree to any increased taxation until the Government had shown better results by way of effecting economies. The hon. member and the Government of which he is now a member have had 12 months in which to practise economy.

The Attorney General: And we have worked hard.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But no results have been shown. The Government have failed entirely to do that which they condemned the Wilson Government for not doing. One need only refer to the Estimates presented to this House during the present year, and compare those Estimates with the Estimates of the two preceding years, in order to see that not only have they failed to effect those economies they said should be effected, but in many directions they have increased the expenditure. If the contention was a good one last year that the House should not grant additional taxation to the Government until such time as they exhausted all possibilities of economy, that contention holds good to-day with equal force. I will admit that some of the Ministers have effected a considerable reduction in expenditure in their departments, but the trouble with the Government is that there is no co-operation amongst them. As a Government they have done very little in the way of effecting economies. One Minister, perhaps, may have reduced his expenditure by a thousand pounds or £5,000 a year, but another Minister has more than balanced that reduction by increasing his expenditure by a similar amount. The inevitable result is that the Government are forced to ask for this enormously increased amount of taxation. I have already stated that more taxation has been asked by the Government this session than has ever been asked for by any Government since we have had responsible Government, and in all seriousness I say that the Government have not risen to the occasion in the way of reducing expenditure, because, after all, if the expenditure could have been reduced two or three years ago, when the whole of the State was a hive of industry in comparison with what it is to-day, and when our industries were going at full swing, and when there was greater need for increased expenditure—if they urged that reduced expenditure ought to have been effected then, they should be able to do more to-day, when there is, I am justified in saying, almost a general paralysis in regard to our industries. If the people of the State are going to be subjected to the load of taxation now being heaped upon them, the effect will be a reaction throughout the whole of our commercial and industrial life, and there will be a consequent additional diminution in the general activities in the interests of the State. Then there will inevitably follow a shrinkage in the amount that will be received from these taxation measures. I notice, too, that the Bill has shared the fate to some extent of its predecessor. I do not know whether this is one that was dealt with at the famous meeting on Thursday last. There is an amendment on the Notice Paper which indicates that some influence, whether it was caucus or not I cannot

say, has been at work in order to bring about an amendment which is going to have a serious effect upon the amount of revenue that will be derived under the measure. I do not propose to debate the merits of that amendment at this stage. We will have an opportunity of dealing with it in Committee. The Bill is essentially a Committee one. The arguments that can be advanced against the various graduations we see here can be more effectively done in Committee than on the second reading. I think I am justified in dwelling for a few moments upon the proposed amendment, because it is such a vitally important one. The "West Australian" in its leading article this morning referred to the question of taxation. I have not analysed the figures, so I do not know whether they are correct or not. No doubt the Attorney General will inform the House as to whether the figures may be taken as being correct.

The Attorney General: They are nowhere near correct.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My examination of the figures leads me to believe that they have been rather under-estimated, because, while the article states that there are 246 taxpayers who would be affected by this proposed amendment, and the writer proceeds to say that on that number the Treasurer will lose £30,000 by the proposed amendment. But the figures supplied in the report of the Commissioner of Taxation show that the "West Australian's" figures, taken from "Knibbs," under-estimate to the extent of 50 per cent. the number of taxpayers who will be affected by the amendment. If we take the Commissioner's report for 1915 we find that instead of 247 taxpayers in receipt of £1,500 and upwards, there were 453. If the "West Australian's" figures as to the amount of revenue that would be lost by the amendment are correct in respect of 247 taxpayers, then instead of losing £30,000 as they say, the State will lose £56,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: More like £60,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It may even reach that sum. Whatever the total amount may be it is quite clear that the Government propose to give away a very considerable sum of money under the amendment. One is at a loss to divine the motives of the Government in this connection. We were repeatedly told yesterday that, in view of the financial position of the State and the need for increased revenue, the Government could not afford to agree to certain amendments moved from this side, because those amendments would involve them in a loss of one or two thousand pounds. Particularly was that the argument used in opposition to the amendment which sought to provide a deduction of £26 for each child; and the whole of the members on that side who voted against that amendment did so because they were actuated by the desire to retain to the Government every possible penny of revenue. The same argument was advanced in favour of the striking out of the exemption. We were told that at a time like this it was the duty of every person in the State, regardless of his or her position in life, to contribute something to the upkeep of Government. And so, in pursuance of that line of argument,

practically all the workers of the country, all the wage-earners, have been roped in and will have to pay a tax in future, whereas they have been exempt in the past.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We are all entitled to pay at this time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Except the man who has not the money to pay. But it will be of little use for him to say to the Commissioner, "I cannot pay, because I have not the money."

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): If he has not the money he cannot pay.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But he will have to find it, even, perhaps, by letting his children go to school barefoot.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It will do their feet good.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is all very well. There is no dearth of argument on the part of many members opposite in the support of the proposal of the Government to tax the people to whom I am referring; there are any number of arguments put forward to justify the policy of taxing the workers who cannot afford to pay. On the other hand, there are plenty of arguments for the exclusion of the men at the other end of the ladder, men who are in a position to pay and who ought to be made to pay. With regard to this question of the reduction of all amounts over £1,447, here again, as soon as the Treasurer has left the State, those who have taken his place have decided to reduce that amount by one half. From 2s. 6d. in the pound on all taxable income over £1,500 it is proposed to reduce it to 1s. 3d. But I find from the speech of the Colonial Treasurer when introducing the Bill that he expressed a doubt about that 2s. 6d., the doubt that it was not high enough, that he had not gone as far as he ought to have gone. While apparently that was the view held by the Treasurer only a few weeks ago, we now find a complete somersault on the part of the Government, and instead of their increasing the amount as one might believe the Treasurer was inclined to do, we find it is proposed to cut it down by one-half. I would like to know how it is the Government are chopping their own measures about in this fashion. Are we to understand that after the 50 hours during which the Treasurer laboured in six different attempts at the production of the Bill—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): He was new at it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Evidently our friends opposite think he is a prentice hand at this business, because as soon as his back is turned they proceed to indicate to the House and the country that the Treasurer knew nothing about the matter.

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Stubbs) took the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a quiet intimation to him to get out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I can only take it that during his absence his colleagues are giving him a hint that he is not required in the Ministry, or at least not in his present portfolio. They have virtually passed a vote of want of confidence in his taxation proposals. They might



relieve the Honorary Minister in another place of some of the burdens he is carrying, and put them on to the Treasurer. The Government apparently have no fixed idea of their own in regard to taxation. After discussing the question in Cabinet, and taking it to the party, they arrived at the conclusion that half-a-crown in the pound on all incomes over £1,500 a year was a fair thing. What has induced the Government to put forward this amendment? On the last Bill they proffered the explanation that they had made the amendments as the result of the debate on the second reading; but here they have not that explanation, because before any member has expressed an opinion upon it, before the breath of criticism has touched it, the Government have proceeded to run away from it, without waiting to hear the opinions of any member.

The Attorney General: It was discussed by you on the Dividend Duties Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. My reference was, not that the income tax should be cut down to conform with the Dividend Duties Bill, but that there might be an argument for increasing the dividend duties up to the income tax.

The Attorney General: I remember there was a discussion on the question in the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know how any discussion could have taken place because, except for the Assessment Bill, there has been no measure before the House upon which a member could express such an opinion.

The Attorney General: The Treasurer said in regard to the discussion that he was looking to find some measure to equalise the difference.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think I am justified in assuming that the influences that have been at work to bring about this amendment did not originate in this Chamber.

The Attorney General: It was the discrepancy between the tax and the dividend duty.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Did that never occur to the Government before they brought down the Bill? Is the Minister going to tell us that this amendment is brought forward because of the difference in rates that will be paid under it as against those paid under the Dividend Duties Act?

The Attorney General: It is one of the reasons.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, it evidences an extraordinary lack of foresight on the part of the Government. But I take leave to suggest that that is not the reason. If it is, why is this equalising of taxation to apply to only those in receipt of incomes of over £1,500? Why is a man who is in receipt of, say, £1,450 a year going to be taxed the 2s. 6d. under the Income Tax Act, while the man receiving an equivalent amount from dividends is only to pay 1s. 3d.? If the argument of the Minister has in it any equity at all, he must of necessity bring down the whole of the rates in order to correspond with that which will be paid by shareholders in companies under the Dividend Duties Act. Let hon. members observe what is being done.

The Attorney General: I cannot answer you by interjection.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is how it appears to me. The Government say that the man

who is in receipt of over £1,450 a year should not pay any more than the man who pays under the Dividend Duty Act. The Government say, "We will bring him down to 1s. 3d. in the pound, the same as the man drawing dividends from a company."

The Attorney General: There is no State in the Commonwealth where the individual pays a higher rate than we propose.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that is a sound reason—

The Attorney General: It is a fact.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it is a matter of equity that he should not pay under the income tax more than the man who pays under the Dividend Duties Act, why will the hon. gentleman not apply the same reasoning and the same principle to those in receipt of incomes of less than £1,450—say, £1,000. or £1,100?

The Attorney General: How would you apply it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not prepared to say off-hand; but I have no doubt that it can be done. Here the Government are quite content to let the man pay 2s. and right up to 2s. 5d. for £1,446 a year. If he is in receipt of £1,446 he will pay 2s. 5d.

The Attorney General: His average rate will be 1s. 3d., taking it all through on every pound.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then the Minister says the man is not at a disadvantage as compared with the man paying under the Dividend Duties Act. That is the contention of the Minister. It is an extraordinary thing that the Government did not discover this earlier, that it was left to the last moment to relieve the taxpayer who can well afford to pay this 1s. 3d. in the pound. Having regard to the attitude of hon. members during the last three days on the other Bill, and having regard to the Government's contention that the financial position of the State is such that every possible pound must be brought into the revenue, I should imagine that they were not going to vote to relieve those who are in receipt of the higher incomes, and who, after all, are or ought to be in a position to pay. However, the Minister in charge of the Bill may be able, when we get into Committee, to give us more detailed information as to how this will work. Certainly, I should imagine the House will require very complete information, and very substantial arguments too, before it will be induced to agree to the amendment the Minister has placed on the Notice Paper. I shall not dwell on the other aspects of the Bill, except to say that it represents a tremendous increase in the income tax, in view of the fact that only last year the income tax was increased. The parent Act, passed in 1907, provided a flat rate of 4d. in the pound; and that rate has obtained right up to last year. Then the Government amended the Act, so that the maximum amount now paid is, I think, 1s. in the pound for £5,000 and upwards. The rate of tax goes up by stages. Now we have a Bill bringing the rate up to 2s. 5d. in the pound for incomes just under £1,500. The Bill itself, of course, provides

a rate of 2s. 6d.; but the amendment which the Minister proposes to move will reduce the rate to 2s. 5d. It must be recognised that the increase is a tremendous one to be made in one year. Undoubtedly it is going to put a heavy strain on the taxpayers of this country.

Mr. Davies: And then it will not meet requirements.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; and that is the sad feature of the whole business. I believe the taxpayers would submit to this taxation in a fairly cheerful mood if they had the knowledge that it was going to bring the State round financially. But the depressing aspect of the question is that even after imposing all the volume of taxation upon the people this year, we are still going to be somewhere in the vicinity of half a million sterling on the wrong side for the year. The situation is such that, without any stressing it should drive home to the Government the absolute need for taking hold of things in the way of effecting reduction of expenditure. I am quite confident reduction of expenditure can be effected. If the Government will appoint me a Royal Commission for three months or six months, I will undertake to cut down their expenditure, and without affecting efficiency. It can be done to a very considerable extent now. I do not say that it could have been done when the Government activities were greater.

The Attorney General: We will welcome you over here.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Reduction of expenditure is one of those subjects which no Government will touch if they can possibly avoid it. Liberal, Labour, National and otherwise—they will not touch it.

The Attorney General: We are at it today.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In a small way.

The Attorney General: In a big way.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The results are not apparent. Whilst the Minister can point to reduced expenditure in some departments, I can point to increased expenditure in other departments which more than balances the reductions; and so there are no results.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All the economies effected refer to officers engaged on loan work.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. What is the use of one Minister cutting down his expenditure by £5,000 a year while another Minister increases his expenditure by £7,000 a year? That is what has been going on. That is the way the Government have been dealing with the matter of reducing expenditure. There appears to be no cohesion or unity amongst members of the Government in this respect. I do not know what is the cause of it. Undoubtedly it is an easy thing for one Minister, by increasing his expenditure, to make himself popular at the expense of other Ministers. I know of nothing that will make a Minister more popular with all the officers and staff of the department he controls than a pretty generous expenditure of public funds, or else an avoidance of anything in the nature of cutting down expenditure. Such a policy will make the Minister

popular for the time being, but the State suffers under it. The present Government, however, will have to face the question. Whether they like it or not, sheer necessity will force them to face it. The present Government, or any other Government in power, will be forced to cut down expenditure.

