

AYES	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Latham	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Doney
Mr. McLarty	
	(Teller.)
NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Millington
Mr. Cross	Mr. North
Mr. Fox	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Panton
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Triat
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.16 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 14th May, 1942.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS (2)—MEAT.

*As to Imports and Stocks.*

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House all papers in connection with the recent importation of meat from the Eastern States to Western Australia? 2, Will the Minister advise the House what is the total quantity of meat held in cold storage, both for export and local consumption, during each week from the 1st January, 1942, to the 1st April, 1942.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The member may, on request to the appropriate Minister, see the confidential telegrams which passed between State and Commonwealth authorities in this connection. 2, For national security reasons it is not advisable to give this information.

### W.A. Meat Export Company's Works.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that the Government has purchased or intends taking over the W.A. Meat Export Company's Works at Fremantle? 2, If so, will the Minister disclose the terms and conditions of such purchase or transfer? 3, If a purchase or transfer has been or is to be made, will the Government agree to the appointment of a board of management, with adequate producer representation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, 2, and 3, The Government has been approached by the directors of the W.A. Meat Export Company and negotiations are proceeding.

### QUESTION—CHARCOAL.

*As to Forests Department's Mills.*

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many charcoal-producing mills have been established by the Forests Department? 2, Where are they situated? 3, What is the productive capacity of each? 4, Is it now proposed to close down any of these mills? 5, If so, for what reason? 6, Are any arrangements being made to ensure to primary producers and other users, a quantity of charcoal at least equal to the shortage that will be caused if the mills referred to cease to operate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, One at Dwellingup. Unemployment relief camps burning charcoal have been taken over by the Forests Department since January of this year. 2, Wooroloo, Denmark, Manjimup, Cowaramup. 3, Approximately 5 tons per week each. 4, Yes, all relief camps by the end of May. 5, The production cost greatly exceeds the selling price of the charcoal. 6, Kilns operated by the State Saw Mills at Pemberton have just come into production, and it is expected that other mills in the South-West will follow suit.

### QUESTION—SHOPS, CLOSING TIME.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: When the suggestion for the earlier closing of shops was considered by the Commissioner for Railways and the Superintendent of Tramways, Ferries and Buses, did either, or both, strongly oppose such suggestion?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: No.

**MOTION—UNIFORM TAX PROPOSAL.***As to Submission to State Parliaments.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. H. Seddon (North-East):—

That in view of the effect of the Federal Government's proposal for a unified income tax on the finances of the States, and while recognising the necessity for the Federal Government to have the field of finance free to be devoted to war requirements, the whole question of the financial relationship between Commonwealth and States should be submitted to the State Parliaments before ratification of the proposal.

**HON. G. W. MILES** (North) [11.5]: I am one of those who favour uniform taxation. In my opinion the arguments submitted by the State Premiers in opposition to the Federal Governments' proposals were narrow and parochial. It was pointed out when Mr. Fadden submitted his proposals that the Federal Government would collect another £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 for the war effort without increasing taxation. In my opinion that is the position today. The arguments submitted by Sir Hal Colebatch were quite good from his point of view.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is why he submitted them.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Sir Hal referred to Section 51 of the Federal Constitution. The object of that section is to give the Federal Parliament power to control taxation in a time of national crisis. The present is a time of national crisis, and it is the duty of the Commonwealth—not of the parochial States—to say what shall or shall not be done. The Federal Government's proposals will save considerable time and money in the preparation of different forms.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is the selfish side.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is not the selfish side. That has been stressed.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: You are the only one to put forward that view.

Hon. G. W. MILES: What view?

Hon. C. B. Williams: The selfish view.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I put it to the House: Is it not better to have one form to fill in that to have three or four? Will it not save time?

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: How will the Federal Government's proposals save time, seeing that we fill in only one form now?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Is not one form better than three or four? We have to fill in half-a-dozen forms.

Hon. C. B. Williams: In Western Australia we have to fill in only one form.

Hon. G. W. MILES: In my opinion, good secessionist speeches have been made on this subject.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They may have been all the better for that.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask hon. members to allow Mr. Miles to proceed.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am opposing the arguments that have been submitted by other members. Sir Hal Colebatch said that Section 51, which was imported into the Federal Constitution, represented a confidence trick. There was no confidence trick about it at all.

Hon. C. B. Williams: On a point of order, Mr. President! Is Mr. Miles allowed to read from a newspaper during the debate in this House?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not know that the hon. member was reading from a paper.

