

it is, what is to be done with it?" Do not go on in the illegal fashions of the past. Either provide for this deficit in the Estimates, or set up a fund and say that the Government for the time being shall finance the deficit out of that fund. I again thank hon. members for the attention they have given to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 10.19 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 7th March, 1917.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before asking for questions, I desire to call the attention of hon. members to Standing Order 107, which reads—

Questions may be put to Ministers of the Crown relating to public affairs; and to other members, relating to any Bill, motion, or other public matter connected with the business of the House, in which such members may be concerned.

Questions which do not come under this Standing Order put the Speaker and the officers of the House in an undesirable position. Frivolous questions court frivolous answers and both alike are unbecoming the dignity of the House. The object of a question is to obtain information, not to give it.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Audit Act. Order-in-Council.

By Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Education Department, amendment of regulations.

By the Minister for Industries: Returned Soldiers Settlement Scheme.

### QUESTION—CIVIL SERVANTS, SPECIAL ALLOWANCES.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that special allowances are about to be granted to certain civil servants in higher grades? 2, Do the Government propose to treat all officers, irrespective of rank, on their merits?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. Allowances for special work are granted from time to time to all ranks of the service. 2, Yes.

### QUESTION—ROYAL COMMISSIONS ON TOUR.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Has he noticed that two Royal Commissions left on Saturday for a trip to the Eastern States? 2, In view of the present condition of our finances, does he intend to close down on this waste of public money?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Royal Commissions on the Agricultural Industry and on Esperance Lands left for the Eastern States on Saturday, the 3rd instant, to further investigate the subjects into which they are inquiring. 2, In view of the importance to the State of the questions being investigated by the Commissions, it is not considered advisable to curtail in any way their opportunities of gaining information which will enable them to report effectively on the matters in question.

Hon. J. Scaddan: They will want to go to America next.

Mr. Taylor: Why do you not send them to France?

Mr. Underwood: Why do you not send them to the Front?

Mr. Holman: Why do you not spend the money on building railways?

#### QUESTION—ESTATE REPURCHASE, THOMPSON'S LAKE.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Minister for Lands: 1, From whom, and on what date, was the Thompson's Lake estate purchased by the Government? 2, What was the total sum paid for same? 3, What other expenditure has been incurred in connection with the estate since date of purchase? 4, With what intention was the purchase made? 5, Has effect been given to such intention? 6, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Messrs. Holmes Bros., 24th August, 1911. 2, £9,500. 3, About £320. 4, With the intention of utilising the land in connection with the drainage of West Jandakot. 5, No. 6, I understand that the ratepayers have never presented the necessary petition for a drainage district, as prescribed by the Land Drainage Act, 1900.

#### QUESTION—FREMANTLE PRISON WARDERS.

Mr. CARPENTER asked Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): 1, Is it true that seven warders at the Fremantle prison, who live outside the official quarters, have had their rent allowances stopped be-

cause they decline to occupy one of the official cottages now vacant? 2, Is it a fact that a previous occupant of this cottage was advised by a doctor to leave the premises because they were inimical to health? 3, Has any health officer or other medical authority since reported that these premises are now fit for occupation; if so, who was the officer making such report? 4, Do the Government intend to penalise seven public servants for objecting to live in a house which only one can occupy?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, The occupation of quarters is a condition of appointment. There is no right of refusal nor any ground for objection. Gaols Regulation 13 provides that, "all officers shall reside in the quarters provided for them, unless otherwise permitted." Quarters are provided to the occupiers as compensation for their liability to be called on for duty at all hours of the night or day. What is known as "Reserve Duty" is one such special call. Men living out of quarters evade this duty. In case of a mutiny, outbreak of fire, or other emergency, it is imperative that the officers be available in the quarters provided. It is not a question of the amount of rental, but of the safe and proper administration of the prison.

Mr. CARPENTER: Do the Government intend to penalise seven public servants for failing to live in a house which only one could occupy? The question I asked has relation to the fact that the Prisons Department has stopped the allowance of £29 a year, in lieu of residence in quarters, to seven warders of the Fremantle prison because there is one official residence vacant and each of the seven object to live in it. In reply to my question the Honorary Minister read a long paragraph of about a dozen or 14 lines and there has not been the slightest attempt on his part to answer the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CARPENTER: Would the Honorary Minister please answer the question I have asked him?

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member desire to ask the Honorary Minister a ques-

tion without notice? If so, will you ask the question? I do not want a statement.

Mr. CARPENTER: Would the Honorary Minister, in view of the fact that he has not given me any explanation——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member will look at the Standing Orders he will find that there can be no discussion on a question.

Mr. CARPENTER: Perhaps I have exceeded the limit, but I have no wish to go outside the Standing Orders. Will the Honorary Minister attempt to reply to my question of which I gave notice?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): I have answered the question put by the hon. member.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is not an answer at all; it is an evasion.