Mr. Davies: In that case there would be no party within 12 months.

Hon. P. COLLIER: So far as I am concerned, there is no party now. I am prepared to give the Government every assistance as regards the finances, and I do not think I have ever attempted to discuss the finances from a party standpoint. I do not desire to do that.

The Attorney General: The Government will be very glad to welcome any suggestion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is all very well. I have already given suggestions to Ministers in this connection. I think I have demonstrated to individual Ministers where savings of thousands of pounds could be effected; but they do not take my advice. I want to know do the Government take up the attitude of sitting back and declining to accept the responsibility themselves of making these reductions? Do they want me to get up in this House and incur the odium and displeasure of the people of the country by indicating reductions or moving reductions? It is not a fair proposition to try to place a responsibility of that kind on any member of the Opposition, or indeed on any individual member of the House.

The Attorney General: You make your suggestions, and I will undertake to submit them to Cabinet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have submitted suggestions, and they have not been acted upon. But if I were to bell the cat, as it were, if I were to get up, when the Estimates are under consideration, and move to strike out a whole list of items, which might result in the dismissal of a number of public servants, and if the House were to back me up, then, no doubt, the Government would graciously say, "Yes; we will give effect to the decision of the House; we will do it." But that would be shirking responsibility. The Government would be free to say afterwards, "Well, we did not initiate this retrenchment or whatever you like to call it; the leader of the Opposition brought it forward in the House, and the majority of the House supported him." At the next general election I and my party would be saddled with the whole responsibility. I am prepared to accept my share of the responsibility here on the floor of the House, along with Ministers; and I have said to Ministers, in the course of discussion, "If you attempt to effect economies, to reduce expenditure, in matters which I have indicated, I give you my pledge that I will never attempt to make party capital out of your action, and that I will stand by you in the country about it." No member could make a fairer statement than that. Having regard to the position of the State, any Government endeavouring to reduce expenditure would incur unpopularity in some directions; but I, for one, would not be out

to gain political capital by their action. The present Government took office with the express determination, or with a pledge to the people of Western Australia, that they could and would effect economies. If that is the policy of the Government—and they said the financial position was such as to render economy imperative—surely they do not require that I should join their ranks before they will be prepared to put that policy into effect? Apparently they say, "We will not do anything unless you come in and join the Government." Is that the attitude the Government adopt?

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Government are prepared to stand by their policy, if they have no hesitancy in doing so, then I from my place on the floor of this House tell them that I am prepared to assist them in every legitimate effort to reduce expenditure; and I further undertake not to endeavour in the future to make political capital out of the subject. No Government have ever been better circumstanced or situated for carrying out such a policy than the present Government were during the past six months. They have come back fresh from the elections, with a large majority, almost an overwhelming majority. They had three years certainty of life in this Parliament; three years without any doubt or uncertainty; and they might well have taken matters of this kind in hand soon after the elections. I can understand a Government being perhaps a little timid about tackling such matters during the last few months of the life of a Parliament. They do not desire to go to the country with the recollection of their efforts in this regard fresh in the minds of the electors. But reduction of expenditure is a matter that might well be tackled soon after an election. I put the subject in this way because we have reached a stage in this country when we are compelled to impose a tremendous load of taxation upon the people; and even then we still find ourselves about half-a-million on the wrong side at the close of the financial year. Therefore I am convinced there is nothing for it but that this country will have to face reduced expenditure. We cannot impose more taxation next year to meet that half million. The Government will have to stop when they get these Bills through. They cannot come down next year and say "We are still half a million to the bad; we shall have to bring in further taxation." They will have to find other methods in order to improve the financial position of the State. There is one other aspect which I wish to refer to and that is the question of the retrospective taxation. The Government, not content with all this increased taxation, propose to make the taxpayers pay one year's tax for the last six months of last year. I am going to oppose that notwithstanding that the Treasurer justifies it by stating that he gave a warning to the people some six or eight months ago that this would be done. It is absolutely unfair to the taxpayers of the country to come to them now, something like 12 months after the event and say "We are going to double the tax for the second half of the year 1916-17." It is not

a fair proposition. Taxpayers have not made provision for it even though they may have read the Treasurer's warning. Unfortunately they do not take too seriously statements made by politicians. They become so accustomed to our saying one thing and doing another, that they do not place much reliance upon the statements which are made. It is rather amusing for the Treasurer to take up an attitude of that kind. He says, "I want to get the benefit of this money which ought to have been paid to my predecessor, Mr. Wilson." He told Mr. Wilson in February or March of last year that he would not give him any taxation and he forced the Wilson Government to abandon their taxation proposals. Now he says, "I not only want all the increased taxation for this year, but I will go back and take £30,000 from the year which rightly belonged to Mr. Wilson and which I refused to give him." He said to Mr. Wilson, "You were not entitled to the £30,000; I would not agree to you getting it, but I am entitled to it." It was the most extraordinary act of injustice that I have ever known one politician to attempt to play upon another. I hope the House will not give it to him. He is getting as much or more than the people can pay under this Bill without taking an additional £30,000 from them. I cannot imagine the Treasurer having the hardihood to ask the House to agree to a proposition of that kind more particularly when he himself said last year there was no need at all for taxation. I propose to try to modify these proposals in committee, so as to ease the burden upon the taxpayers. I believe, too, that the sooner the House takes the matter in hand and refuses to give the Government the whole of the taxation they desire, the sooner we shall have a genuine effort on the part of the Government to reduce their expenditure.

Mr. DRAPER (West Perth) [9.20]: I listened to the speech of the leader of the Opposition with interest and also to the candid offer he made to the Government to assist them if they introduced sound financial proposals. There is one defect in this Bill which I am surprised the leader of the Opposition did not point out, and I was also surprised that the Treasurer in introducing the Bill did not point it out, and that is the innovation that the Bill is not brought down for one year, but it is to remain in force as a perpetual piece of legislation.

Hon. P. Collier: I see that there is an amendment on the Notice Paper and I intend to support it.

Mr. DRAPER: I do not propose to stress that because I think hon. members on both sides of the House are in accordance with the amendment which stands in my name and that which also is in the name of the Attorney General. But to pass a measure of that kind, to hand over the control of the funds from the present Parliament to all future Parliaments, or to any future Government which may happen to occupy the Treasury bench, would be extremely dangerous from a constitutional point of view. The leader of the Opposition pointed out very rightly that this Bill imposed very heavy taxation. We all regret that taxation is necessary, but there is a point at which

heavy taxation will defeat its own ends. It is not a question of the tax for the moment which the individual may have to pay. That is bad enough from the individual point of view, but heavy taxation will affect industrial life and the future of this country to an alarming extent. If it is great in comparison with that of other countries it will prevent fresh capital coming to the State.

Hon. P. Collier: And drive capital out of the State also.

Mr. DRAPER: Yes, and drive out population as well. That is a matter which the House of course must take into consideration and whatever may be done this year, it must be regarded as a temporary expedient, because we cannot continue to impose taxation which is out of all comparison with the taxation in force in the other States. I was surprised to hear the other night the member for Hannans say that this State is more lightly taxed than any of the other States. I think the member for Hannans was very likely regarding the present taxation in force and not the taxation proposed by the Bill.

Mr. Munsie: I was, certainly.

Mr. DRAPER: I will take two incomes, one of £1,000 and the other of £1,500 for the purpose of making a comparison between this and the other States. If we look at the scale of taxation in this Bill we will find that on £1,000 a year the amount of the tax will be about 1s. 9d. in the pound. When it reaches the £1,500 mark the tax will be on the basis of 2s. 6d. in the pound. Let me remind hon. members that this is a peace tax; it has nothing whatever to do with the war. Let us compare the figures I have just quoted with those of New South Wales. I am quoting the figures which I have obtained from the Commissioner of Taxation. On the £1,000 mark the tax is 1s. and on the £1,500 it is the same. That is the tax on income derived from personal exertion. They differentiate by imposing another tax on property which is probably a wise measure. The tax upon income derived from property in New South Wales is 1s. upon £1,000 and 1s. 3d. on £1,500. I am simply taking the figures on a certain mark because that is the only method which can be adopted when making comparisons. In Queensland the tax on an income of £1,000 derived from personal exertion is 1s. and on £1,500 it is 1s. 3d. The tax on income derived from property is 1s. 3d. on £1,000, and 1s. 6d. on £1,500. In Victoria the taxation is much lower, and on the £1,000 mark from personal exertion the income tax is only 4d. and on £1,500, 5d., and on income derived from property it is 8d. on £1,000 and 10d. on £1,500.

Hon. P. Collier: Even those figures are low by comparison.

Mr. DRAPER: To be fair, I want to give them all. In South Australia the tax on income derived from personal exertion is 7d. on both £1,000 and £1,500 and derived from property 1s. 1½d. In Tasmania on the £1,000 mark the tax on the income derived from personal exertion is 6½d. and on the £1,500 mark it is 11½d. On income derived from property in both cases it is 1s. Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria have a graduated income tax. There is one striking difference in the graduated income tax in these States and it is

that they graduate to an income considerably over £1,500. I can see no logical reason myself for stopping the graduations at an income of £1,500.

Hon. P. Collier: What virtue is there in £1,500?

Mr. DRAPER: The result of course of stopping the graduation at £1,500 is to impose a higher taxation on the smaller incomes in proportion to the taxation placed upon the larger incomes. In Tasmania, we find that the graduation extends to £3,150 and on that sum when it is income derived from personal exertion, the tax is 1s. 3d. in the pound and on income derived from property 1s. In Queensland the graduations extend to £3,000 and the tax on income derived from property is 1s. 3d. in the pound, and from personal exertion 1s. 6d. In New South Wales the graduations extend to £9,700 and at that mark the tax on the incomes derived from personal exertion is 1s. 5d., and from property 1s. 9½d. In Victoria the graduations go to only £2,000; income from personal exertion 6d., from property 11d. If those few figures are compared with the tax we propose to pass here, it will be obvious that if anyone thought of starting a business or indulging in any commercial undertaking in this State, and he had the choice of going to the other States, apart altogether from the fact that conditions are more favourable there at present, he would certainly pass this State by. There is no doubt that for the present, as a temporary measure only, we must impose heavy taxation. But whatever taxation we impose it is going to be utterly useless to bring about any permanent prosperity unless we also exercise effective economies; we might as well throw down the ditch the money we raise by extra taxation. It will not, except for a very short period, stave off the evil day unless we can do something by administration to place the finances of the State on a sounder basis than they are at present. The leader of the Opposition was not serious, perhaps, but I think there is a good deal of truth in what he suggested when he stated that if we could appoint him as a Royal Commissioner, with a free hand, he could effect substantial economies in the administration of the State. Seeing that the hon. member has occupied a responsible position in a Ministry in this State, I attach the greatest importance to what he has said. It shows that if, without fear of party, without fear of political influences outside the House, Ministers were to devote their energies to effective economical administration something could be done.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): And he would hear about it.

Mr. DRAPER: Undoubtedly, one would meet a great deal of criticism. But we have reached the stage where we must incur personal odium in order that the State shall have some chance of being prosperous in the future.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Well, protect Ministers when they do it.

Mr. Money: Why, it is not Ministers' interests, it is the country's interests.

Mr. DRAPER: I am not going to say that by economy and taxation we can square the ledger, or can go anywhere near it. We can

do a lot, but we have to take other remedies as well. As a temporary measure every step ought to be taken to suspend the sinking fund. If we look at the figures given for the five or six years during which we have had a deficit, starting about 1911, it will be seen that the deficit is almost equivalent to the amount paid in sinking fund. That is most significant when we bear in mind that the Commonwealth can grant financial assistance under the Federal Constitution to any State in difficulty. I ask, why should not some advantage be taken of that? Why should not the Commonwealth be asked to assist? They need not give us the money. They could help us by a guarantee to satisfy the bond-holders that the sinking fund should be temporarily suspended. It is a matter for those who now occupy the Treasury benches. They can give a better opinion about it than can I, but unless something of that sort can be done, the outlook is not very bright. I do not desire to reflect in any way on the present Ministry for not effecting economies. I know they have done a great deal and I would like to hear that there are possibilities of their doing more. But when we are asked to accept the proposed taxation, which is no doubt going to do a lot of harm if carried on for many years, I think we have the right to ask those occupying the Treasury bench to do everything they can to satisfy the public that the taxation will not be thrown away by reason of other causes over which they have control.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.37]: I would like to express my gratitude to the leader of the Opposition for the views he put forward to-night. There is one aspect of taxation which has not been touched upon to-night, that is our relations with the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. P. Collier: We have only a couple of years to go ere we may lose the 25s. per head, if they insist upon stopping it.