Hon. J. Cornell: There is a Standing Order that provides that no member shall quote from a newspaper report of debates during the current session.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am speaking from memory of what Sir Hal Colebatch said.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is what we all have to do.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. W. MILES: Sir Hal referred to various Governments, including that of which he was a member. He did not wish to accuse the present Government of being spend-thrift any more than his own Government. Time and again I have said here that the Government of which Sir Hal was a member would borrow from anyone at any time at any interest rate. And it has been the same with the present Government. The Financial Agreement has been criticised. In my opinion it represents one of the best determinations ever reached as affecting the States, because it prevented the continual borrowing. Moreover, under the Agreement, proposed borrowings had to be reviewed. Sir Hal compared New South Wales with Victoria in this respect, and said New South Wales would get so much extra. He said Western Australia should get so much extra. The hon. member should have compared what Western Australia is to get by way of

compensation in proportion to the population. According to the table, we should get £10,000,000 against Victoria's £6,000,000. Thus Western Australia is not in the same position as is New South Wales. Evidently, according to Sir Hal's argument, New South Wales is receiving more than Victoria in proportion to population. So is Western Australia. I am in favour of one form of taxation; and, that being my view, I shall oppose the motion.

Hon. H. Seddon: Why? What is wrong with it?

Hon. C. B. Williams: How is your province to be developed?

Hon. J. Cornell: By starting the pig industry there.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If a few years ago members of this Chamber had had a little more vision, my province would have been developed. The Federal Government's proposal, so far as I understand it, is a war measure which is to have effect for the duration of the war and 12 months thereafter. Thereupon the whole arrangement will have to be ratified by the Federal Parliament.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Another continuance Bill!

Hon. G. W. MILES: It might be. Eventually the arrangement may mean the abolition of all State Parliaments. That is what concerns many members of Parliament now.

Hon. J. Cornell: It does not concern me.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The writing is on the wall. Abolition of State Parliaments has to come. We are bound to have provincial councils throughout Australia to administer and develop various sections. There has been talk about the Commonwealth not giving Western Australia a fair deal. The Federal Aid Roads Grant gives us an amount based on area as well as population. I, for my part, am prepared to trust the National Parliament and I appeal to members to look at the proposal from a national point of view instead of adopting a narrow parochial outlook.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Then you are with the Labour Party!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. W. MILES: Twelve months after the war this legislation, if the Federal Parliament passes it, will cease unless re-enacted. Then will be the time for those opposed to unification to put up their argu-

ments. In the meantime the Commonwealth must obtain all the revenue it can. It has been argued that the Commonwealth Treasurer will get £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 more under uniform taxation throughout Australia than he receives under the present system. That being the case, I regard the proposal as a war measure; and the Commonwealth Parliament is given, by the Federal Constitution, supreme power in a national crisis. So I say again that I oppose the motion.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [11.15]: I desire to voice, briefly, my protest against the iniquitous proposal of the Federal Government. Unlike Mr. Miles, I am not keen on Mr. Seddon's motion, because in my opinion it does not go far enough. I shall support it although it is not sufficiently drastic. The State Government is to be commended for the proposal it has put up in the other House. I trust the proposal will be submitted here. In view of the fact that I may not be able to speak on that motion, I shall speak on this one.

The Chief Secretary: Speak on this one now.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must speak on the motion before the Chair.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I congratulate Mr. Seddon on having got in first with his motion, though I again repeat that it is not sufficiently drastic.

The Chief Secretary: It covers the same ground.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Practically. However, the motion passed in another place voices an emphatic protest, whilst Mr. Seddon's motion does not do so. This is a time when we must forget party politics entirely and pull together for Western Australia. I believe that all parties in the Federal Parliament are in favour of the proposal, and not because a Labour Government is in power. My belief is that had Mr. Fadden's Government remained in power, the same proposal would have been made. I condemn Mr. Fadden, although he is a member of the Country Party. I make no bones about saying that the integrity of Western Australia is at stake.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The integrity of Australia is at stake.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Mr. Miles said the proposal was necessary for our war effort. Nobody can tell me, and get away with it,

that the military effort of Australia has been in any way impeded by lack of money. The last war loan was well and truly over-subscribed. Therefore the present proposal is not necessary. In fact, it is only another trick of the Federal authorities. All parties in the Federal Parliament are in it. Mr. Craig said that the people were asking for the proposal. I reply that if such is the case, it is a pity that the people do not know what they are asking for. But how does Mr. Craig know that the people ask for it? How can he voice the opinion of the Western Australian people by what he has heard from a few persons he knows in St. George's terrace?