#### QUESTION — EXPEDITIONARY FORCES AND EDUCATION DE- PARTMENT.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that a school teacher at Manjimup, who is single and physically fit, has been refused by the Education Department permission to join the A.I.F.? 2, Is it the policy of the Government to prevent school teachers going to the Front?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. When the Federal Government called up the single men for national service, pending the result of the referendum, the Education Department applied for the exemption of certain teachers of schools in localities to which it was inadvisable to send female teachers, and also for the exemption of a few teachers of special subjects in higher-grade schools. The teacher of Manjimup school was in the former class, and exemption was granted up to 1st February. As the referendum was negatived, teachers were left free to enlist as they chose. 2, It is not the policy of the Government to prevent teachers going to the Front. On the contrary, every encouragement is offered to them to enlist. Service while at the Front counts as service in the department, and claims for promotion will be considered as though the teacher had remained at his post. Those who enlist are granted

a cash equivalent of the proportion of long service leave due to them. Already 149 out of 500 male teachers have joined the colours. The majority of those remaining are married men or men who are debarred from enlisting by age or by some physical infirmity.

#### QUESTION—ESPERANCE LANDS COMMISSION, EVIDENCE.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Industries: Will he make immediately available to the public the whole of the evidence obtained up to date by the Esperance Land Commission?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: It is thought advisable to await the report of the Commission, which should be available in a short time, before making the evidence taken to date available. Much of the evidence has been published in the newspapers from time to time.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What nonsense! What have you to hide in the matter?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Nothing.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Then why not make it available?

#### QUESTION—TOBACCO, SALE TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Attorney General: Will he issue notices to trades people drawing their attention to the Act just passed prohibiting the sale of tobacco, etc., to young persons, as was done in England when a somewhat similar Act was passed?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: Yes.

#### QUESTION—FREEZING WORKS, WYNDHAM AND MR. TEMPLETON.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: Is Mr. Templeton, who gave evidence before the Commissioner dealing with the Wyndham Freezing Works, the same Mr. Templeton who applied for the position as foreman in charge of the construction of the works and was not successful in his application?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Yes. Another man well known to the Department was appointed.

#### QUESTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE FUND.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: What is the total amount of money now standing to the credit of the Workers' Compensation Insurance Fund, which was established for the purpose of paying accident pay to workers employed in the various Government departments?

The PREMIER replied: Balance 28/2/1917—£26,463 4s.

#### QUESTIONS (8)—WHEAT MARKETING SCHEME.

*Acquiring Agents and Ockerby & Co., Ltd.*

Mr. ALLEN asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Did he definitely promise the Inspector of the W.A. Bank some weeks ago to appoint Ockerby & Co., Limited, acquiring agents under the wheat scheme for 1916-17, if certain conditions were complied with? If so, why is it that no appointment has been made although every condition required by the Minister has been complied with by Ockerby & Co., Limited? 2, Is it not a fact that fully 80 per cent of the wheat has already been delivered to agents, and the balance promised, so that if Ockerby & Co. were now appointed there would be no wheat left for them to acquire? 3, What is the quantity of wheat delivered in Kellerberrin railway yards, and how much approximately has still to be delivered? 4, Is he aware that no new wheat has been delivered to the Kellerberrin mill, and if that in the railway yards is eventually delivered to the Kellerberrin mill, it will entail a loss to the scheme (owing to the extra handling and agents' commission) of fully £3,000, which loss would have been avoided had the wheat been delivered to the Kellerberrin mill in the first place? 5, Is he aware that the Cottlesloe mill has been twice brought to a standstill within the last week for want of wheat, in spite of numerous warnings from Ockerby & Co. to the general manager that their supplies of wheat were running short and that they

would be unable to furnish their quota of the Imperial flour order if the mill could not be kept running? 6, Is it news to him that the general manager wired on the 20th February to Mr. T. Ockerby at Kellerberrin, as follows—"Unless you advise immediately, as promised, admitting continuance of last season's agency agreement, subject, of course, to modifications to be determined either mutually or by arbitration, the Scheme will be unable to supply any further old season's wheat." And received the following reply:—"Not anxious old season's, quite willing mill new, you can avoid any difficulty old or new, by appointing us agents for new, meantime admit nothing and deny making any promises (stop) As you hold our debit for £22,000 on account 2,000 tons flour Imperial order now ready for shipment, you can safely supply old wheat to this value." 7, Will he state why he is so anxious to retain Ockerby & Co. as agents under the first pool (season 1915-16), whilst he is apparently reluctant to appoint them under the new 1916-17 season?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, No. 2, I have no definite information, but the position is probably as stated in the question. 3, 60,471 bags. It is not possible to estimate the quantity still to be delivered. 4, Yes. The owners have not been appointed milling agents. I cannot say what the loss will be. 5, No. 6, No. 7, Ockerby & Co., and all other acquiring or milling agents under the 1915-16 scheme must continue responsible for the delivery to the pool's order of all wheat acquired during that year.

#### *Wheat for the Empire.*

Mr. HARRISON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Whether his attention has been drawn to an article in the *Primary Producer* of Friday, 2nd March, under the heading "Parasites on Patriotism and Production"? 2, Will he inform this House what action, if any, he intends taking to bring about a more satisfactory condition of affairs with regard to the despatch of wheat to the British Empire and her Allies?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, No; only so far as referred to by

the hon. member when giving notice of his question. 2. Answered by No. 1.