Mr. PICKERING: We are undoubtedly confronted with a grave danger. The decline in the returns from the Commonwealth has been from £6 5s. in the first year to £1 16s. 8d. in 1917. This on a population of 300,000 means a loss of £1,300,000 per annum. According to "Knibbs," the payment per capita through indirect taxation in 1917 was £3 4s., which is a decline of 4s. 8d. on the preceding year. I take it an evidence of decline in Customs revenue under the existing economic conditions governing the Federal Government means that probably we shall be confronted with an additional protective tariff. It is a very serious proposition for the primary producers, and I should like to congratulate the Government upon their having forwarded to the Premier, to pass on to the Prime Minister, a request for the fulfilment of his promise to relieve the agricultural industry from that burden of taxation under which it is struggling. Of course we, as a party, are in favour of a revenue tariff as opposed to this prohibitive tariff, and we have realised that the time must come when this prohibitive tariff will lead to direct taxation. The time has now arrived. I am glad that the member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) has brought to the notice of the House that particular section which makes this a tax in

perpetuity. Personally, I am going to support the second reading, but when in Committee I propose to go into that particular phase of the subject.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [9.40]: I hardly know which Bill I am entitled to discuss, whether it be that introduced by the Colonial Treasurer with a graduation up to 2s. 6d. or the amendment submitted by the acting Treasurer with a graduation up to 2s. 5d., and a sudden drop to 1s. 3d. After the futile efforts we made to get the exemption retained in the other Bill, I intend to vote against the second reading of this Bill. The acting Treasurer pointed out that the figures given in the article in this morning's "West Australian" were altogether wrong. I do not know whether they are right or wrong but I find that the "West Australian" has taken "Knibbs" figures for 1915. The acting Treasurer also said that the "West Australian" had taken a considerable amount of income earned by companies, income on which dividend duty was paid.

The Attorney General: No, that they had taken the Commonwealth figures, which bulk all our incomes together, whereas we separate company from private individual.

Mr. MUNSIE: I did not go through the Commonwealth figures, but we have figures supplied by our own Taxation Department. The latest report from our own department, namely that for 1915, dealing with the number of persons earning certain incomes, and the amount of incomes they earn, suggest that the estimate given in the "West Australian" is considerably below what the Colonial Treasurer will actually lose. I have worked out both figures. The Colonial Treasurer gave the House to understand that there were 320 people earning between £1,560 and £4,160 per annum. I have worked out these 320 people, and have given them an average of £3,000 a year each. I think I am a little under, and believe the average would be a little more. Then he tells us that these figures give £960,000 as a total of incomes. The Treasurer tells us that there are 50 persons earning over and above £4,160 per annum. I averaged these 50 persons at £5,000, and I am positive that I am under the mark there. On this average of £5,000 we get a total of £250,000. If we add the two amounts together we have 380 people in the State whose united incomes would be £1,210,000. We must of course give them the deductions, in order to find out what the State would be losing. In working that out, I find that, taking the 380 persons and allowing them £1,450 each, it leaves £451,000. Take that away from the balance, and we are left with £759,000, from which, according to the Treasurer's figures, he was going to get 2s. 6d. in the pound, but, according to the amendment, the Treasurer will only get 1s. 3d.

The Attorney General: Have you deducted the number of those at £1,500, because it only concerns those over £1,500?

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not know the numbers and can only take the averages.

The Attorney General: The exact numbers are given in the returns which you have there.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Attorney General is going to take these figures they work out

worse to the State than the Treasurer's figures do.

The Attorney General: I am depending on the figures of the Commissioner of Taxation.

Mr. MUNSIE: The State loses considerably more on the figures submitted by the Commissioner of Taxation than on the figures submitted by the Treasurer. This leaves a balance of £759,000, from which the Treasurer would have to collect, if his statement is true, 2s. 6d. in the pound.

The Attorney General: You would therefore put 2s. 6d. in the pound on every pound of their income.

Mr. MUNSIE: No. I have deducted £1,450 from each of the 380 persons who, the Treasurer says, are going to bring this income to the State. That pans out at a loss to the State of £47,437 10s.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It should be £47,457.

Mr. MUNSIE: I averaged the first lot at £3,000 each.

The Attorney General: Now take off the exemptions.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have taken the bulk. That makes £47,437, which the State would lose under the suggested reduction from 2s. 6d. to 1s. 3d. Now the Attorney General says we have later figures from our own Taxation Department, and this I admit. These figures prove that taking 1915, the actual amounts are—from 391 persons who earned incomes between £1,500 and £4,999 the total earnings were £945,080. He also pointed out that there were 64 persons who earn £5,000 and over, and their actual income was £740,301. If we lump those together we find that the total earnings of those 455 persons amounted to £1,685,381, according to our own taxation figures.

The Attorney General: Quite right.

Mr. MUNSIE: Let us take the £1,450.

The Attorney General: No, the £1,500.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, not that, because they pay the 2s. 6d. on the last £1,500.

The Attorney General: Take it off at £1,500.

Mr. MUNSIE: I will not alter my figures. I have taken off the £1,450 from each of the 455 persons, which gives £639,650 to take from the people I have just quoted, and this leaves then £1,045,731. This, according to the 1915 returns, means that the Treasurer would have collected 2s. 6d. in the pound from these people, whereas the present Treasurer is only going to take 1s. 3d.

The Attorney General: What deductions are you allowing them?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not taking off any deduction.

The Attorney General: The Commissioner of Taxation says there are £650,000 in deductions to come off.

Mr. MUNSIE: I realise that there are deductions to come off on these figures, because there is a general exemption of £200 already, and a considerable number of other exemptions. I want the Attorney General to realise that from these figures I have quoted there would be very little deduction if the Bill is carried as it is introduced. He has taken away the biggest deduction of £200 by way of general exemption, and that pans out at a loss of £85,576.

The Attorney General: A large amount of this is represented in company dividends.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have worked out the figures again on the taxation returns. I realise that there are deductions to come off, but these I have not got. The member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) said he was surprised to hear from me that Western Australia was the lowest directly taxed State per head of the population of any in the Commonwealth. I maintain that this is perfectly true.

Member: It should be so too.

Mr. MUNSIE: I quite agree. In a State where our industries have to be developed we cannot afford to go to the amount of taxation that can be afforded in a State in which the industries have been already developed. The member for West Perth went on to explain that we could not afford to go in for high taxation. I would point out the difference between the attitude of the State and the Commonwealth, particularly as that affects the Income Tax Bill we are now considering, and the State of Western Australia. The Attorney General has been good enough to supply us with a table giving the amounts paid by the Commonwealth in income tax, the amount which should be paid by the Bill as introduced and the amount that will be paid if these amendments are carried. We find that on a taxable income of £20,000 per annum the Commonwealth takes £5,121 17s. 6d. by way of income tax, and it is proposed to take for Western Australia only £1,250, which is allowing the Commonwealth to take from the individual £3,871 17s. 6d. more than is being taken from him by the State in which he is making his money. I do not agree with a proposition of that kind. I would again refer to the amount that I will endeavour, when the Bill is in Committee, to save to the workers of the State by means of the retention of the £200 exemption. My statement was ridiculed by some hon. members when I endeavoured to point out that it is not so much the increase in the exemption proposed, but that the wiping out of the £200 exemption would mean £80,000 of the £140,000 the Treasurer anticipated getting from the Bill. It was said that this was not the case.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You have shown £80,000 in another place.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, I have admitted that all the deductions have to be made from the figures I have quoted. As a matter of fact I only showed £47,000. I do not know what the Bill will give, but I am taking what the Treasurer estimated it would give. The figures quoted by me are almost accurate. If, as the Treasurer admits, it will mean between £85,000 and £90,000, let us take it at £80,000. If this is the figure, the workers of the State, many of whom are earning over £4 a week, will contribute out of that sum at least £75,000 odd. Members have pointed out that I have made an enormous mistake in the figures, because they say that if we take the table supplied with the Bill, and take an income of £800 and £1,000, a difference of £200, the table shows that a man earning an income of £1,000 will have to pay an income tax of £43 19s. 2d., while the man earning

£800 would pay £28 10s. 10d., a difference of £15 8s. 4d. They argue that this is an amount which will be lost to the State if the £200 exemption is granted, because they say that if a man has an income of £1,000 he would pay the larger amount, but by giving him a general exemption of £200 his taxable income is reduced by £200, making it £800. Therefore, he would only pay £28 10s. 10d., a difference of £15 8s. 4d. That is not the case. There has never been one hon. member on this side of the House but has supported a graduation from 5d. in the pound upwards. The point that the hon. gentlemen lose sight of is that all the State will lose from the men getting big incomes is the amount that they would pay on the first £200 of their incomes, because if the general exemption of £200 was still retained they would still pay 5d. on the first £50 over and above the £200, and so right up. The position so far as this Bill is concerned is that it is absolute robbery of the working classes. If there are any people in the State who can pay the taxation it is the men who are drawing £1,000 a year and over. They are the people who can pay and who should pay. While I agree that every man is called upon to make some sacrifice in these times, still the man receiving an income of £1,000 a year, even if he paid £300 per annum in taxation on his income, would not then be making a sacrifice commensurate with that of the man on £3 a week, owing to the exploitation to which the latter has been subjected ever since the war began. The man on £3 a week is by far the worse off of the two; and if the other man had any patriotic feeling at all he would not growl at paying a little extra taxation in these times of stress. I wish to have a word again as to the reasons given by the Attorney General for making the reduction from 2s. 6d. to 1s. 3d. By interjection he intimated to me last night that one reason was the very suggestion made by myself—that the people in receipt of large incomes would immediately take advantage of the Companies Act, register their businesses as companies and declare dividends, and thus pay 1s. 3d. instead of 2s. 6d. Let me say right here that if the law of the land allows an individual receiving an income of £10,000 per annum, by registering himself as a company to save £600 taxation annually, he would be foolish not to accept the implied invitation to register as a company and thereby save the money. I would blame no one for taking advantage of the law of the land. But we have to consider by what means we can prevent people from getting out of their legal obligations in that fashion, even if it came to the point of repealing the Dividend Duties Act altogether and increasing the graduations off the income tax so as to make people pay what they ought to pay. In my opinion, the graduation of the income tax should have gone a little further. I think the Treasurer ought to have got a little more money by that tax. Let me again suggest to the acting Treasurer that, if it is absolutely imperative for him to have more revenue, then he can get by this measure, with a general exemption of £200, the necessary funds. The exemption

might be permitted to extend to only £400 after which point it could decrease and, as the income rose, be, little by little, wiped out altogether. I urge that in the interests of the National Government.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Do not waste any advice.

Mr. MUNSIE: If they are desirous of continuing on the Government benches they must do something to relieve the man on £3 10s. or £4 per week of income tax. If they do not do that, it will need only one general election to deprive them of the opportunity to reimpose taxation on these lines. I honestly believe that will be the result. I am not joking. Indeed, men outside have said to me, "You are foolish, from your own party standpoint, to object so strenuously to the Government's income tax proposals; why don't you let the Nationalists put the taxation on, and then the people will put them out at the next election?" But never while I am in this Chamber will I allow any Government, National or Liberal or Labour or anything else, to do such a grave injustice to the people I am sent here to represent, if my voice can prevent it.

Mr. Davies: You did not object to the 1915 Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am pleased to have that interjection. I did not object to, I most strenuously supported, the 1915 Bill; and if the present Government will introduce a measure on exactly the same lines I will support it just as strenuously to-day.

Mr. Davies: The exemption in the 1915 Bill was £156.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Labour Government gave an exemption to the single man of £100 and to the married man of £156; and the scope of the measure was limited to one year. The Bill now before us is to operate for all time.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No.

Mr. MUNSIE: An alteration has been made in that respect, but only after the awakening of the Government to the fact that the people of Western Australia are opposed to it. Only then did the Government express the intention to enact this Bill year by year.

Mr. Davies: No.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Bill as introduced was intended to carry on.

Mr. Davies: Until Parliament otherwise decided.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is not year by year.

Mr. Davies: But it can be.

Mr. MUNSIE: The difference is that here we have a proposal that a married man with no children under the age of 16 years and earning £153 shall pay on every £1 he earns, right from the very first pound. Under the Bill introduced by the Labour Government, that man would not have paid a shilling, irrespective of what he earned, so long as he was a married man on £156.

Mr. Davies: But if he earned £157 he would have paid £1 income tax, and that would have reduced him to £156.

Mr. MUNSIE: The minimum to be collected under the Labour Government's measure was £1. Suppose a man earned £158, what would he have paid under that Bill?

Mr. Davies: One pound.

Mr. MUNSIE: And what would he pay under this measure?

Mr. Davies: One pound eleven shillings.

Mr. MUNSIE: Is there no difference between those two amounts? The member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) knows very well that the Labour Government's Bill was introduced for a specific purpose. Never in the history of Western Australia were there so many unemployed in this State as at the time when that Bill was introduced. It was introduced for the purpose of giving employment to the workers of Western Australia. Let me remind the Honorary Minister for the North-West that the Labour Government's Bill definitely laid down the purposes for which the money was to be expended.