We are told that the adoption of this proposal will save taxpayers a lot of time, as then they will not be called upon to make out half-a-dozen income tax returns. I have never heard such rubbish in my life before. I have always made out my own income tax return. There is only one form to be filled up, though certainly it has two columns, one for Federal taxation and one for State. The statement that the adoption of the proposal will mean a great saving in manpower is absurd. Anyone who goes into the Taxation Department here will see that today the offices are filled with girls and old men, with the exception of perhaps a few key men, and the position is the same in the Taxation Departments in the Eastern States. For the life of me I cannot see that the adoption of the proposal will release men for war service.

To speak of what the people want sounds very nice. They are told that under the proposed arrangement there will be only one tax and less taxation. What is the benefit of less taxation to any person in Western Australia as compared with the resultant disadvantages? I remember how during the Federation campaign our people were caught with catch cries as "One nation, one destiny" and "United we stand but divided we fall."

It shows how gullible the people were at that time. The fact that the people of the goldfields are threatened with the loss of their great industry is in the nature of a judgment on them for having voted for Federation. I think that if a secession referendum were taken again, the result would be different from the last occasion. After the war there will be another agitation for secession. I would not suggest such a procedure during war time, but if the Federal Government gets away with this proposal,

there certainly will be another clamour for secession, and I hope Mr. Miles will get that into his head.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I will be opposed to secession then as I am now, and I hope Mr. Cornuell will also be opposed to it.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I commend the Government for having introduced a similar motion in another place and have pleasure in supporting this one. I do not think it goes far enough, but it is a step in the right direction.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South-East) [11.21]: I support the motion but, like Mr. Wood, I wish it had gone further. A statement has been made that £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 extra will be produced by the proposed unified system of taxation. That is questionable, but even if it were not, the amount so produced would be of relatively small importance to the war effort. On our present scale of war expenditure, amounting to about £1,000,000 a day, the sum so produced would help the war effort for no more than three or four days. As Mr. Wood has pointed out, we have no evidence to date that the Commonwealth Government has experienced any difficulty in financing the war or that the squander-mania of the service Departments has been limited to any extent or controlled by the amount of money available.

The State Parliaments are in a better position to keep control over the finances and to watch their own interests than is the Federal Parliament, or—so far as this State is concerned—than are the few members that represent Western Australia in the Federal House, who have extreme difficulty in maintaining contact with their constituents. If this proposal is bludgeoned through in Canberra I hope the State Premiers will continue to maintain their attitude and that in the final result it will be possible for them to point out to the Federal authorities that such State instrumentalities as will be concerned will lend no assistance to the Federal Government to enable it to enforce its taxation proposals. In Western Australia we have had sufficient evidence of the despotism of the over-built, over-populated cities of Sydney and Melbourne in connection with Federal politics and, if this proposal is successfully carried through, the influence of Western Australia and of the smaller States of the Commonwealth in

the affairs of the Commonwealth will become much less than it has been in recent years, and goodness knows there is sufficient proof that our influence in the last 20 years has not been sufficiently strong in those quarters to protect the interests of our people in the outposts of the Australian Continent.

A committee was appointed by the Federal Parliament to investigate these proposals. It comprised gentlemen like Mr. Spooner and Mr. Scullin who have always been avowed unificationists. Mr. Scullin has had wide experience and I understand that he has always been a champion of unification. Mr. Spooner may have had some experience in the matter of budgets in New South Wales and the correct type of bathing costumes for use on the beaches there, but I do not think the people of Western Australia should be called upon to regard gentlemen of that type as great authorities on the matter of unified taxation, which is unification in disguise and which, if it were adopted, would prejudice the welfare of a State like ours. Perhaps this is not the occasion to refer to the prejudiced position that Western Australia and the other smaller States have been forced to accept in the Federation, but it is a fact that we have only to carry our minds back a few weeks to see how little the defence of Western Australia entered into the scheme of things, to realise that without a State Parliament and without a State authority to make urgent and strong representations on behalf of Western Australia, the outlook for our people would have been very poor indeed.

**HON. H. V. PIESSE** (South-East) [11.26]: I support the motion and also congratulate the Government on having introduced in another place a similar motion which is, however, worded more strongly than is Mr. Seddon's proposition. One point I do not like about this motion is that it suggests that the whole matter should be referred back to the State Parliaments before ratification. We should submit a unanimous statement to the Federal Parliament to the effect that we are wholeheartedly opposed to the proposal and every member of this Parliament should support the State Government's attitude. Listening to Mr. Miles and realising that he is the only one opposed to the motion, I was extremely puzzled. It seems impossible that a practical man like Mr. Miles, who is a primary producer and

who has gone through such experiences in Western Australia as he has had and has given so much assistance to the State, should stand up in this House and say what he said today.