*Sale of Wheat to a Miller.*

Mr. HARRISON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Has he, or the manager of the Wheat Marketing Scheme, granted any farmer the right to sell the product of his 1916-17 harvest direct to a miller? 2, If so, will he grant the same right to all farmers? 3, If permission granted, by what authority?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, Yes. Two farmers have been allowed to sell special wheat at a price higher than the pool is likely to realise. The quantity of this special wheat is small. 2, Yes, for similar wheat and at a similar price. 3, The power conferred upon the Minister by the Wheat Marketing Act, 1916.

*Finalising Agency Agreements.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Could not the agency agreements under the Wheat Marketing Scheme be finalised subject to the reduction (if any) of the charges agreed upon before the sale to the Imperial Government of 3,000,000 tons was completed? 2, Do these deductions apply to the millers' agreement; if not, why are the millers' agreements not finalised? 3, Does he realise the grave danger of allowing the agents to first handle the wheat and then discuss the value of the work after it is finished? 4, Will he insist that last year's agency conditions and handling charges paid shall also apply this year?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. All agreements are now being finalised. 3, There is no grave danger. 4, I have no power to insist upon last year's agency conditions and handling charges being made to apply to this year. Clause 14 will find no place in the new agreement, and other clauses must be modified.

*Purchases outside Pool, Millers' Claims.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, What sums have the

following millers claimed for wheat purchased outside last year's pool:—Ockerby & Co., Ltd.; W. Padbury, Peerless Mills; York Milling Co.; Perth Flour Milling Co.; Victoria Flour Mills? 2, Have these claims been closely investigated? 3, Will he consult Parliament before settling these claims, and, if Parliament is not in session, will he obtain the approval of the advisory committee before doing so?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, No specific sums have been finally claimed by any of the mills mentioned. 2, The claims are being properly investigated—investigation should have been made by the late Minister before the agreement was signed. 3, Parliament has already been consulted, and after investigation by a select committee declined to take any action. The advisory committee will be consulted, but the interpretation of the agreement is one for consideration by a legal authority.

*Agents' obligations to Pool.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Has the last year's £20,000 bond or any portion of it been accepted by the local Wheat Marketing Committee from the agents as covering their obligations to the pool in connection with this year's harvest? 2, Is it proposed to make each agent deposit an additional £20,000 bond, as was done last year, by which they guarantee to deliver on to the world's market wheat equal to the value of the wheat certificates issued? 3, If not, is the pool taking the responsibility of checking delivery at the sidings and comparing these with the quantities shipped? 4, If not, how are the farmers' interests being protected?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, The £20,000 bond is continued to cover both crops. The bond is very much higher than in Victoria. 2, No. The one bond of £20,000 is the guarantee. 2,000,000 bushels old wheat remain on hand. 3, No. The same system applies this year as applied last year. 4, The bond is not the only guarantee. The acquiring agents are responsible, and their financial position apart from the bond is also the pool's guarantee.

*Next year's wheat, negotiations for sale.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Industries: Whether he considers the enthusiastic acceptance by the farmers of Australia of the wheat board's guaranteed advance of 4s. per bushel f.o.b. for next year's wheat will influence that body to open up negotiations for sale at this price?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: No. There is no guaranteed advance of 4s. per bushel. The guaranteed advance is 3s. per bushel, and the guaranteed price a minimum of 4s., f.o.b.

*Low grade wheat at Geraldton.*

Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked the Minister for Industries: 1, What quantity of wheat of a class below f.a.q. sample was received at Geraldton and put through the supplementary pool dealing with low-grade wheat? 2, How much of this wheat was gristed at Geraldton? 3, Was any of this wheat sent from Geraldton to Northam to be gristed; if so, why? 4, Why was the gristing not done at Geraldton? 5, When will the final dividend out of the supplementary pool be paid?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, 8,315 bushels 7lbs. 2, 3,688 bushels 4lbs. was sold to Geraldton mill at 2s. 4d. per bushel ex-stack Geraldton. 3, 4,627 bushels 3lbs. was sent from Geraldton to Northam mill to be—(a) gristed for 6d. per bushel plus any excess over 3s. per flour ton for new bags with 2½ per cent. commission on sales (including *del credere* risk) of mill products; or at the option of the Scheme. (b) purchase by the mill at a price of 4s. per bushel delivered at the mill. 4, No further wheat was sold to the Geraldton mill because their best offer was 2s. 4d. per bushel. 5, After gristing is completed.

## BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

Report adopted.

*Third Reading.*

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister—Perth) [4.50]: I move—

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

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [4.51]: I again wish to draw the attention of the Minister in charge of the Bill to the danger created by rushing the Bill through as was done.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): It has been before the House for four months.

Mr. HOLMAN: It has not been possible to debate it until last night. It is absurd to say that the Bill has been before the House for four months when the Government rushed it through in one sitting.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): That is only one stage.

Mr. HOLMAN: This is the particular stage. With the main policy of the Bill I am in accord. The local authorities in various centres should contribute their fair quota towards the upkeep of any brigade which they may have in their district. There are, however, several other matters which require attention. Last night served to demonstrate the utter ignorance of the Minister in charge of the Bill when he said that there were no offices attached to the volunteer fire brigades.

The Premier: You have no right to say that. He knows as much about the Bill as you do.