Mr. Green: Yes; and the Honorary Minister for the North-West was the Minister for that job.

Hon. P. Collier: He was Minister for unemployed at that time.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): And if there was anything over, we were going to put it into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am prepared to take the public platform anywhere and justify my action in supporting the 1915 Bill and condemning such a rotten proposal as this of 1918. There is no likeness whatever between the two measures. The hon. member who has been interjecting flaked Guildford at the last election; but last night, when we forced a division, he was not game to vote with the Government he was elected to support. I refer to the matter of the £200 exemption. The hon. member knows that the electors of Guildford would put him in his place if he had acted otherwise. The hon. member need not try to side-track me. He has endeavoured, by his interjection, to lead the people of the country to believe that I am inconsistent in supporting one Bill in one year and opposing quite a different Bill in another year. The hon. member desires to get that view into the Press by his interjection. As a matter of fact, the hon. member has admitted that he has never seen the Labour Government's Bill, but only the scale of taxation. He has admitted that to me. And yet he tries to convey to the public through the Press something which will make me appear inconsistent. I am at all times prepared to justify any stand I take in this House, whether I am in Parliament or out of it. I shall vote against this Bill; and if the Government will bring down an emergency Bill similar to that introduced by the Labour Government, they will get from me support just as hearty as that which I gave the Labour Government's measure in 1915.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [10.13]: We realise that the Government must have some additional taxation; and this is the Bill

that means something. We have listened to some very intelligent criticism from hon. members sitting opposite, criticism that ought to impress the acting Treasurer. I desire to point out that when the Treasurer brought down this measure he said that it would realise £140,000. The event will prove, however, that the measure will bring in something like £300,000.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): That is all the better.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: At the time the Bill was introduced, the Treasurer was the only man who knew what it would realise; and he should have told the House exactly what the effect of the measure would be.

The Attorney General: The Treasurer said it would net him about £140,000.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We must bear in mind that the actual deficit on the operations of the financial year 1916-17 was £600,000. I suppose the Honorary Minister for the North-West and his friends were extremely glad when they got Mr. Wilson and myself out, but they have not got rid of the deficit. If I were capable of making the same mess as the Honorary Minister for the North-West makes, I should admit being a very dreadful Minister. According to the acting Premier, the deficit this year will be something like £600,000. Let me point out the position in regard to revenue and expenditure for last year. I am astounded to find that there has been no economy really, except in the business and trading concerns controlled by the Minister for Works. It is an extraordinary thing that during this year which we are told has been so bad, the general revenue is £101,000 more than the revenue for the previous year. True, there is £30,000 less revenue from business undertakings, but then there is considerably less expenditure on those undertakings. But £100,000 more revenue is made up as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out by taxation to the tune of £62,000. Then there are reimbursements, loan moneys transferred. There is a strange item of £29,000 from timber revenue, but if members look for a debit amongst the figures just published they will not find it. There is no entry on the expenditure side. It is not on the trading or business concerns, therefore it must be forestry. On the expenditure side we find £50,000 less this year than last. When one analyses the figures, one finds that the business concerns expended less by £70,000. Then the Agricultural Bank item has disappeared altogether. There has been no expenditure by the bank this year at all. There was £28,000 last year. Then there is the loss by the Railway Commissioner on food supplies. A sum of £45,000 was charged up last year. I admit that under special Acts £63,000 was spent more than in the previous year, but the revenue expenditure appears to be £93,000 more this year than last apart from business concerns altogether. The House must have some regard to the position. We are told there must be economy, but the whole economy appears to have been in the trading concerns. The Treasurer expended more, the Mines Department has spent less, the Agricultural Department has spent less, but other departments all appear to have spent more. The Treasurer is asking the House to agree to a super tax for six months



of the period which Mr. Wilson wished to tax when Treasurer. In addition to the super tax the Government is collecting double land tax over the same period and without the authority of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: It ought not to be paid then.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is being collected. When we come to the taxes in the Bill I shall endeavour to reduce them in Committee. The Treasurer is making every post a winning post. Every Bill that has come down to the House this session has been a taxation measure of some description. We have been engaged the whole of this session in putting on taxation of some kind.

Hon. P. Collier: The greatest avalanche of taxation we ever had.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If Mr. Wilson was not justified in asking for taxation, what about now. The business and trading concerns have rectified the position somewhat, but that has nothing to do with the ordinary functions of Government. I wish the House to realise the figures I am quoting referring to the legitimate functions of Government. If we take the graduations in this Bill we find they are very steep indeed. The present Act fixes a tax of 4d. at £500, and with a £200 exemption the tax of 4d. is only reached really at £700. This Bill goes by £50 stages, rising one penny until it gets to a very high rate in a very short time; £750 pays 1s. 3d. in the pound, that is the last £50 of that amount. The Acting Treasurer says that the man receiving £7,000 ought only to pay 1s. 3d. I hope the House will agree to alter the graduation. I intend to move some amendments. The tax at £1,500 is 1s. 3d., and 2s. 6d. on £5,000. The present Bill puts a tax of 2s. 6d. at £1,500 and then it begins to fall away again. I do not know how it is justified. It is an extraordinary proposal. I hope the schedule will be altered and the graduations made reasonable, much more reasonable than they are at present. We have to remember that the Federal taxation is very high and that there are other imposts that have to be paid and we must recollect that this money is really for paying off a dead horse. If it were being expended in the development of the country there would be some hope, but there is no hope so far as I see. However, some taxation has to be paid and we must fact it. What we want to see is that that taxation is made fair. A man who receives £5,000 a year can afford to pay a reasonable amount. We were told the other night that a man receiving £156 could afford to pay. I think the £200 exemption which we have now should apply to everybody. We were told that it was nothing for a man to pay 1s. a week, but it is a difficult thing for a man getting under £200 a year to find a few shillings for taxation. I do not believe in undue taxation and I hope these rates will be very much reduced. However, we must have money now and therefore must pay a higher rate than we do at present. In Committee we ought to endeavour to alter the exemption and make it £200 as at the present time. If it had not been for the fact that the expenditure was much greater than in the previous year, there might have been a very different state

of affairs. In Committee I shall endeavour to alter the taxes and make the impost far more reasonable.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [10.30]: I wish to take this opportunity to ask for an explanation from the Minister on the subject of bringing into line the State and Federal taxation dates. It was generally understood throughout the community that the taxpayers would only be asked to pay a half year's tax, but when the returns were lodged and the assessments came out, the assessments, of course, were only for that half year. Recently further assessments have been issued by the Commissioner and I have had many inquiries from people in my electorate who cannot understand why the additional assessments have been issued.

Hon. P. Collier: The object is to try and make every farmer an accountant.

Mr. MALEY: The farmers are worried and in a state of despair. This is one letter which I have received from a constituent—

As our representative in Parliament, I wish to bring before your notice what appears to me as something grossly wrong in connection with my land tax assessment as between 30th December, 1916, and 30th June, 1917, which, as you will see, covers a period of six months and for which I am charged a full year's rate. I am aware that it was decided to bring State taxation dates into line with the Federal dates, but I never for one moment dreamt, nor could I see anything put forward at the time which would lead a taxpayer to believe that he would be charged a full year's rate as between the dates above mentioned, and like a great number of others, I expected to have to pay a half year's rate only for that period. I enclose endorsement which was on my assessment notice, which shows conclusively that a full year's rate is intended for that period and that it is the clear intention of the department to exploit land owners in a most shameful manner for six months' tax. There was a rubber stamp notice on the assessment, setting out that a full year's tax was payable on all land owned on the 30th June, 1917. I think an explanation is certainly due to the House from the Minister on this subject so that the atmosphere may be cleared. I have asked the Commissioner myself but I fail to understand the reply which he gave me.

Hon. P. Collier: The fact is that in this Bill the Government propose to take the power to make people pay a full year's tax for half a year.

Mr. MALEY: Nearly every member of the House thought it was only intended to assess for the half year, and if hon. members themselves are so confused over the matter we can imagine the state of irritation amongst the taxpayers. With regard to the second reading of the Bill, I have only this to say, that if the object is to reduce the higher income assessments so as to bring them into line with those proposed for dividends, then for that reason only I am not prepared to support those proposals in Committee.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [10.35]: I want to make my position clear with regard to this matter and with regard to taxation in the State at the present time. I notice there is an amendment to be proposed by the Government to make this Bill one which will have to be introduced to the House every year. That will give an opportunity to each and every member to consider the Bill as it will be affected by the then existing conditions. That is a wise precaution, but on the matter of taxation generally I have secured my seat in this Chamber, after having gone before my constituents with a certain policy. Every man in Western Australia at present living here and working here, and having the right to earn money, should contribute something towards the upkeep of this State, because there are other men who were in the State and who would be doing this work and earning money here but for the fact that they are fighting a battle for the liberty of this country far from the shores of Australia. Irrespective of whether a man is earning £150 a year or whether he has a profit of £20,000 a year, I consider he should pay taxation. Even recently, since I was elected to this House, I have visited my constituency and we find now that the same electors have returned to Parliament those men who held the same views as I do regarding taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not know what view the people in the back country take, but all the National Labour candidates at Kalgoorlie and Boulder most emphatically opposed any alteration of the exemption.

Mr. FOLEY: I did not, and the candidates who recently sought election to the other House, who hold similar views to mine, were returned by a majority of five to one.

Hon. P. Collier: But Mr. Ardagh most emphatically opposed the alteration of the exemption.

Mr. FOLEY: I am just as desirous, and always have been as desirous as anyone in this Chamber, of safeguarding the interests of those on the lower rung of the ladder, namely, the wage earners. If a man is making a profit to any appreciable extent at the present time he should pay taxation in accordance with what he is making. I think there should be no flat rate over £1,500, and if an amendment is moved to cut out that flat rate, whether the profit is made by an individual or by a company, I will vote for it.

Mr. Green: It cannot be done.

Mr. FOLEY: I am sorry that it cannot. Nobody wants taxation if it can be avoided. I am not altogether satisfied that everything has been done by this or any previous Ministry in respect of keeping right down on economy. It is all very well for the leader of the Opposition to say that if he were appointed a Royal Commissioner he could save thousands of pounds. If that is so, I say he was negligent in his duty when, as a Minister of the Crown, he neglected an opportunity for making those savings.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The need for economy was not then so great.

Mr. FOLEY: The need for economy was equally as great when Mr. Scaddan was Premier as it is now.

Hon. P. Collier: There was not then the same opportunity for effecting economies as there is to-day.

Mr. FOLEY: I contend that the hon. member should have made economies when he was in office. Only recently an hon. member said that the National Laborites had sores to lick and were licking them.

Hon. P. Collier: Who said that?

Mr. FOLEY: An hon. member of this Chamber, and it was published in the Press. Whenever there has been a straight-out battle between a National Labourite and a Labourite the National Labourite has won. I secured a majority by advocating what I am advocating now. If hon. members think that I am going to sit down and allow them to declare they have a monopoly of everything that pertains to the working man, I propose to ask the public to look at the results of the elections of those who advocated the policy I am advocating now.

Mr. Green: You had all the Tories of the North with you.

Mr. FOLEY: The same arguments that were put forward by hon. members here were put forward on the goldfields recently, and cut no ice.

Mr. Munsie: Not one in ten of the electors had a vote, or the arguments would have cut ice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question is that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. Green: The hon. member is blowing hard, as usual.

Mr. FOLEY: He does not blow hot and cold.

Mr. Green: Yes, he does. There is no bigger twister in the House.

Mr. FOLEY: Kalgoorlie tried to get two members, with what result?

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order, if the hon. member is going to discuss elections, I claim a similar privilege.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already drawn the hon. member's attention to the fact that the motion is that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. FOLEY: Irrespective of whether a man is earning £156 or making £20,000, hon. members opposite will find me voting with them if there is any injustice being done.

Mr. Munsie: You did not vote with us when we wanted to keep the £200 exemption.

Mr. FOLEY: Because I have always been against it.

Mr. Munsie: That is why at three successive conferences you kept your mouth shut on the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOLEY: Irrespective of whether a man is earning £156 or £20,000, I want to see him taxed. If my friends opposite are for anything just and fair they will find me with them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you not think it just to grant exemption to the £4 a week man?

Mr. FOLEY: I have already given my views on that. If this State is affording a man

an opportunity for earning money at present I contend he should pay tax, because others are doing far more under worse conditions for less money, fighting for the freedom the taxpayer is enjoying.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [10.50]: Towards the end of 1914 Mr. Scaddan introduced a Bill providing for an exemption from taxation of £100. I have listened attentively to the debate, and consider that most of the hon. members sitting opposite are inconsistent in the attitude they are adopting.

Mr. O'Loughlin: I hope we were not as inconsistent as the Government you are supporting.