**HON. J. M. Macfarlane**: Give him credit for his own convictions.

**HON. H. V. PIESSE**: I do. But it is to the disadvantage of the State to have anyone opposing this motion. We have had almost daily evidence in the Press of the way in which the Federal authorities handle matters. We have had men like Mr. Dedman coming over here and making statements and bringing in regulations such as those dealing with the rationing of goods in shops, which are imposing such tremendous disabilities upon those who have not cash to spend. We also find that the Federal authorities are applying to the goldfields a scorched earth policy before there has been any enemy attack. The wheat industry is suffering in a similar manner, but in that instance the disability is Commonwealth-wide.

I am wholeheartedly behind the Government, but do not think it is going far enough. I would like to see a delegation sent to the Federal Parliament from this State, which has always been regarded as a Cinderella State from the time it fought Federation. I remember when the goldfields carried the baby and from that date to the present Western Australia has not received fair recognition. Whilst we hear from Mr. Miles of the development that would have taken place in the North if Parliament had permitted it, I point out that the only method he has advocated in this House is to hand over the North to the Federal Government. It looks to me as though he would be prepared to hand Western Australia over to the same authorities. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East—in reply) [11.31]: My remarks in reply to the debate will be brief. I should like to say to those who have stated that the motion does not go far enough, that it was put up a fortnight ago really to give Parliament an opportunity to discuss the matter and express an opinion, and also in order that that opinion might be available for the Premier when he was attending the conference in the Eastern States. It is only due to the fact that no meeting of Parliament was held

that that object was not achieved. Mr. Miles suggested that we were approaching this question in a narrow and parochial manner. I have endeavoured to place this matter before the House as nearly as possible not from the standpoint of any particular interests but to show that State Governments are carrying on most important functions of government, and that there were spheres under the Federal Constitution that were left entirely for them to develop and attend to.

It is the danger to those activities that arises from the proposals contained in the report to which I would direct the attention of the House and the public. As I said before, the whole of the development of any State is left in the hands of the State. In order that that development might be carried out satisfactorily the State has had to undertake the borrowing of capital so that the work might be done. It is upon the State, therefore, that the greatest burden has fallen by reason of the Federal policy. Mr. Roche pointed out clearly what the position would be if we lost the State Parliaments. There would be no representation to point out the position that would be created by a Federal policy operating in one-third of the continent of Australia, such as is comprised in Western Australia. It is from these angles that we have to consider the matter.

Only too frequently we have had the greatest difficulty in obtaining segregated accounts of the revenue obtained in different parts of the Commonwealth. It was only as a result of repeated agitation that we finally obtained the figures setting out what our position actually was. I support very strongly the Financial Agreement. I still regard that agreement as one of the best steps that has ever been taken in connection with the financing of the development of Australia.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Had it been carried out on the basis of the 4 per cent. sinking fund there would have been no deficits to contend with.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The fact remains that there was exceedingly keen competition between the States for the amount of money available on the money market. New South Wales particularly, in opposition to the interests of Australia, advanced the rate it was prepared to pay in order to obtain all the money available on the market. It was largely that action which led first of all to

the formation of the Loan Council, and secondly to the framing of the Financial Agreement whereby the quotas advanced to each State were definitely to be laid down. I am not arguing that the quotas arranged were by any means the best that could have been devised, but the agreement represented the best compromise that could be obtained, and consequently we had to accept it.

We are looking at the question from the national point of view when we regard it from the standpoint of Western Australia. So far as I can see we are going to be left entirely at the mercy of the Commonwealth Government in regard to any amount we receive from the unified tax. That is the grave danger I see, and that is why I have moved my motion so that State Parliaments in Australia would have an opportunity to bring before their people the seriousness of the position in which they might find themselves. I wish to quote a few figures dealing with the position of the various States. Reference has been made to the State debt charges per head. It is interesting also to note the expenditure from Consolidated Revenue in the various States.

Let me take first of all the debt charges per head. In 1940 New South Wales had an annual debt charge of £6 1s. 10d. per head; Victoria a debt charge of £4 9s.; Queensland £6 13s. 10d.; South Australia £8 15s. 9d.; Western Australia £9 12s.; and Tasmania £5 6s. 6d. In regard to the total expenditure from Consolidated Revenue the per capita total for New South Wales was £20 18s. 7d.; Victoria £14 17s. 4d.; Queensland £20 7s. 6d.; South Australia £21 12s. 9d.; Western Australia £24 0s. 3d.; and Tasmania £12 15s. 6d. I have quoted these figures to show how the debt charges per head are operating in the various States and how serious the position is in regard to Western Australia. It appears to me that if there is any attempt to interfere with or reduce the amount which this State should receive from income taxation, Western Australia will find itself in an unenviable position because it will not be able to meet its obligations. We may well find that through Federal action we are not in a position to meet our commitments.