Mr. HOLMAN: It shows his utter ignorance upon the subject of volunteer fire brigades, and of the Bill of which he is in charge. We have about 30 volunteer brigades in this State, and each and every one of these has its full set of offices under its entire control. There is no provision made in the Bill for the members or officers of those brigades. One very far reaching amendment has been brought into the Bill on the motion of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) in connection with the proviso to Clause 26. That may cause a great deal of trouble in the future, because, as the Honorary Minister has correctly stated, the insurance companies did pay a quota towards the valuation price of the property taken over by the Fire Brigades Board, actually in 1910. If the amendment is allowed to go through—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope it does.

Mr. HOLMAN: It will mean that the owners of the property held by the board—

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): You will notice if you read the amendment that he says, "not now required."

Mr. HOLMAN: The whole of the property of the board, whether it is required to remove the station from it or to leave the property there, must revert back to the local governing body. That will mean that the board would not be enabled to realise on the property and to repurchase a more suitable one. It will mean that any buildings which are held by the board and which are not suitable, or any land which is not suitable for the fire brigade purposes, cannot be realised upon for the purpose of extending their quarters or providing themselves with buildings in any other direction.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): I do not think that is right.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am saying what is right. It would also mean, with regard to the insurance companies, which have paid their quota towards the purchase of these sites and are entitled to three-eighths on these sites by the fact that they paid three-eighths of the price, that when it comes to a readjustment there may be serious complications which should be provided against. In the case of a municipality, which, prior to the board taking over the property, had a block of land which it handed over to the fire brigade board for fire brigade purposes, and which the fire brigades board has no further use for and where the Government can supply them with a more suitable site upon which to erect buildings. I maintain that that site should revert to the local governing body but not otherwise, because we know full well that sites have been granted to the brigades outside any municipal authority whatever.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That does not apply.

Mr. HOLMAN: Prior to 1909, and in other cases, the board acquired property which some of the municipal authorities are anxious to get back at the present time. Before an amendment of this nature is allowed to go through. I maintain that the Minister in charge of the Bill should be very careful in what he does. There is a possibility of serious complications arising

in that direction. I do not desire to delay the passing of the Bill, but merely enter my protest to show that the Bill was forced through without amendments which would have been of advantage to the Bill being discussed, and to draw attention to the grave disabilities which may arise when an alteration in the constitution of the board is being brought about. We desire the best possible service to the people for prevention against fire, and we also desire to have that carried out as economically as possible. I am satisfied that when an alteration is made, it is going to bring about a big dislocation of existing conditions, and that ample provision has not been made to meet this situation.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister—Perth) [4.57]: As mover of the motion, that the Bill should be read a third time, I take it that I have not the right to reply. The amendment in question was moved by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) and I would ask him to be good enough to reply.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.58]: I regret that the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), who is chairman of the Fire Brigades Board, has not read the amendment which I moved last night, or the proviso. Any property which is given to any person outside a local authority, and has been taken over by the Fire Brigades Board, is not affected so far as my amendment is concerned. This does not affect it in the least. I only wanted to protect the local authorities, who have had granted to them in the past by the Government areas of land for the purpose of local government buildings.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): And which they no longer require.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is possible that a corner of a block of land in one of these areas has been used for a fire station and has upon it some small building which is not used as a fire station, but possibly as a stable. This building may be alongside the Town Hall and therefore becomes an eyesore in the district. My amendment provides that in case the Fire Brigade Board does not desire that building for fire brigade purposes it should go back to the

local authority from which it was originally transferred without any fee. No one has paid the local authorities for the buildings or the ground. Any expenditure incurred upon the buildings by the Fire Brigades Board should be repaid by the local authority. In the case of my own district it would be detrimental to the town that the Fire Brigades Board should have power to sell or lease an area of land there in the main street if they did not require the land for fire brigade purposes. It is an improvement in the Bill, but as long as a Fire Brigade Board requires the property it would not be necessary to hand it back. If the board does not require it the local authority should have an opportunity of taking it back on payment of the costs incurred by the board in connection with it. It is only a fair request, and I would point out that in any case the fire brigade stations are in most cases on sites removed from the town hall or municipal offices.

Question put and passed.

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

#### MOTION—RAILWAY FREIGHTS AND FARES, INCREASE.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [5.1]: I move—

*That in the opinion of this House the raising of railway freights and passenger fares, as proposed by the Government, is an unfair and inequitable impost, and should be abolished.*

It is not my intention to take up a great deal of the time of the House on this motion, for the reason that the subject matter, railway freights generally, has been discussed several times during the past few months, and especially during the recent debate on the motion of want of confidence. I am submitting this motion in the interests of those persons who use the railways only because they are forced to do so, many of whom are not in a position to pay the increased fares which have been imposed in several directions. My plea is not on behalf of the person who goes jaunting about the State on the railways, but is a protest against the increase which has