Mr. DAVIES: I want to enter my protest against the utterances of the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) when he referred to a conversation he had with me. I always thought that conversations which took place between members in a private way were regarded as confidential. I only hope that members will regard such conversations in that light for the future.

Mr. O'Loughlin: To what are you referring?

Mr. DAVIES: To the member for Hannans when he referred to a conversation he had with me, when I said I had only seen the schedule of the Bill. That was a paltry thing in the extreme. I would not have referred to the matter if so much had not been made out of the fact that the present Government intended levying a tax upon the poor workers of the State. The minimum wage in the State, when Mr. Scaddan proposed his tax, was 9s. a day. At the present time it is 9s. 7d. Mr. Scaddan was calling upon the man in receipt of £150 a year to pay an annual tax of 30s. The Bill was, however, defeated in another place.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It was for one year.

Mr. DAVIES: It has also been argued that the Bill was brought in for a special purpose.

Mr. O'Loughlin: The present Treasurer and all his party supported it.

Mr. DAVIES: I am prepared to admit that this is one of the reasons why the Bill was brought down. It will be of interest to members if I repeat the words which Mr. Scaddan used on that occasion. He said—

To be perfectly candid, although I regret having to make the statement, I really believe that even the existence of the war between His Majesty and His Majesty's enemies in Europe would not alone create the necessity for the introduction of this Bill at this stage. Notwithstanding the war in Europe, or if the war had not taken place, it would have been necessary to introduce this tax.

If it was necessary to introduce the tax then I say it is necessary to do so now. Members will recollect that when I addressed myself to the general discussion on the Estimates I did not know what the taxation proposals of the Government were, nor did I care. I said I had been returned to the House, and was prepared to support a tax, and would support an exemption of £156 for married men. I also said I was prepared to support an exemption of £26 per child, and to give single men the same exemption as married men, provided they had the same responsibility. I said this before I knew what the taxation proposals of the Government

were. I did know what the Premier had said in his policy speech at Moora, and that he intended reducing the exemption to £150. I fought the election, and was asked on more than one occasion what my attitude was towards the taxation proposals of the Lefroy Government. I said that I differed from the Premier in certain matters of detail, that I would support an exemption of £156, when his was for £150, and would support an exemption of £26 for each child, and give the single man the same exemption as the married man. I was returned. The member for Hannans observed that I had got in by a fluke, but I actually got in by one of the biggest majorities in the State, although I supported a reduction in the exemption. Members opposite talk about the poor working man. He did not thank members opposite.

Mr. Green: Every time you speak you attack Labour.

Mr. DAVIES: The minimum wage in the Government service to-day is 10s. Even if the exemption is taken away altogether it is impossible to hurt the man who cannot pay, the man who is regarded as being below the poverty point. I am at one with hon. members who say if an attempt is made to tax the man who is at poverty point the only thing to do is to advise him to become a passive resister. What has happened since Mr. Scaddan's taxation proposals?

Mr. O'Loughlin: Wages have increased 7d. a day and the cost of living over 6s. a week.

Mr. DAVIES: We still have the exemption for married men and the allowance of £20 for each child, and there are few married men in the State who have less than two children. The married man with two children would, therefore, be exempt if he was earning £196 per annum. And yet members opposite prate about the poor men of the State.

Mr. O'Loughlin: You seem more inclined to defend the big man than the small.

Mr. DAVIES: It is not fair of the hon. member to make such a statement. He may do it for a purpose.

Mr. O'Loughlin: We will see when we get into Committee.

Mr. DAVIES: Unless we get taxation we are going to have retrenchment in the Government service.

Mr. O'Loughlin: And we want some of it.

Mr. DAVIES: What are we going to do with the men we retrench? Even if we get the taxation that we are after it will not give us all that we require. If we are going to retrench we must not do it indiscriminately. Members opposite must not forget the plank in their platform regarding the right to work. If the Government put a man out of the Midland Junction workshops it is their duty to find him employment elsewhere. The same thing applies to all Government employment.

Mr. O'Loughlin: What about the thousands in private employment who have been put out of work?

Mr. DAVIES: They have a right to get employment in the State.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Many of them have been unable to get it.

Mr. DAVIES: The duty devolves upon the Government to find employment for them, but

can the Government perform that duty if they have not any money?

Mr. Willcock: They do not carry out that principle in the case of returned soldiers.

Mr. DAVIES: If they can, they do. There are men being put out of employment at the Midland Junction workshops to-day in order to provide work for returned soldiers. The others are walking the streets because they can find no employment.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Mr. Scaddan said that when introducing his Bill, but all your colleagues denounced him.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member was over on this side of the House in those days, and the members who were criticising him and his party are on this side to-day, and he is criticising them. I have come into this House as a new member knowing nothing of the criticism which has passed between the two parties; and I ask hon. members to lift the debate back on the high level reached by the leader of the Opposition this evening. That hon. gentleman said he was prepared to assist the Government in every way. What is the use of members sitting opposite each other and barking at each other when there are honest attempts to lift the State out of its difficulties? A cry has gone up about the £200 exemption. But there is in the Labour platform a plank asking for an exemption of £250. Therefore hon. members opposite have already broken a plank of their platform by subscribing to an exemption of £200. Moreover, the most democratic Government that Australia ever had, the Fisher Government, introduced into the Federal Parliament an Income Tax Bill with an exemption of £156. During the debates of 1914 and 1915 here on income taxation, not one argument was brought forward either by a member of the then Government or by any member supporting that Government in favour of increasing the allowance for children beyond £10; and now the members of that party grumble at members on this side because they do not support the allowance of £20 for each child.

Mr. Green: Cannot you do something besides attack the Labour party, just for a change?

Mr. DAVIES: I am not attacking the Labour party. I merely say that the position to-day is reversed from the position of 1914. I am reminded by that interjection of the fact that the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) was very unkind to me personally. The hon. member referred to the fact that I had crossed over three or four times to vote with the Opposition, as I did last night. Instead of giving one credit for doing as one's conscience dictates, the hon. member said that I crossed the floor last night in order to appease my electors. That statement is entirely wrong. If such interpretations are to be placed on the actions of members in this House, what is the business of Parliament coming to?

Mr. O'Loughlen: What are your views on the reduction of taxation on the bigger incomes?

Mr. DAVIES: I daresay they are exactly the same as those of the hon. member interjecting. I am only following the course which was followed by the Labour party in 1914. I

then subscribed to their taxation proposals, and I assisted the party in the country. They came back with a reduced majority. Why? Because the men who are to-day the greatest critics of the taxation proposed by the Government would not agree to the taxation proposals of the Scaddan Government. If I chose to use private conversation, as has been done here to-day, I could show that the Trades Hall sent the Scaddan Government back to power with a reduced majority because that Government endeavoured to bring in taxation for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed.

Mr. Munsie: That statement is absolutely incorrect. The taxation to find employment for unemployed workers was introduced after the general election was over; and you know it.

Mr. DAVIES: But I am using Mr. Scaddan's words. He said, "You have come here to-day to ask me to find employment for the unemployed."

Mr. Munsie: That was in 1915.

Mr. DAVIES: It was in 1914 that this taxation was introduced.

Mr. Munsie: On a point of order. The hon. member is misquoting "Hansard." The taxation of 1914 was never specified to be used in finding work for the unemployed. That refers to the 1915 taxation.

Mr. DAVIES: I will now quote from "Hansard" the speech delivered by Mr. Scaddan on the 9th September, 1914—

No measure I have been called upon to introduce into Parliament has given me so much thought, and perhaps to be candid, I may say so much pain, as this. It is regrettable that it should be necessary to introduce a measure of this kind, because one has to appreciate the fact that it will, to some extent, change the channels through which money is already passing, and to a lesser extent will be harmful. At the same time I hold that the conditions prevailing at the moment, and which are likely to continue for some time to come, are such that, in my duty to the State and the people, I am compelled to introduce this, a tax of an emergency nature. I want hon. members to clearly understand that it has not been introduced without a great deal of thought; in fact, the matter of introducing a tax of this nature has been before the public for some time. It is true that we have not entered into a discussion either in regard to the necessity for or the incidence of such a tax, but at the same time we have been using all the time that could be spared upon it to obtain all possible particulars from different parts of the country and from departmental officers, in order to arrive at something that would meet the case without bearing unduly on the people. To be perfectly candid, although I regret having to make the statement, I really believe that even the existence of a war between His Majesty and His Majesty's enemies in Europe would not alone create the necessity for the introduction of the Bill at this stage. I am not saying that such a tax would not be necessary, did the war continue any length of time, even under normal conditions locally; but we are, unfortunately, faced with other difficulties which must be met. If hon. members will read the preamble of the Bill, it will give them a better idea of the reason for the introduction of the measure. It is as

follows:—"Whereas it is necessary and expedient in the present hostilities between His Majesty and His Majesty's enemies, and in the existing depression in the agricultural industry, to make provision for the additional expenditure by the Government thereby directly or indirectly caused, including the relief of the unemployed." Hon. members will see from this that the Bill is introduced for a twofold purpose.

The Premier had already met the party.

Mr. Munsie: No.

Mr. DAVIES: Or met the Cabinet.

Mr. Munsie: Do not say "The party."

Mr. DAVIES: I was one of the representatives of the unemployed who met the party, and who asked the party to provide work for the unemployed. Does the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) recollect what resolution was carried on that occasion?

Mr. Munsie: Yes.

Mr. DAVIES: After four or five hours' solid discussion a motion was moved and carried to the effect that the relationship between the outside and the inside bodies of the metropolitan A.L.F. was much improved. What was my reply to the carrying of that resolution? I asked, was I to take back that resolution to hungry men and women, to workless men with families? I say the relationship in question should not have ever been impaired.

Mr. Munsie: It would not have been, but for the like of you.

Mr. DAVIES: That is not fair.

Mr. Munsie: It is absolutely true.

Mr. DAVIES: The reasonable members on the opposite side of the House will never agree with that assertion, although the extremists may.

Mr. Green: Every member on this side will subscribe to the statement. The reference to extremists comes well from you, seeing that you were an out-and-out red-ragger.

Mr. DAVIES: Mr. Scaddan's speech continues:

For instance we propose in this Bill, in order to prevent too many returns being made which is usually the case in all income tax acts, that the employer shall deduct the amount of the tax from the salaries or wages he is paying to his employees.

That has been described by members opposite as something which is iniquitous and something which is in contravention of the Truck Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Be fair because the Bill was introduced at the request of the employees.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member's own Bill provided all that.

Mr. Munsie: That was the Bill that was introduced for the purpose or raising funds for the unemployed; the other did not.

Mr. DAVIES: The member for Northam interjected when Mr. Scaddan was speaking—"They will not have anything to pay with." Of course they would not. Mr. Scaddan then went on—

If an employer had engaged as some employers have, as many as 500 or 600 men he would naturally have difficulty in deciding who were married and who were single. He would merely have to take the word of the employees. Jones, for instance would expect that he would have to pay a greater amount of tax if he declared that he was single, and he would immediately say that he was a married man.

Those are Mr. Scaddan's words urging that the tax should be collected per medium of the wages

sheet. I supported Mr. Scaddan at that time. Hon. members opposite did not raise their voices in opposition. The Bill was defeated in the Legislative Council. There was not one word of protest from any member sitting opposite. If hon. members did protest they must have done so within the confines of their bed chambers where no-one could hear them. Mr. Scaddan went on—

I am not saying this from the point of view that it would be impossible to put this into operation, but we consider that it would be better for the purpose of this tax to make one single exemption and provide that it should be under £100 as is shown in the schedule. Therefore, a man drawing under 6s. 5d. a day will be exempt from payment. If the salary received per month is £8 6s. 8d. a person will be called upon to pay 1s. 8d., being one per cent. on the month's income. That cannot be claimed to be very heavy. If the salary or wages be 9s. 7d. per day or £12 10s. per month or at the rate of £150 per annum, the tax would be 2s. 6d. per month, deducted from the £12 10s. If the salary or wage be 12s. 10d. per day or £16 13s. 4d. per month, equal to £200, a tax of 6s. 8d. would be deducted which is at the rate of 2 per cent. on the income. On an income of £20 6s. 8d. per month or 16s. a day, equal to £250 per annum the amount deducted would be 8s. 4d. On 19s. 3d. per day or £25 per month, equal to £300 per annum, and this will interest hon. members, the amount would be 15s. per month or at the rate of 3 per cent.

Mr. Teesdale: Hon. members opposite were fair bandits then.

Mr. DAVIES: I supported the tax then because the country was in need of revenue in order to provide work for the unemployed and there will be unemployed again unless the present Government can raise money with which to carry on the affairs of the country.

Mr. Munsie: To-day the industries cannot find men to work them.

Mr. DAVIES: If the taxation measure was a virtue in 1914 why is it regarded as a crime by hon. members opposite to-day?