The Financial Agreement provides that the State Governments must recoup the Federal Government for the amounts of debt charges. If the State Government is not able to meet its obligations, not only will the Federal Government have to take over the debts of

the State, but it will have been responsible for that having been brought about. That is the most dangerous feature that impressed me about the proposals contained in the report. The Federal Government will have brought about the result that Western Australia will be placed in an impossible position, and consequently we may find ourselves having to be taken over by the Federal Government and unification brought about. There is a vast difference between administration on the spot by people who are living under the conditions in the State, and administration from a remote centre like Canberra, where all too frequently matters are considered rather from the academic than from the practical point of view.

I have not been parochial in pursuing the course I have. In its resolution the State Government has put forward a very definite statement, and the terms of it are certainly stronger than are those contained in my motion. In suggesting a resolution in the form in which I have set it out, I had in mind what is often referred to as the realistic view. By that I mean that there is a very strong opinion in the minds of the general public, an opinion which is entirely founded on ignorance, in the direction of unification. There is a strong opinion in the direction of unified taxation. We must recognise that. We have also found from the reports that there is a strong feeling in the Federal Parliament that there should be a unified tax.

Unless the Senate can be relied upon to exercise the function for which it was created, namely, to see that no unfair treatment was extended to the States, I am very much afraid that a unified tax will become an accomplished fact and will appear on the statute book. The only recourse then available to the State Governments would be to take the matter to the High Court, for that tribunal to determine whether the action taken was within the bounds of the Constitution or otherwise. In regard to representation in the Federal Parliament, members will see by the table that New South Wales has the largest representation. That State has 28 members in the House of Representatives, Victoria 20, Queensland 10, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania five each, while the Northern Territory has one representative, making a total of 74. The weight there is definitely in favour of the two larger States. The only hope we have of getting the matter

revised is the fact that whereas New South Wales will get a large proportion of the amount to be raised by the unified tax, Victoria itself will be hard hit. Victoria will necessarily, I think, be more inclined to ask that the matter be reviewed and that it should be placed on a more favourable basis compared with New South Wales. It is hard to say.

We are in a position where more than ever before the Senate should fulfil the functions for which it was created. Reference has been made to the constitutionality of the proposal. The fact remains that if this is an interference with the powers of the States, the law will be ultra vires. As Mr. Cornell pointed out, a considerable time will elapse before we can get to the High Court, and by then the law will be in operation. Under those conditions the States will be placed in an unfair position. That is why I would like to see a public expression of opinion concerning the whole proposal. The Chief Secretary showed us yesterday that alternative proposals had been placed before the conference.

It is remarkable that there has been no reference in the Press to such proposals. The general impression created is that the State Governments were sitting stubbornly on their rights instead of meeting the proposal of the Federal Government in the spirit that, while entirely desirous of helping in the war effort, they wished to ensure that they received an adequate share of the revenue that would be raised as a consequence of the proposal. The time is not yet too late for the State Governments to submit alternative proposals to the Federal authorities in order that the people may see that their attitude was not obstructive but was definitely helpful, having full regard to the circumstances in which they found themselves. It is under these conditions that I have placed the motion before the House. I should like to see both proposals carried.

The Chief Secretary: Do you intend to suggest some slight amendment?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I should like to be permitted to make a slight amendment by substituting for the word "be" the words "should have been." That will then make the motion read in the form of a request that the matter should be discussed under the conditions laid down, and at the same time leave the door open for the Minister to introduce the Government motion, one

which definitely sets out the position of the State Parliament in its attitude towards the proposal for a unified tax. I ask leave of the House to make that alteration.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [11.45]: Before leave is granted may I say a word or two?

The **PRESIDENT**: Certainly.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: We should not act hurriedly. To make the amendment suggested by Mr. Seddon would be unwise. What I suggest is that Mr. Seddon withdraw his motion and that the Chief Secretary move a motion similar to that passed in another place. If members then think that the motion does not contain all that is desired, a well-thought-out amendment could be made to the motion and the concurrence of another place sought therein. That would be an infinitely better way of dealing with the matter.

**Hon. H. S. W. Parker**: The motion, as amended, has been passed in another place.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: Yes, but we could ask another place to concur in an amendment. I cannot see any reason for passing two motions on the one subject. To do so would be wrong policy and would accomplish no good.