been imposed in railway fares and freight which bear so heavily on those resident in the remote portions of the State. The increases in fares have been on the basis of one penny for first class and two pence second class fares in the metropolitan area. There are many people, shop girls, apprentices, and others, who have only a small wage, and to whom the increase in fares has been absolutely hurtful. That increase of one penny and two pence on every ticket has made a considerable reduction in the purchasing power of the money earned by these people in wages. The casual labourer on nine shillings per day has to pay an extra penny on his second class ticket; and while the actual payment of one penny is not a very serious matter, I wish to call the attention of the House to the fact that at such stations as Burswood, Mt. Lawley, Maylands, Bayswater, Victoria Park, and Belmont—I hope the Attorney General is listening—the increase in railway fares imposed by the present Government has been at the rate of 66 per cent. to second class travellers. In these stressful times, when the housewife has to make the best use of every penny, and when we are not protected as we were by the Control of Trade in War Time Act when the previous Government were in office and alterations in the railway fares were made, I contend, and I think this House will contend, that injustice has been done. The constituents of the Attorney General are not the only persons affected in this matter, for the increase has been made general throughout the suburban railway system. But, while the increase of 66 per cent. has been demanded from the poorer classes who travel second class, the fares of first class travellers have been increased by 40 per cent. only. If the Government must increase fares, I say the increase should be equitable. I contend that those persons travelling first class would be in a better position to pay from a monetary point of view if the positions were reversed and they had to pay a 66 per cent. increase as against 40 per cent. on second class fares. Had the increases been framed on an equitable basis there would have been a correspondingly higher increase in first class fares than in the increase on second class tickets.



And had that been done no one could have cavilled at it from an equity point of view, however much there might have been said as to the necessity for increasing the railway fares at all. In increasing the railway fares to metropolitan and suburban residents the Government are on a good wicket, for the reason that the people have no other means of travelling into the City. Had there been other means of conveyance into the City, or if the railway travellers were within walking distance of Perth, I venture to say there would have been little additional railway revenue as the result of these increases. The Government have the whip hand and they know perfectly well that it is impossible for the people to reach the City except by means of the railways. I contend that in times such as these this is inequitable class taxation, for the reason that it is not spread equally or equitably over the whole of the community. We now come to the question of what this increase means in the matter of the cost of living in the remote parts of the State. I shall not use the worn-out argument that the man who is living outback is blazing the track. That has been used so often in this House that people now do not believe it. But I do assert that the persons living in the remote portions of the State are handicapped to a greater extent in the matter of their household expenditure than the people in the more favoured portions of the State nearer the metropolitan area. While there has been an increase in railway freights, and a consequential increase in the cost of commodities, we find that the workers are not in receipt of any increased remuneration from their employers. We do find, however, that the storekeepers in every part of the State where these increased railway rates operate have put up their prices. Not only have they increased the price of commodities by the difference of the increased impost of the railway department, but they have also placed an extra impost on the people who buy goods from them; and then they use the argument that the railway rate increases are responsible for it. If we now had the safeguard which we had under the Control of Trade in War Time Act the people would have been safeguarded to

the extent that the board could have shown what the increased railway charges actually were, and could have controlled tradesmen by directing how much they would be entitled to charge the people. When comparisons are drawn between the City and outback portions such as Meekatharra it is pointed out that the miner at Meekatharra is in receipt of £4 per week and that in many industries the worker in Perth is in receipt of only 10s. or 9s. per day. But it must be remembered that a man in Perth can obtain board and lodging for 22s. 6d. per week, whereas in Meekatharra a man has to pay 30s. per week for board alone, and on top of that he has to pay for water, lighting, kerosene, etc., for the camp in which he lives. And all these things make the impost upon him consequent on the increased railway freights a great deal higher than in the case of the man in Perth. It is the duty of the State to afford opportunities for education in every portion of the State as nearly equal as can be to those offering in the metropolitan area. In this connection a further advantage to the man in the City lies in the fact that there are available here facilities which are not open to the man outback for the education of his children from a technical point of view. When the railway department increases rates to an extent that the price of goods to the man outback is rendered extortionate, then I contend that the handicap is too great. To Armadale in the metropolitan area there has been a rise in the cost of transport of goods of 1s. per ton. That is to say, a man may send in to Perth and get the pick of the goods, provender and so forth in the Perth warehouses and stores and the railway department will transport those goods to his station at the increased cost of 1s. per ton. That is for twenty miles; but to the man in Meekatharra, who is over six hundred miles away, class 1 goods have to pay an extra impost of 15s. 3d. per ton from Perth: to Cue it is 14s. I wish to read this table, it is a short one, because I want it to be on record and I want to use it as an argument:—Perth to Meekatharra, class 1, 15s. 3d.; class 2, 20s.; class 3, 24s. 9d.—all increases on the old rates. To Cue from Perth, class 1, 14s.; class 2, 18s. 5d.; class 3, 22s. 9d.—all increases. To Leonora, class