Mr. Munsie: Quote the 1915 Bill.

Mr. DAVIES: Then Mr. Scaddan went on explaining the Bill in detail and the member for Northam interjected "That is a lovely tax." It is fair to the member for Northam to say that he has been consistent right through on the question of taxation. Mr. Scaddan went on—

It seems a large amount, I will admit, but at the same time the amount which will be required will be large.

Mr. Frank Wilson interjected, "What is the Commissioner of Taxation's computation?" and Mr. Scaddan went on—

The Commissioner was not prepared to state what this tax would provide; he said it would really be guess work.

Mr. Scaddan told the House that he would get half a million of money from that tax out of the people. What was that for? Certainly to provide work for the unemployed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: More than to find work for the unemployed.

Mr. DAVIES: That Bill provided that the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act of 1907 was to be incorporated and read as one with it, subject to the provisions of the Bill and to modifications, as if £156 were inserted in lieu of £200. If a man was on a basic wage of £156 he would pay no tax. If he received £157, under Mr. Scaddan's proposals,

he would pay £1, and if he was in receipt of £158 he would still pay £1. Hon. members opposite are acquainted with that measure. I appeal to hon. members to support the Bill which we have before us now. They must know that the money is required to enable the affairs of the country to be carried on. If the Bill is not passed there will have to be big retrenchment and consequent unemployment. Unless the Government have means to find employment for those men, what are their wives and children to do? Hundreds of men are returning from the Front, and those men cannot be employed. There is only one employer they can look to, namely, the Government. I ask members to remember the plank they subscribed to, namely, the right to work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [11-21]: I hope the hon. member will be gratified by the applause he got, because it is all from the most reactionary section of the Chamber.

Mr. Green: Thirty pieces of silver for Judas.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In the first place the hon. member spoke in strong language against the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), who was supposed to have said something in private conversation, and the hon. member then repeated a private conversation he heard elsewhere himself.

Mr. Davies: I did not mention names.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want the hon. member to use the phrase used from time to time in this House by one who, in his time was the father of the Assembly. He used to say, "Whatever you be, be fair." The hon. member dealt with the Taxation Bill introduced by the Government of 1914, prior to the general elections, at a time when it was found almost impossible to get money to keep the farmer on his land, at a time when, in consequence of the drought, the farmers were crying out for bread, when it was found that the revenue of the State could not provide for the claims made against it, and the Government of the day were faced with the position that money must be found to assist those on the land to enable them to remain there. I was in charge of the Charities Department at the time, and there were brought before me appalling cases of distress among the farming community.

Mr. Griffiths: I thought you said the other day that there was no poverty on the land.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; I said that, owing to the action of the Labour Government, the Royal Commission could find none. The hon. member is entirely wrong. But at the time the Bill was introduced we were experiencing conditions worse than any we had previously known. I might tell the hon. member that the Bill was introduced not as a party measure, but as a Government measure. It was introduced under exceptional circumstances. War had just broken out, and no person knew what the consequences would be. Having the custody of the well-being of the State, and realising that distress existed in the farming community, we felt it our duty to ask those who were in employment to contribute to the alleviation of the distress of those who had no employment. The Bill was introduced as an emergency tax. We did not wait for the tax, but we began to build up the deficit by assisting the farmer. Immediately our attention was drawn to the necessitous condition of any man on the land he got assistance. As I have said, I was in charge of the Charities Department, and I instructed the officers to see that no man on the land was in actual distress.

Mr. Griffiths: Did you say that the deficit was built up by assisting the farmers?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. I said we did not wait for the tax, but went ahead straightaway. After getting over the temporary difficulties of the farmer, and finding Parliament would not agree to raise the money for the assistance of the farmer in this way, we had to go on the loan market for the purpose. A few months afterwards things were getting worse in respect of other workers in the community, owing to the war and the drought. Many employers were putting off hands. The farmer in particular could not afford to employ hands. Thousands drifted into the City, and we appealed again with a lesser tax, asking Parliament to grant temporary taxation to enable those persons to be temporarily assisted. Parliament for the second time refused our request. That tax was specially earmarked for the employment of the unemployed. What was the result? There was scarcely a union in the State whose members were not contributing to a fund for the unemployed. Public subscriptions had to be raised from those least able to contribute for the assistance of the unemployed, who had to be provided with charity work. I think it would have been far better to-day if we had had taxation instead of having so many patriotic and charitable funds in existence. Again, I ask the hon. member to be fair. The two Bills were introduced under special conditions. Since the State Parliament refused to allow the Labour party to impose increased taxation the Federal authorities have imposed an income tax which did not exist in 1914 and 1915, when the Bills were introduced. To-day we have to pay two income taxes when at that time we only had to pay one. This is one alteration which the hon. member has overlooked. Further, according to Mr. Knibbs there is a difference between the cost of groceries and other food between then and 1917 of 4s. 1d. in the pound. The hon. member will also admit that clothing and other necessities have gone up in price. The worker to-day is, therefore, facing a position entirely different from that which he had to face in 1914. He has to pay a Federal tax now, and an additional tax for the profiteer, and the value of his £3 a week is reduced to something like 12s. 3d. for food only. We have to deal with this question as it exists to-day. While the man who was earning his £3 a week in 1914 could have paid the tax he would still be having considerably more than he is earning to-day in spite of increase in his wages.

Mr. Davies: To-day we are not touching the man below £156.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was £100 then, but the second Bill provided for £156. To-day in this taxation measure provision is being made not for 1d. in the pound, but for 2d. in the pound. In the 1914 and the 1914-15 proposals the tax was 1d., and double that amount is being asked to-day.

Mr. Davies: Your minimum in 1915 was £1.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It started as 1d. but it is double that to-day. It is proposed in the second Bill that immediately a man gets £1,450 a year his tax is reduced 50 per cent., but in both of Mr. Scaddan's Bills when a man reached £1,500 his tax was not decreased at all. We have a perfect right to criticise, therefore, because the present Government are putting an increased tax upon the worker in addition to the increase which he is called upon to bear in the cost of living.

Mr. Davies: I was only criticising your exemptions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member was criticising what took place in 1914-15, and I am endeavouring to show the conditions which existed then as compared with those which exist now, as justification for the action we took then and are taking to-day. The Treasurer provided that on incomes of over £1,450 a sum of 2s. 6d. in the pound will be paid up to £1,500. We also have a second Bill before us—an unheard-of proceeding—which states that if a man's income increases from £1,500 to £2,000 on the additional £500 he shall pay 1s. 3d. in the pound. This means that because a man is getting a larger income he is not in a position to be taxed to the same extent. In the Bill, which the hon. member has criticised so much, the tax was 15 per cent., and it has to continue at that.

Mr. Davies: I find no fault with that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member cannot see the difference between what existed then and what exists now.

Mr. Davies: My only criticisms were in regard to the exemptions.

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Stubbs) took the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The conditions are now totally different. The position of our finances is not as black as it is painted. We have been told that our indebtedness per head of population is so much more than the Eastern States, but we cannot make the necessary comparison for the reason that in the Eastern States there have been formed many boards which carry out public works and have borrowing powers, and whose debts are not attached to the indebtedness of the State. In Western Australia all such work is carried out by the State. It is therefore impossible to strike a fair comparison, and it is not fair to say that Western Australia is in a worse position than the Eastern States.

Mr. Davies: The married man with two children is in a better position to-day than he was then because of the increase in the exemption.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The married man to-day with £200 exemption is not in as good a position as he was in 1914 by the Bill which was introduced, for to-day he is paying a Federal tax. In fact, a man on £3 a week now has 12s. 3d. less income on account of the increased price of the goods that he must buy. One could indeed safely add another 3s. to that 12s. 3d. for clothing and other necessaries. I would not have dealt with the matter at all except for the unfair criticism of the hon. member. I believe all right thinking people condemn severely the action of the Government in introducing this second Bill. A man in receipt of £2,000 a year can better afford to pay the high tax than can a man receiving only £1,500. The Treasurer has said, in effect, that the only doubt he had was whether he had not done wrong in failing to carry the graduated scale higher. In his absence the scale has been reduced. It might be argued that under the reduced scale there is a possibility of bringing more money into the State for the building up of industries. But that is all rot. If a man sees a chance of earning an income of £2,000 here—and let it be remembered that he pays only on his clear income—is the prospect of being taxed to the extent of an extra 1s. 3d. going to keep him away from this State? No. The position in Australia is such that a man with money to start a large manufacturing business would go to the centre of Australia for distribution purposes.

Mr. Griffiths: You are now speaking of large concerns.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is only large concerns that can enter into competition. A large concern would establish itself in the centre of Australia, with a view to obtaining the cheapest means of transit all over Australia. We have had clear proof of that in this State. Look at the hundreds of thousands of pounds sent out of this State for agricultural implements during years and years. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) inserted in the Agricultural Bank Act of 1907 a section empowering the Agricultural Bank to lend money at a specially low rate for the purchase of agricultural machinery that should be manufactured in the State of Western Australia. But the total number of harvesters manufactured here would be only about 20. The years have passed on since that enactment was made, and no agricultural machinery except a few ploughs have been manufactured in Western Australia. And in the face of that fact we are told that by reducing the income tax on incomes of over £1,500 from 2s. 6d. to 1s. 3d. we shall gain an opportunity of attracting people with capital to start industries here.

Mr. Pickering: Do you think that increasing the taxation will bring them here?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A man who could see that he was going to earn another £500 a year would not consider the extra 1s. 3d. at all. The member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) says by his actions, if not by his words, that this tax is all right.

Mr. Davies: Do not put words into my mouth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I said that the hon. member had declared it by his actions, not by his words. At the present time the man on £3 a week loses about 16s. per week owing to the increased prices of goods. Moreover, he has to pay Federal income tax, which he had not to pay in 1914. And yet the member for Guildford says that he fails to see any difference between the position in 1914 and the position to-day. I am not at present concerned with what a man's earnings may be; I am taking the general wage earner throughout the State.

Mr. Davies: I am concerned on behalf of the lower-paid man.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Guildford took us on this side to task because three years ago we supported something of this kind under conditions almost of compulsion, on account of the drought and the war, over which matters we had no control. But to-day the conditions are entirely different.

Mr. Davies: Why did you not take it out of the highly paid man, instead of getting down on the man at £156?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We did; and that was one of the reasons why our taxation Bill was defeated. Had the hon. member followed the subject closely at the time, he would have realised that fact. We proposed a tax of 15 per cent. Our proposal was that an income of £2,000 a year, or £166 13s. 4d. per month, should contribute £25 per month to the State. That was the reason, and the only reason, why our taxation proposal was defeated.

Hon. P. Collier: It was said that our proposed taxation would be the heaviest in the world.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The tax on the worker was used by our opponents to lead the people astray, to make the workers think that they were to be heavily penalised. One heard very little, though, about the 15 per cent. tax. The worker,

was bluffed, with a view to his being used against the Government.

Mr. Davies: My regret was that you touched the exemption at all. Had you not touched it then, I would have supported £200 now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member did support £200 last night.

Mr. Davies: But, as stated by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), there is no exemption until a certain amount is reached.

Mr. Griffiths: What does the taxation on the £3 a week man amount to, after all? Sevenpence halfpenny a week.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for York can bark now that his party have, by an intrigue, escaped this taxation.

Mr. Griffiths: That is an infernal lie.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for York will withdraw that observation.

Mr. Griffiths: I withdraw, Sir, and I say the statement is incorrect. The member for North-East Fremantle should speak the truth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I always do, and the member for York should do the same.

Mr. Griffiths: I take exception to that, and ask that the hon. member should withdraw.

Hon. P. Collier: You made the statement first.

Mr. Griffiths: I withdraw my statement.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am quite willing to withdraw my statement if it is objectionable to the hon. member. I would not hurt the hon. member's feelings for a moment because I am afraid he might worry, he might lose some sleep. The hon. member, in his statement in regard to the amount of the tax per week, is quite justified in throwing off. Why did he object? He was willing to vote for the man earning £3 or £4 a week to pay the tax so long as he was let off payment.

Mr. Griffiths: Who said that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is the arrangement that was made. I do not care who denies it.

Mr. Johnston: Every man is free to do as he likes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I thought the hon. member would deny it again, I would quote what I did last night. It ill-becomes members representing the interests which they do to jeer at the working man and say he only has to pay 7½d. a week, especially after the influence they have used. The working man has to pay two taxes.

Mr. Broun: You must admit that a double tax is unjust.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it is unjust for the country it is unjust for the town.

Mr. Johnston: Every man who owns land in Hay-street is dealt with in the same way as the man in the country. He does not have to pay the double tax.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is only in regard to places of business.