The **PRESIDENT**: Is it the will of the House that the hon. member have leave to amend his motion as indicated? There being no dissentient voice the motion is, by leave, amended.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

## **MOTION—UNIFORM TAXATION.**

*As to Protest by State Parliament.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [11.48]: By leave of the House, I desire to submit a further motion without notice, one similar to that carried in another place, together with an addendum agreed to by that House. It reads—

That this House expresses its strongest opposition to what is known as the uniform taxation proposals. These proposals would deprive the States of their constitutional power to levy income tax and thus seriously impair the exercise of functions entrusted to them under the Constitution for the welfare of the people. They would effect a funda-

mental change in the Constitution of Australia in an undemocratic manner without reference to the people, and would violate the rights of the States and the people. It has not been shown that the proposals are essential for the war effort, and it is the opinion of this House that they should not be put into effect.

The addendum agreed to in another place reads—

The Western Australian members of the Senate be requested by this Parliament to exercise their privilege as protectors of State rights and, in the interests of this State, to oppose the proposal; other State Governments to be requested by the Premier to take similar action.

The **PRESIDENT**: Is it the will of the House that the Chief Secretary have leave to move, without notice, the motion he has just read?

Leave given.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [11.52]: I now formally move the motion. The State Government believes that there are other methods by which the same results could be achieved without the constitutional rights of the States, which are so valuable to us, being impaired. I do not desire to occupy a lot of time by traversing the ground that has been so well covered by other speakers. Members are fully conversant with the statements made by the Premier in another place in support of the motion. In view of the fact that not only has this State objected to the proposals, but also that every State Premier has expressed his objection to them, if we pass the motion and show that both Houses of Parliament in Western Australia are unanimous on the point, it may have some effect in regard to the legislation to be introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament. It has become a set policy with the Commonwealth to do what it has indicated will be done on this occasion. Irrespective of the views held by the States on this subject, the Commonwealth proposes to adopt the recommendations of the committee appointed to deal with the matter and bring its proposals before the Commonwealth Parliament with a view to making those recommendations law. This being so, the motion, together with the addendum agreed to in another place, will go as far as it is possible for us to proceed at the present time.

**HON. C. F. BAXTER** (East) [11.54]: The combined motion and addendum will now have some material effect.

**Hon. J. Cornell**: It is full of contradictions.

**Hon. C. F. BAXTER**: I am referring to the improvement made to the motion by the addendum agreed to in another place. Neither the original motion nor Mr. Seddon's motion led anywhere, although each showed a strong, decided and warranted objection by this Parliament. Now we have a direct motion that will go forth to the six Senators representing Western Australia, and if the other States of the Commonwealth are as jealous as is Western Australia in protecting State rights, they could follow the lead we have given them, if they have not already taken action along these lines.

I have listened to various arguments on uniform taxation, and I must say that those who advance arguments in favour of it are on very weak ground, especially when they say that the people want it. How do we know what the people want at this juncture? Some contend that uniform taxation will lead to the saving of much trouble and expense in the direction of preparing returns. In what way? We will still have to do the same amount of accountancy; there is no escaping that. I cannot see how any saving can be effected in that direction. As regards other arguments that have been advanced, we know they are equally futile. I have no intention of dealing with them at this stage. When we are told in this House that uniform taxation will result in the saving of labour and money, all I can reply is that those who make that statement have very little idea of what has happened in the past.

During a long period of years the Commonwealth Government has stolen the best servants from the States by offering them double the salaries they were paid by the States, and the Commonwealth has doubled its staff instead of decreasing it. That experience will be repeated under the uniform taxation proposals, provided they are not rejected by the Senate, as I hope they will be. Some good speeches have been made on the subject and sound arguments have been advanced, and the case put up against uniform taxation, both in the Council and the Assembly, has been very strong. I feel sure the motion will be agreed to. It will be an expression of opinion by both Houses that our Senators should act in the manner

requested by us, and they should realise that we have a better idea of the State's requirements than they have.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [11.57]: If members read the motion carefully, they will find that much can be read into it and that one part is contradictory of another.

**Hon. H. S. W. Parker**: Are you objecting to this motion?

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: No, but I do not want the House to make a fool of itself. The Premier has said it has not been shown that the proposals are essential to the war effort and deal with one subject only. The Chief Secretary's motion deals with uniform taxation, and it is the opinion of the House that uniform taxation should not be put into effect. The motion, however, proceeds to state that uniform taxation will impair the sovereign powers of the States and that the people should have been consulted. Mr. Seddon's motion, in recognising the necessity for leaving the field of finance free to the Commonwealth to utilise for war requirements, makes the whole question one of financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States. Mr. Seddon's motion indicates that not only uniform taxation but also the whole field of taxation should be the subject of consideration. If we pass the motion, I submit that we shall be judged as we ought to be.