1, 14s. 2d.; class 2, 18s. 7d.; class 3, 22s. 11d. Perth to Kalgoorlie, class 1, 11s.; class 2, 14s. 9d.; class 3, 19s. To Narrogin the increase in class 1 is 5s. 11d., in class 2 7s. 9d., and in class 3 9s. 7d. In the case of Wagin the increases are in class 1 6s. 11d., in class 2 9s., and in class 3 11s. 2d. To Katanning the increases are, respectively, 7s. 9d., 10s. 2d., and 12s. 6d. I have selected those stations from the rate book as fairly representing the various portions of this State affected. I do not wish for one moment to assert that the whole of the increased imposts will be borne by any one section of the outback country. But I ask all people affected, no matter in what portion of the State they may reside, whether these increases represent a fair thing? I am sure that if the opinion of the country generally were taken, it would be agreed that there is a great necessity for further consideration of railway rates by the Government. Class 1 goods comprise sugar, jam, butter, and candles—that is to say, food and household requisites—and also mining machinery and requisites. The thing which the people of the goldfields need most is that mining machinery and mining requisites should be carried at the lowest possible cost. Gold is needed just as much as men are, to win the war. There has been an increase in the cost of railway carriage of every commodity used for the production of gold and the reduction of ores, and an extra impost again has been placed on these commodities by the merchants. The latter fact is due to the circumstance that Australia did not, until very recently, wake up to the fact that other countries, and notably Germany, were producing most of the requisites for the production and refining of gold. It is our duty to do something to insure that Australia shall produce many of these requisites in the near future. This ought to have been seen to long before. Had our Federal Government taken the matter in hand, and shown a little more patriotism a considerable time ago by putting on a sufficient duty to bar out the imported articles, the desired position would ere now have been attained. For example, zinc shavings are now being produced in Australia. Had a business man, a man of business acumen,

a man of big, broad, national business, been told a few years ago that zinc shavings could be produced in Australia, he would have told his informant, "You do not know what you are talking about." However, necessity drove, and now all the zinc shavings and concentrates required here are being produced in Australia. Australia, however, has not either the machinery or the technical knowledge to produce these commodities at a price which would represent material assistance to the mining industry. The Australian cost of production is much higher; and this fact should be an incentive to the Government to carry the commodities at a lower rate, rather than to place extra imposts on them. Class 2 goods include kerosene, jam in small lots, and fruits preserved in jars. In the case of Meekatharra, an extra £1 per ton has been imposed on jam and preserved fruits. Let me point out that the people of Meekatharra have no access to either orchards or fruit barrows. In my opinion, the fruit growers would be well advised to form themselves into a body for the local marketing of their product. Instead of talking so much about what the State will produce, the fruitgrowers should take up the question of distribution and send their produce to localities now languishing for fruit. From that course both the State and the fruitgrowers would benefit, especially the latter. As we know, the fruitgrowers are in distress at present; and if they were to establish canning works would not the extra £1 per ton freight to Meekatharra represent a serious handicap in the disposal of their product? Tea, again, is an essential commodity on the goldfields and outback generally. The extra freight imposed on tea to Meekatharra is 24s. 9d. per ton, to Leonora 22s. 6d., to Wagin 11s. 2d., and to Katanning 12s. 6d. Freights have been increased on all the commodities used by the ordinary man outback, used by the only man who is any good outback, and that is the man who will work. Parasites cannot get a living outback. Surely the labourer is worthy of his hire, and the least the Government should do is to reconsider the question of railway rates generally. My belief is that if they do so during recess they will submit, on the reassembling of

Parliament, a definite proposal for the redressing of existing wrongs in this respect. I understand the Railway Department are not squaring their financial ledger just now. I know full well that any Government of this State will be right up against it for a long time to come, and that we shall have deficits for the next 15 or 20 years.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Mr. FOLEY: The Premier may fund his deficits, but they will still be deficits. If I owe a man £100, I shall be in his debt until I have repaid him that sum and the interest it carries. I wish it to be understood that I am not quibbling over the money spent during the past few years. I wish the amount had been twenty millions instead of ten, because the expenditure has laid the foundation of good for this State. No matter what Government may be in office, the people of Western Australia must benefit from the expenditure of the past few years. Even although the Government may not be able to square the ledger of the Railway Department, I trust that if there is any little consideration to be shown it will be shown to the people outback. I commend the motion to the House. I move it in no carping spirit, but solely with the object of obtaining reconsideration from the Government of the increased railway freights. Although the Government sit on the opposite side of the Chamber, I feel sure they will give my motion the consideration that it deserves. I feel sure, too, that they will accept it in the spirit in which I move it.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [5.29]: Whilst I admire the moderate tone in which the hon. member has moved this motion, and am grateful for his concluding remarks, I cannot, of course, support the motion as it is worded. It is practically a motion of censure on the Government, and if it is carried in this form I am afraid we shall have to consider our position very seriously. All the notices of motion which appeared on the Notice Paper prior to yesterday have, as promised, been brought up for discussion this evening. I propose, therefore, to make my remarks as brief as possible in connection with every motion on which I may speak,

and I hope hon. members generally will do the same, in order that there may be a chance of disposing of those motions which may be considered most urgent and most important. I thank the mover of the present motion for his concluding remarks, because he has intimated that what he wants the Government to do is to reconsider the increases in railway rates and passenger fares. I admit that he has pointed out some anomalies. It is very difficult to make increases in a big department like the Railways without creating anomalies. Whatever might be done, we could scarcely hope for general commendation from the whole public. I am very desirous of impressing upon hon. members the fact that our national railway system has been going back year after year for some time past. We have been losing money on the system. We have lost nearly half a million during the past four or five years, and for the six months ended 31st December last we show a loss of £144,000.

Mr. Lambert: Why not tax the unused lands adjacent to the railway lines?