Mr. Johnston: It applies to every cottage in Perth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member has shifted his ground entirely. The position to-day is the same as it has been all along. With the man in the country, if his income is greater than his land tax, he does not pay land tax at all. The £200 exemption is far better for the ordinary farmer, especially if the member's statement is true that ordinary farmers have no income. The hon. member must surely be aware that the man who owns town property has to pay income tax and land tax as well.

Mr. Broun: He only pays the greater of the two.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He does not.

Mr. Johnston: I say he does.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members must cease interjecting. We cannot get on with the business if there is this constant cross-firing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If what the member for Williams-Narrogin says is true, then ever since the land tax has been in force I have been charged wrongly, and there are thousands of persons in the State who are similarly situated. I do not think the Taxation Commissioner would assess me for land tax every year if I was not entitled to pay it and I have continued to pay that tax ever since there has been a land tax. I hope many amendments will be made in Committee. The man who is receiving the larger income should pay a fair tax for the upkeep of the State. It is not right to say that the worker pays nothing. The worker has been paying all the time through the Customs.

Mr. Broun: So does every man.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the statement has been made that the working man has never paid anything. He has paid all the time through the Customs, so that he has been contributing something towards the revenue of the State, and in addition there are many instances where he has been paying the land tax. I instanced a case last night where business people at Fremantle had their rents increased considerably, and where the landlord told them that they would have to pay the increased taxation imposed by the Federal Parliament. The increased rents, of course, are passed on to the worker, who has to pay a higher price for his goods. In Committee I hope hon. members will realise that if they reduce the amount from 2s. 6d. to 1s. 3d. above £1,500, it will be one of the greatest scandals ever heard of in Australia.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [12.2 a.m.]: It is discouraging to find that the exemption which was sought to be provided for the wage-earners did not receive that sympathetic consideration in this Chamber to which it was entitled. We were told that if the exemption which we wanted had been agreed to it would have meant a loss to the State of between £5,000 and £7,000, but the proposals of the Government, which are apparently going to be swallowed whole, to exempt another class of the community, will result in the State losing anything between £20,000 and £64,000. This is the most astounding example of an income tax that I have ever heard of during my brief political existence. I have never even read of anything approaching it. The newspapers which are generally behind the Government in demanding that taxation on the higher classes shall be kept as low as possible, are against the Government on this occasion, and the pill has been too bitter even for the "West Australian" to accept. That journal, in a leading article this morning, had these remarks to offer—

Mr. Gardiner introduced Income Tax and Assessment Bills early in the year. The State Treasurer is now in the East. Parliament was recently adjourned over a few weeks, and during the adjournment a body, which is not Parliament but a caucus section of it, met and deliberated in secret with the result that the State Treasurer will not recognise his Bills when he returns.

No more striking indictment could possibly be made of the Government proposals from any political party than the words of the "West Australian." The article goes on to say—



The Labour Opposition's indictment of the Country party on account of the pressure which the latter is alleged to have put on the Government would come with better grace were not the Labourists themselves the most shocking example of the evils of the caucus system. This said, the fact remains that following the secret diplomacy of the Government caucus during the adjournment the Administration's taxation proposals now, on certain details, differ, almost as night from day, from those submitted to Parliament earlier in the year. The changes are not general: they are specific. The retention of Section 17—which allows the agriculturist a rebate of the amount of his land tax payment from the amount payable as tax on income from land—is not worthy the heroics that the Opposition spent upon it. Some member, however, might inquire what classes of rural landholders gain by the concession—how much do cultivators benefit: how much cultivators cum pastoralists: how much pastoralists? The Labour protests against the abolition of the exemption of £200, too, must have been uttered tongue in cheek. More than three years ago Mr. Scaddan introduced a Bill which, if enacted, would have taxed the recipient of £100 income £1: and the graduated increase was one per cent. on each additional £100 of income to a limit of 15 per cent. on incomes of £1,500 and over. A good purpose is likely to be served by extending the area of direct taxation, and thereby bringing home to all classes some conception of the importance of finance in government. The consideration given to single men with dependants and the increase to £20 of the exemption for children will afford considerable relief to the small wage-earners. The plea for the retention of the £200 exemption lacks strength coming from the Labour party. And it has no validity in the present circumstances of the State, which demand that citizens of nearly every financial degree shall contribute something, in proportion to their incomes, to meet the costs of administration. But having said this we are at a loss to drive the argument home because of the transformation that the tax proposals have undergone since Parliament adjourned.

I am not particularly concerned with the alteration of the clause, but I venture to say that they will find on actual operation that it will release from taxation a class already very well off, so far as this world's goods are concerned. We had a speech this evening, from the member for Guildford, which met with considerable support from the members on the other side of the Chamber. That speech, when dissected, was an attack on the Labour party. I am not concerned about the Labour party being attacked because as long as the party have been in existence in this Chamber they have had to defend themselves from many attacks made upon them by members opposite. But what I want to remark is that on the subject of taxation proposals of this kind, which are so open to criticism and question, it is surprising to hear that a member who declares that he is still as good a Labour man as ever he was, cannot find one fault so far as the proposals of the Government are concerned. The hon. member contented himself by quoting from a proposal of several years ago that the Labour Government then proposed to start with an exemption of £100 for single men and £150 for married men. Ho, however, did not mention the fact that to-day the

wealthy classes of the community, the people receiving from £1,450 a year upwards, were going to be exempted from the payment of £64,283 and would only pay £28,566. The hon. member says, in effect, let the workers be taxed. We want the money. It will inflict a hardship no doubt, but the taxation will bring in anything between £4,000 and £7,000. Not a word about the thousands that were being saved to the people in receipt of over £1,500 a year. The hon. member had the impertinence to profess that he is on the side of the worker. We cannot expect anything else from a man who becomes an apostate to his party. I have always had the highest respect for members opposite. They differ from me on political matters, but when a man becomes an apostate he cannot last. The attitude of the member for Guildford this evening has been a bitter attack upon the party to which he once belonged because we are trying to improve the condition of the wage-earners, while he forgets to raise his voice in protest against the generous treatment which it is proposed to hand out to those well able to pay. It will be interesting to see the hon. member's attitude at a later stage. It will be interesting to see how the members of the Country party who consider themselves free to vote on this question in the way they think proper, will vote.

The Minister for Works: Every member on this side of the House is free to vote as his conscience dictates.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, you come to a certain agreement in caucus and there is a certain amount of loyalty displayed. But there is another side to that question. Let us suppose that a certain Minister who has charge of an important Bill goes to another State, leaving that Bill in trust with other members of the Cabinet.

The Minister for Works: You do not suppose that he left it without understanding what the views of the others were?

Mr. GREEN: But when in a division some members of the Cabinet are found on one side of the Chamber while the others are on the other side—is that quite in accordance with the loyalty that should be shown to the absent Minister?

The Minister for Works: That division was on an entirely new proposition.

Mr. GREEN: There should have been no new proposition. By that statement the Minister for Works has entirely given the game away. There must have been some sinister influence at work—I do not mean the Country party—which determined those in control of the measure to see that the tax on incomes of over £1,450 was reduced from 2s. 6d. to 1s. 3d.

The Minister for Works: There was nothing sinister about it.

Mr. GREEN: There has been no explanation of it. This Bill in different forms has been debated for some days in this Chamber, and not one legitimate excuse has been proffered for the amendment.

The Minister for Works: No excuse is needed, and there is nothing sinister about it.

Mr. GREEN: Not in any other civilised country with responsible Government has there been a parallel case of taxation rising steadily to a certain point and then ceasing and lowering just when it begins to touch the gentlemen making immense fortunes. Let us compare this with the income taxation in New South Wales. There the exemption is £250, and when they arrive at £20,000 they ask for £1,280 or 15s. 10d. The proposal here is £1,250, only there is no exemption for a single man on £100 a year. Yet in New South Wales

they have what is known as the property tax, which increases that amount from £1,289 to £1,719 as against our £1,250. And another feature in regard to the proposal of the Government is this: that in every other State of the Commonwealth there is an excess charge for a property tax against the rates given here. In New South Wales if the income is from property it is one-third greater. In Victoria they extract double rates from property, in Queensland property is from 10 to 15 per cent. greater, in South Australia it is double, in Tasmania it is an increased rate, and so too under the Federal proposal. I fully expect that Ministers will put the "half-Wilson" on Gardiner when he returns, and ask him to walk the plank. I expect that when he gets back and finds his Bill emasculated he will resign, if he is not simply a frothy humbug.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing Mr. Gardiner.

Mr. GREEN: But we are discussing Mr. Gardiner's Bill and the present Government's Bill. The Bill for which Mr. Gardiner was responsible has been so mutilated that Mr. Gardiner may well feel some of the heat which I feel.

The Minister for Works: Well, let him carry his own burden.

Mr. GREEN: Why not display a little loyalty towards him when he is away?

The Minister for Works: It is for him to express an opinion about that.

Mr. GREEN: I expect the whole country will express an opinion about it. The daily newspapers have already taken it up.

The Minister for Works: That does not make any difference; you know nothing whatever about it.

Mr. GREEN: When the daily newspapers, which are usually on the side of the wealthy man in this community, are so surfeited with what they no doubt consider a political job, they are constrained to show that the lower paid man cannot consistently be charged with the alteration that has been made.

The Minister for Works: We are not discussing the newspapers; we are discussing the Bill.

Mr. GREEN: I am not going to allow the Minister for Works to direct me as to what we are discussing. I am in the hands of the fair and just man who is in the Chair and who will pull me up if necessary. If the Minister for Works is so uneasy in his conscience he can retire from the Chamber. If I believe something unfair is being brought forward, I will attack it as long as I am in this Chamber. The present position is grossly unfair, and until it is explained I will continue to declare that there is some sinister influence at the back of it.

The Minister for Works: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. GREEN: If the thing is straight there should be some explanation forthcoming. If it is not straight, those responsible for the Bill will of course evade the issue and continue to let it go on without explanation. Some explanation is due from members of the Government.

The Attorney General: You will get the explanation when you give me a chance.

Mr. GREEN: It should have been given long ago. The member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) dealt, not with the Bill but with the Labour party, and tried to show that this Government were justified in taxing single men from £100 a year and married men from £150—because, forsooth, the Labour party had proposed something of the

same sort. Was there nothing else in the Bill? The sole point of the hon. member's attack was the Labour party, clearly showing that, with the bitterness of the apostate, he could not contain himself. He is not prepared to discuss a measure which is hitting at the worker. He tries to put it on all fours—

Mr. Davies: The worker will hit you when he gets a chance.

Mr. GREEN: At present the hon. member is drawing funds from a union the majority of the members of which are trying to get rid of him.

Mr. Davies: Dear, dear!

Mr. GREEN: They are trying to do this by petition. This is the hon. gentleman who will try to attack the Labour party.

Mr. Davies: For you to get in.

Mr. GREEN: I have no intention of getting in.

Mr. Davies: How many unions have you got?

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member has been asked to get out by a majority petition, and he has the hide to show there.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We are not discussing anyone's hide, but the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member dealt with the taxation proposals only as a sort of camouflage in order to attack the Labour party as to its taxation proposals of 1915. The hon. member is not worthy of further attention. The Bill he was attacking proposed to bring in half a million of money. The Bill that I am attacking, and that he should have been attacking, proposes to bring in £140,000, and allow the man with an income of over £1,450 to pay 1s. 3d. in the pound instead of 2s. 6d. as under the Treasurer's proposal.

The Minister for Works: A sum of £140,000 extra.

Mr. GREEN: Under the Seaddon Bill a man on £1,500 a year, instead of paying £93 15s., as contained in this proposal, would have been paying £225, but the hon. member forgot to mention that fact. The Bill, instead of bringing in £140,000 would have brought in £500,000, but the hon. member forgot to mention that either.

Mr. Davies: How much of that would have come from the man on 16s. 8d. a day?

Mr. GREEN: Not more than would be the case now. The hon. member has shown by his attitude that he is on the backs of the majority, getting a salary from those who want to oust him.

Mr. Davies: To let you in.

Mr. GREEN: He says "I will be a parasite, a leech, and though you do not want me I shall stick."

The Minister for Works: What has this to do with the Bill?