The Chief Secretary: I do not see anything inconsistent in the two motions.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: Suppose I am asked which motion I support, what shall I say?

**Hon. H. S. W. Parker**: Both.

**Hon. J. CORNELL**: I might say that I support a unified form of taxation, but that at this stage I cannot in the same breath support an inquiry into the whole field of taxation relationship between the Commonwealth and the States before anything whatever is done. That is what I think is Mr. Seddon's contention, that the whole of the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States should be reviewed. I am afraid we are liable to a charge of blowing hot and blowing cold. However, the damage is done.

Question put.

Members: Aye.

**Hon. G. W. Miles**: No.

The PRESIDENT: The question passes in the affirmative.

Question thus passed.

**MOTION—NATIONAL SECURITY ACT.***As to Closing Hours of Shops.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter (East):—

That this House urges the Government to proceed forthwith to have Clause 3 of the Closing Time for Shops Order, made under the National Security Act, 1939-1940, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 24th April, 1942, so amended as to operate only in that portion of the State as is comprised in the definition of "Metropolitan Area," set out in the Hotels, Licensed Premises, and Registered Clubs (Closing Time) Order, made under the National Security (Supplementary) Regulations published in the "Government Gazette" of the 18th March, 1942.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.2]: I rise to oppose the motion. Members will recall that after Mr. Baxter had moved it, he saw fit to make a personal explanation to the effect that the position was somewhat different from what he understood it to be when he moved his motion. From inquiries which I have made since, I am of opinion that perhaps the hon. member would prefer to withdraw the motion after giving it further consideration. When all is said and done, the hon. member is objecting merely to the closing of shops half-an-hour earlier. Had he obtained all the information which it was possible for him to secure, he might have taken the view that he had been misinformed and that it was not worth while proceeding with the matter.

What is the position? As a result of a Commonwealth Order made under the National Security Regulations, late shopping nights for certain classes of business throughout the Commonwealth were abolished, and accordingly these shops have to close at 6 p.m. Subsequently another order was made providing that those shops which would normally close at 6 p.m. should be closed at 5.30 p.m. The effect of the order is that on those days when shops would normally close at 6 p.m., they now close at 5.30 p.m.; but on those days—commonly termed the late shopping night—they may remain open till 6 p.m. Consequently, there is no point in the argument put forward by the hon. member.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Does that apply to the whole State?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: Yes. But I want it distinctly understood that the order does not apply to all shops, but only to such shops as grocers, drapers, and so on. It is applicable only to those shops which ordinarily close at 6 p.m. on week days. Other types of shops, such as mixed business or shops which come under the Fourth Schedule of the Factories and Shops Act, namely, tobaccoconists, newsagents and others, may still remain open ordinarily until 7 p.m. and until 8 p.m. on one night in the week. Still other types of shops, such as fruit and confectionery shops and eating houses, may remain open until 11.30 p.m.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What is the reason grocers' shops are not allowed to remain open until 8 p.m. on Saturday, in the country at all events?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: I do not agree with that. I agree with the 6 p.m. closing time, and am pleased that it prevails at present right throughout the Commonwealth.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I hope it will prevail for all time.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: One objection raised by Mr. Baxter was that the shop assistants would be working half-an-hour less per day, but would be still drawing their full week's salary. It is remarkable that the hon. member is the only person from whom I have heard an objection raised on that score.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If you had had all the trunk line calls that I have had, you would not think it remarkable.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: I would like the hon. member to be a little more specific. As a matter of fact, representations were made to the Government by country interests with respect to this matter. Neither the Minister nor his department has received any complaint, except from Kalgoorlie.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What about Northam?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: It may be of interest to the hon. member to know that only two or three days ago a very fully attended meeting of members of the Chamber of Commerce at Northam endorsed this early closing. So much for Mr. Baxter's knowledge of what is taking place at Northam, or of the views of the people there.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not mention Northam.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I did.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry if I have accused the wrong member. That is the position so far as Northam is concerned. Another important point that Mr. Baxter either overlooked or was not aware of is that this order applies only during the winter months. It operates from Monday, the 27th April, 1942, to Sunday, the 29th August, 1942. Consequently the matter will come up for further consideration when the order expires. In my opinion, there is very little that the hon. member has to complain of. He did make some very general statements as to the effect that the order would have upon country districts. In opposition, I say that country districts generally are in agreement with the order.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Of course they are not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What is more, it is only as a result of representations that were made that the order was put into effect.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Representations made by whom?