The PREMIER: A very good suggestion. If I could see some way of forcing the owners of that land to improve it I would be very glad to act upon it.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The whole trouble arose years ago through the system of selection before survey.

The PREMIER: That is so. Still, it is one of the problems that must be tackled. We have lost £144,000 on the railways for the six months prior to the 31st December, despite the first increase in fares and rates.

Hon. P. Collier: The first increase was not on very long before December.

The PREMIER: A couple of months. There has been a shrinkage of £110,000 in passenger and goods earnings during the six months alluded to. This position must be faced. While I admit that we must endeavour to adjust our rates and fares so that they may be more equitably imposed on all the people of the State as far as possible, yet I think hon. members will agree that it is our duty to see that the railways secure some increase for the services rendered. I cannot look upon it at all as a question of taxation. The hon.

member who moved the motion claimed that it is a form of taxation. It is nothing of the sort. It is payment for services rendered.

Mr. Taylor: But why make it press so heavily on people far out?

The PREMIER: It is all a question of whether the tariff is the most equitable that can be devised. Of course, any tariff must press more or less heavily on those far back, those 600 miles or more from the capital. Still hon. members will agree that those people are receiving all possible consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: Our holiday excursion fares are the cheapest in Australia.

The PREMIER: Certainly they are essentially moderate. A lot of our charges might be fairly increased, but of course we must go into the matter and give it due consideration before we make any further alteration. If the hon. member will withdraw his motion or agree to have it amended so that it may be acceptable to the Government, we will promise that full inquiries shall be made and the matter reconsidered with a view to devising, if possible, a more equitable distribution of any increased rates and fares. I think we shall have to increase rates and fares all round rather more than they are at present. I am not forgetful of the fact that every time prices of facilities are increased the effect is likely to be a decrease of the demand for those facilities. I keep that prominently before me. The thing is to hit the happy mean, and be able to get a return for services rendered more commensurate with the charges made elsewhere, and with the fact that our railway lines have so small a population per mile as compared with other places, in order that we may, if possible, bring the balance to that point where payment for services equals the cost of providing those services. We have no right to have this big system running and constituting a general tax, because in the last analysis it does become a tax on the general community. We ought to endeavour to get sufficient revenue for the services to pay at least working expenses and interest and sinking fund on the capital involved.

Mr. Lambert: The Eastern goldfields line will do better when the Trans-Australian railway is through.

The PREMIER: We shall get only a proportion of the through fares, and I doubt very much whether it will be any direct benefit to our railway system for some years to come, although, of course, it will be of immediate advantage to the State and to those who wish to travel from East to West, or *vice versa*. I quite agree with the mover of the motion that we should endeavour to deal equitably between those who travel first-class and those who use the second-class facilities. I am not prepared, however, to admit that it is only what the hon. member calls the "poor man" who uses the second-class. I am afraid that many who could afford to use first-class use the second-class, perhaps because there is no third-class. The hon. member's plea in regard to the cost of living in outback centres is one to which all can give general support. At the same time, it is not always the railway rate which establishes the prices of commodities in outlying centres, although, of course, it is a big factor. I have seen in centres very near to the City prices charged in retail stores which were higher, if anything, than the prices charged in Kalgoorlie stores. There are many things to be considered in the fixing of prices. There is the volume of trade, the question of demand and, I regret to admit, sometimes the greed of the man who is in a position to insist upon his price. Because we put 10s. a ton on railway rates to some far distant settlers is not to say that we shall see an immediate effect on the retail prices charged to those settlers for commodities. Members will agree that if we were to take 10s. off the rates to-morrow we would not find any immediate alteration in the price the storekeeper has been in the practice of charging. We ought to do all in our power to encourage the establishment of industries in Western Australia. I hope that, whichever side may be in power, that sentiment will be adopted as being based on a sound principle. We should encourage and assist anyone who will come to Western Australia and establish industries, opening up new avenues of production and employment. The hon. member's

complaint regarding the cost of commodities in connection with the gold mining industry is undoubtedly correct. But it applies all round. I do not know any industry in Western Australia to-day which is not suffering from increased cost of commodities. I am afraid that for many years to come we shall have to put up with that position of affairs, brought about by the war. I do not see how we can expect to reach normal for some considerable time after the war is over. It is part of the price we have to pay for our nationality and for the fact that we are doing our utmost to support the Empire in the great struggle, doing all we can to assist the Empire to win. At the same time it is easy for members to cry out that we must assist the gold mining industry and must reduce railway rates and fares in order that the industry may continue to carry on its activities. I do not think we would be justified in running our railway system at a loss merely to keep another industry going, which, perhaps, was not making good to the State the loss the railways would suffer. We must try to adjust our charges, just as a private company would, to encourage the establishment and continuance of industries which will bring traffic to our railway system, and so by increasing the volume of traffic make it possible to reduce charges. In conclusion let me say that we wish to deal equitably with all sections of the community. We are quite prepared, and have already made up our minds to have this question of railway fares and rates fully inquired into and given more consideration than, perhaps, it previously received. We hope that the result of the inquiry and reconsideration will mean a readjustment which will largely increase the earnings of our railway system, and will bear equitably on all the people who use that system. I hope the hon. member will accept that assurance and either withdraw his motion or allow it to be amended.