Mr. GREEN: Nothing, but I am taking the opportunity of showing how hollow and hypocritical the hon. member is, and that he is not the Labour man he represents himself to be.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GREEN: It is up to the present Government to show how it is that they have reduced this amount to 1s. 3d. They will probably tell us that certain companies can be formed after the incomes reach a certain amount, and so will only have to pay the 1s. 3d. That is the most puerile excuse I have yet heard from the Government. If the brains of Ministers, together with those of the Taxation Commissioner, cannot devise some means by which they may discriminate between those who should pay as from a company, and those who should do so from personal exertion, then it is

time for us as a deliberative body to hand the business over to the Federal authorities. I hope the Government will at least exempt those on the lower rung of the ladder, and will re-cast the Bill so that those below £1,450 will be paying a tax in proportion to that paid by those enjoying the larger incomes.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [12.25 a.m.]: I only desire to touch upon one or two points. I cannot allow the mis-statements which have been made by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) in regard to land taxation to pass without replying to them. The burden of the hon. member's speech appeared to me to be that the Country Party alone would be getting an advantage from the non-collection of the double tax, which was originally proposed in the Bill. I am glad that the Government have given way on that point, and have decided not to collect both taxes, but only to collect either the land tax or the income tax, whichever is the higher. I object to the statement, which has been repeated by members opposite, that the Country Party alone would get any advantage. I am sure if hon. members will look at Section 17 of the original Act they will see that it applies to every land owner in the community, just as much as the holder of a goldfields house or a metropolitan villa, or shop in Hay Street, as it does to the farmer. I should also like to refer to the much debated exemptions. I am definitely pledged to an exemption of £200 per annum for married men. That question has been brought before us from time to time, particularly on the hustings, and in this country where the cost of living is so high I am of opinion that for married men particularly the exemption of £200 a year should stand. We know that prices are increasing all the time. To-day, Tasmania is the only State in the Commonwealth which does not allow an exemption of £200 a year. We should in this State give the married men the same exemption that is given in the other States, with the exception of Tasmania. They should at least be given an exemption sufficient to provide shelter, food and clothing for their families. I do not think that the average married man can carry out his obligations to his family on any lesser amount than the present exemption of £200 a year. If I had any doubt as to whether the financial condition of the country made it necessary to put an extra burden upon the people earning less than £200 a year it would be entirely removed by the alterations set out in the Bill by the Attorney General. I find that the original proposal of the Government to put a tax on up to 2s. 6d. in the pound on incomes above £1,500 is removed, and this certainly strengthens me in my conviction that a married man getting £200 a year or less should not have any extra taxation placed upon him. I submit to members who are open to reason and free to vote that, if we are not going to charge people getting £1,500 a year or upwards more than 1s. 3d. in the pound as now proposed we should not interfere with the existing exemption for married men drawing less than £200 a year.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [12.30 a.m.]: I desire to say to the House that I very much appreciate, and that I am sure the Government as a whole very much appreciate, the generous manner in which the leader of the Opposition referred to the financial position of the country, and his expression of readiness to help the Government in trying to

extricate the country from the position in which it finds itself. I shall communicate to the Premier and Treasurer the statements made by the leader of the Opposition, and I am sure they will gladly join with me in taking advantage of any help that he can give the Government. We want not only the leader of the Opposition but every member of the House, whatever may be his persuasion in politics, to help towards the same end. If all of us work in the direction of helping the State out of its financial difficulties, I feel sure our united action will succeed in lifting Western Australia out of the depressed state in which she finds herself. On this subject I have been wondering for some time past what is the prime factor that has caused Western Australia to hold a so-called financially depressed condition. Looking at some tables in "Knibbs" the other day, I was struck particularly with the railway tables. I ask hon. members, when they have time, to compare those tables, and then they will observe the fact that each Australian State, with the exception of Western Australia and South Australia, has increased its railway earnings by from £100,000 to £200,000 per annum during the course of the war. That fact shows the flourishing condition in which those States are, and also proves that they are not largely dependent, as Western Australia is, on export trade in timber and wheat for the maintenance of the balance between railway revenue and railway expenditure.

Hon. P. Collier: New South Wales has increased its railway freights considerably since the war.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: But the New South Wales railway revenue has also increased considerably; the gross earnings of the New South Wales system have increased considerably. Taking the "Knibbs" table dealing with the Western Australian railway system, I find that the decrease in railway revenue for the first war year, 1915, amounted in round figures to £124,000; that in 1916 the decrease was £108,000; and in 1917, £256,000. In 1918 the decrease is expected to be £403,000, as compared with the 1914 figures. Hon. members will see at once that these decreases represent at all events half the trouble of the Government. The other part of the trouble, of course, is due to the increase of about £450,000 in interest and sinking fund payments in respect of the borrowings during the same period.

Hon. P. Collier: You should treat the sinking fund separately, because we are the only State that is paying sinking fund.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As the hon. gentleman says, Western Australia is the only State that is paying sinking fund. If these troubles could be eliminated, Western Australia would be able to pay its way. Now, when the war is over and trade resumes its normal course, surely we can hope that the railways will regain the position which they occupied in years past, and possibly the funds invested in various State undertakings in Western Australia by previous Governments will by that time also be earning greater revenue for the country, and thus make up the leeway of £450,000 per annum which now lies at their door. If it were not that what are called the territorial revenues of the country have increased, we should not be able to look forward at the end of the year, as it has already been outlined, to an accumulated deficit of over £700,000. I submit it is very satisfactory to know that, though when the Colonial Treasurer made his estimate in that direction at the beginning of the year, in his first Budget speech, a deficit in the

neighbourhood of £968,000 was anticipated, now, towards the close of the year, the deficit is estimated to be somewhere near the neighbourhood of £700,000. Those facts must be borne in mind when we are discussing this taxation Bill; and I personally agree, to a large extent, with much that the leader of the Opposition has said. But I wish to put forward to this House one or two propositions of fact. The first one I want to mention is that the taxes, even as amended, which apparently do not meet with the approval of some hon. members even as amended, will be as high as any taxation in the Commonwealth. I wish to say as my second proposition—and I would like the member for Kalgoorlie to listen to this—that there is no State in the Commonwealth which has an income tax higher than the flat rate which it charges to companies. There is no instance to be found in the Commonwealth of an average income tax higher than the flat rate charged to companies. And that is the whole trouble the Government found themselves in. This House has passed the Dividend Duties Act Amendment Bill, and the rate in that measure is 1s. 3d. It requires no argument of mine to show hon. members the difficulty which would immediately arise in that connection.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But in connection with dividends the Government get at the source of income and persons only receiving £200 a year have to pay the dividend duty. That makes all the difference.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: True, that is so. I am not basing any argument on this; I am merely stating as a fact that there is that difference. It will be for the Government to suggest to the House ways and means of getting over the difficulty, or of equalising the position of taxpayers on the same plane. On another Bill I have said that my own view is that if we could tear up these measures and recast them in a Bill on the Federal lines, and so tax the income that comes to every person, whether from his own labour or any other labour, or from companies, tax all the income that comes to his hands at graduated rates, we would be fair to everybody.

Hon. P. Collier: At this stage we ought to abandon the dividend duties legislation and put all taxes in one measure.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Treasurer and myself frequently discussed this matter, and he said to me, "Put up a proposition how to do it and I will do it." Then came the difficulty. I said, "Let us adopt Commonwealth lines." The Treasurer said, "The Commonwealth are dissatisfied with the present method of collecting from the individual." This was before the Treasurer went to the East. He added, "The Commonwealth Government are talking of reverting to a flat rate for companies and a graduated scale for individuals, and it would never do for us to adopt their scale, seeing that they are about to discard it." Therefore we stayed our hand in making any alterations. But since the Treasurer left Western Australia a new Bill has been introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament, and that measure perpetuates the old method of collecting everything from the individual. The Commonwealth Government are not changing over in that respect. But whilst I would very much like to copy the Commonwealth method—I do not mean the incidence, but the scheme of the Bill—it is impossible to do so at this stage, because the Commonwealth Bill is only at the second reading. Two or three months may elapse before the Commonwealth Parliament

turns that Bill into a Statute. We cannot wait over that period, and therefore we must do the best we can to arrive at an equitable solution of the difficulty. The Government wish nothing else. Then I have in mind that, at a later stage, when we know what the Commonwealth measure is to be, we may revise our method and tax in the same way. Various estimates have been made, both in the House and outside, as to what the loss or difference would be in turning over from one method to the other. In one place it is stated that the loss would be £30,000. The member for Hannans made it more; some other member made it less. I asked the Commissioner of Taxation to make me out a sum as it were, or a set of figures, showing just what the difference would be, and he made it out in this way. It follows very much the method of the member for Hannans, only he was not in the position to make the necessary deductions the Commissioner made. If we take the total income of persons over £1,500 from the tables which appear in the return issued by the Commissioner, we see that, as between £1,500 and £5,000, the total is £945,000. I am giving round figures. So far as £5,000 and over is concerned, the amount is £740,000. Add those together, and we get £1,685,000. In that sum is included the incomes of 455 persons. We multiply 455 by £1,500 and get £682,500. If we deduct that from the previous amount which I gave we find the result is £1,002,500 as income in excess of £1,500. From that sum we have to make the necessary deductions which are made in connection with the Assessment Bill. Those deductions are in respect of exemptions under Section 17, exemptions such as company dividends, because there are certain company dividends included in those returns, and they amount to no less a sum than £175,000. Life assurance and the £20 allowed for each child account in all, according to the Commissioner's estimate—and he is better able to judge those figures than anybody else—to £650,000. Deduct the total from the £1,002,500 and we get a balance of £352,500, which, at 1s. 3d. in the pound, represents £22,000.

Hon. P. Collier: I cannot follow your deductions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is the way the Commissioner makes it out, and I have no doubt he is right. The £22,000 relates to the one matter. In the question of deductions we have altered the Assessment Bill slightly from the law as it was. It will be remembered that the deductions for interest were allowed to an owner under the old Bill, and the owner was held by the High Court to include a leaseholder as well as the owner in fee simple. It was thought, when the Act was passed, that it applied to an owner in fee simple. The word was used loosely in Parliament, and the pastoralists claimed they were owners of the leaseholds, and therefore they have been deducting what was never intended they should deduct, four per cent. interest. Hon. members will observe that in the assessment measure the words of the section in question in the Act are altered to mean owner in fee simple, and therefore the man who previously has had the deductions on his leasehold estates is cut out. He is the same class of man who has an income in excess of £1,500, and that alteration from leasehold to freehold will lessen the deductions by £7,500. The net amount, therefore, will be about £15,000. Hon. members will see that there are other reasons which can be given, but which I think had far better be discussed in Committee.

Hon. P. Collier: Could the Minister have that information which he has just given us, regarding the deductions, set out in some detailed way, so that we may be able to consider it in Committee.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will have it done. There are other matters which I could explain, but at this late hour I do not intend to weary hon. members. Hon. members will admit that the subject is full of difficulties. The Government propose to approach it in the most reasonable way possible, and I think in Committee a way will be found out of those difficulties, which will be satisfactory to all parties.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair: the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington): I move—

“That the House at its rising adjourn to 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 21st May.”

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.50 a.m. (Friday).

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 21st May, 1918.*

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

[For “Questions on Notice” and “Papers Presented” see “Minutes of Proceedings.”]

#### QUESTION—MESSAGES BETWEEN THE HOUSES.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: Has he yet obtained possession of the file which I asked that he should lay on the Table, relating to certain Messages between the two Houses; if so will he lay it on the Table?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: I have already informally told the hon. member that I have obtained the file and that it is purely through an oversight on my own part that it is not here this afternoon.

#### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS, ADDITIONAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.36]: For the reasons explained by me when giving notice on Thursday last I move—

“That for the remainder of the Session the House shall sit on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 3 p.m.”

Hon. H. CARSON (Central) [4.37]: I would like to know from the leader of the House whether there is any possibility of finishing this week. If not, I think the House should adjourn on Thursday night and meet again on Tuesday. Country members desire to get to their homes for the week end, and the leader of the House should know definitely by Thursday whether there will be any possibility of finishing by the end of the week. Personally, I do not think there is any such possibility, and therefore I think it would be a mistake to keep members here over Friday and bring them back again next week.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES (North) [4.38]: I support the motion, and I hope it is so carried. As I said on a previous occasion, it seems to me the Government are running Parliament for the convenience of country members. I would like to see such a motion carried, not only this session but in all future sessions. The business of the country could be got through much more quickly if we sat an extra day, and an hour earlier each day. I have just been to my constituency and returned, and if we are going to drag the session on I shall miss another boat next week and so be here for another month. I am convinced that the Government are running the business of Parliament for the convenience of country members. It is time this ceased.

Hon. H. Carson: It is not so.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I say it is so. Again, the sooner the House gets into recess the better, because Ministers will then be able to attack the question of administration.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.39]: I support the remarks of Mr. Carson. I agree with the Colonial Secretary that if there is any chance of finishing this week we should sit on Friday, and even on Saturday; but if there is no chance of finishing this week, we ought to have an opportunity of getting back to our homes. We could then resume on Tuesday. While sympathising with Mr. Miles in view of the long distance he has come, I do not think it is the fault of country members that the session has been dragged out for so long a time. I hope that Mr. Carson's suggestion will be acted upon by the Colonial Secretary.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [4.40]: I scarcely like the implication to go forth that I am one of those who have dragged out this session. I think the leader of the House has done his best to give us as much work as he could, and I feel that the fault lies in another place. We are always ready for work, but it is of no use bringing us here unnecessarily with no work to do. Now that we have a large programme before us I am prepared to sit on until we get it finished;