Hon. V. Hamersley: The order certainly does not suit the country districts.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Who told the Minister that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am telling the House what I am advised, and I think members will take it for granted that what I say is correct.

Hon. G. B. Wood: No.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are misinformed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not admit that I am misinformed. I am prepared to accept the information supplied to me by the Minister in charge of this department. Representations were made by country interests that any disabilities which would result from the 5.30 p.m. closing would be felt in the metropolitan area, not in the country districts. We must admit that disabilities have resulted in the metropolitan area; there is the congestion of traffic between 5.30 p.m. and 6 p.m., as hon. members are aware. But it is as the result of representations made that this order was put into effect. I think I have covered the whole subject. The order for 6 p.m. closing applies throughout the Commonwealth. The order for 5.30 p.m. closing applies to that area of Western Australia below the 26th parallel of latitude. It does not apply to what are usually known as "farmers' day," and "late shopping night." Six o'clock

closing still obtains on those days. May I repeat that this order is for the winter months only; it will expire in August next, and be subject to review before then.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [12.11]: I have only a few words to say. I support the motion for one or two very simple reasons. I think it is known to most members of this House that people throughout our country districts are at present suffering enormous difficulties of all kinds. I cannot imagine for a moment that those difficulties will be decreased by compulsorily shortening the hours when they may work. The farmer finds great difficulty in getting into town to make his purchases. The country storekeeper finds great difficulty because many of his hands have volunteered for military service. A reduction in the number of employees, with still the same volume of work to do, obviously means increasing the difficulties if hours of trading are compulsorily shortened. I can see no good purpose served by the order. I do know of many instances in which it will cause great hardship and materially increase the burdens placed on the shoulders of country people at the present time.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [12.13]: I think the Minister has been wrongly informed when he says that country people approved this order. I point out that two distinct orders have been made. One was made at Christmas time and provided that all shops throughout the Commonwealth should remain closed at night. The other order permitted country stores to remain open till 6 p.m. on the late shopping night. Protests must have been made, because we have received complaints from various Chambers of Commerce and other bodies in country centres. These strongly object to the earlier closing of shops. Country people experience great difficulty, as they must leave their work in order to obtain their supplies. Had the State Government placed before the powers-that-be the advisability of permitting stores in the country to remain open until 8 p.m.—as I understood the State Government had every opportunity to do, but the Minister did not refer to that point—that desirable result might have been achieved. We are at the present moment up against it in every way in the country districts. We are up against it just as much

as are the goldfields with regard to the mining industry. These are pinpricks causing us grave trouble. The motion, whilst it will not perhaps have any effect on the matter, must be an instruction to the Government that the country people, particularly, are not satisfied with the hours allocated at the present time.

Question put and passed.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [12.16]: I move—

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

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 12.17 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 11th May, 1912.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11.0 a.m., and read prayers.

### NOTICE PAPERS.

The Speaker called on Question No. 1.

Mr. SEWARD: I point out that copies of the notice paper have not been distributed.

Mr. SPEAKER: There has been a breakdown at the printing works, so I have been informed, but the notice papers will arrive in a few minutes.

The PREMIER: Could not we postpone for the time being the questions of which notice has been given?

The Minister for Lands: It will be very difficult to follow them otherwise.

Mr. SPEAKER: In the unusual circumstances, I shall call on questions with notice at a later stage of the sitting. I understand that some members desire to ask questions without notice. These may be taken now.

### QUESTION—DEFENCE.

*Midland Junction Workshops Annexe.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (without notice) asked the Premier: Will he inquire whether the information given to the House in regard to the serious curtailment of munitions production at the annexe at the Midland Junction workshops was not published because of the indifference of the Press or the activity of the censor.

The PREMIER replied: The matter has never been officially brought under my notice.

### QUESTIONS (3)—CIVIL DEFENCE.

*As to Lighting Restrictions.*

Mr. SEWARD (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it intended to replace the regulations dealing with lighting restrictions during brown-out and black-out periods, disallowed recently by the Legislative Council, by regulations to be enacted under National Security Regulations? 2, If so, will such action prevent this Parliament from reviewing and, if thought necessary, disallowing all or any of those regulations? 3, If so, does the Government approve of such action?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The lighting restrictions were originally imposed at the request of the Commonwealth military authorities. On the disallowance of the regulations, the military authorities were notified of the position and it was left to them to institute such action as was considered necessary for the security of the State. What this action will be has not yet been determined.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Further to that question, is the Government continuing