Mr. Taylor: What form of amendment do you desire?

The PREMIER: That it should be toned down somewhat.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [5.45]: I have listened to the remarks of the member

for Leonora and I say I am very much in sympathy with him.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Let it be practical sympathy then.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I also was pleased to hear the remarks of the Premier, that he is prepared to adjust the fares and freights in an equitable manner. There is no doubt that this matter of railway freights and fares is one of the burning questions of the hour as far as the people in the backblocks are concerned. The member for Leonora said he was not going to talk platitudes. Now what is a platitude? It is a truism and a truism is an undoubted truth, therefore, I am quite prepared to state the undoubted truth regarding the position of the people outback and the railway fares and freights. The railways earn over two million pounds annually in fares and freights and the whole of that is practically paid by people living at distances from the metropolitan area. If that is the case, it is easy to realise how important this question is to them. The railways cost 1½ millions in working expenses and maintenance, and half a million is swallowed up in sinking fund. The Premier states that whatever happens the money has to be found. I cannot cross swords with him over that now. Our railways are national railways and it is not fair to make any one section of the community carry the whole of the burden on their backs. As it is now, freights should be adjusted in such a way that the man outback, whether on the goldfields or elsewhere, should not be unduly penalised. As it is now, the small man is almost killed by heavy fares and cannot compete with his more fortunate brother near the metropolis. Take the orchardist. He is hit in that direction. The whole matter of freights should be looked at from a national standpoint. The main object should be how to assist the primary producer wherever he may be living, on the goldfields or in any other part of the State, to be able to get his goods and send his goods at such a rate, to produce them and provide money so that they may not be wasted as they are to-day.

Mr. Carpenter: At somebody else's expense.

Mr. WILLMOTT: No, but to everybody's benefit in the State when it is washed out.

Mr. Taylor: Do not look so cross.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I cannot help looking cross when members make such statements. When one compares the average cost of articles carried over the railways one sees that the average per ton in South Australia is 38s. as against 59s. in Western Australia.

Mr. Taylor: What is that on?

Mr. WILLMOTT: On wheat, manures, chaff, agricultural machinery, galvanised iron, oil engines, kerosene, petrol, cornsacks, hides, binder twine and timber.

Hon. P. Collier: Is the comparison on the same class of goods?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Those articles which I have enumerated, and I defy contradiction even on the part of the member for Northam. Having listened to the remarks of the Premier it seems we are to have even further increases in fares and freights; that is to continue so as to finance our railways as we are doing now. If that is so, these fares and freights should be adjusted equitably.

Hon. P. Collier: If you adjust them equitably so far as the railways are concerned, you must increase them all round.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The member for Leonora pointed out that the man in the backblocks had plenty of inconvenience and trouble. He has none of the privileges and pleasures that the town dweller has, and on top of that we say that not only shall he forego all these pleasures, not only shall his children not have the same chances of education as the town child has, but he shall carry the whole cost of the railways, working expenses, sinking fund and interest on his back. So long as that policy is carried out so long we shall be doing an injustice. I do not expect in the near future any change in the financing of our railways, but I hope the time will come when we shall take a different view of the financing of the railways and view it from a national standpoint and not say that the railway system is to be paid for out of fares and freights. So long as we do that we penalise the people whom we should help.

Hon. P. Collier: What do you mean by national service?

Mr. WILLMOTT: A national service is a service that all the people benefit from; people in the towns do not pay in their pro-

portion to the people in the country. The motion as moved by the member for Leonora is too drastic, therefore, by way of amendment. I move—

*That all the words after "fares" be struck out and that the words "should be reconsidered by the Government with a view to a more equitable adjustment of the same" inserted in lieu.*

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.54]: I was interested in the interpretation given to the word "platitude" by the leader of the Country party when he said that it was a truism and that a truism was an undoubted truth. I listened to the hon. member with some attention and I thought that he commenced by introducing some undoubted truths. He no doubt uttered some truisms but he finished up by introducing platitudes. That is really what happened. He raised all sorts of objections to the action of the Government introducing an equitable form of taxation by increasing the freights imposed on the primary producers, but he finalised by saying that although the Government had done something which was detrimental to the primary producers, he was prepared to allow them to suffer on so long as the hon. member got over the difficulty of the discomfiture of the Government by moving an amendment making fares and freights more equitable in the future. That is a platitude; it is not a truism, not an undoubted truth. May I say I think the time has arrived when the leader of a party when discussing a matter of vital importance should be able to assist with some constructive criticism and not always generalise in his remarks and leave us no wiser for his utterances as to what he intends or desires. The leader of the Country party left us no wiser. He says this is a national question. What is not? Everything we deal with here is of national importance. Anything affecting the welfare of the people of the State is of national importance, but that does not help us very much. What does the hon. member really mean? May I be permitted to say what I think he means. The railway system should be viewed from the standpoint of belonging to all the community and therefore we should fix fares and freights on a flat

rate, which means that whether a man travels half a mile, or one mile, or 500 miles he should pay exactly the same fare, or if he sends goods half a mile or 500 miles he should pay exactly the same rate.

The Minister for Works: Is that what you call a flat rate?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Is that the hon. member's desire?

Mr. Willmott: No, he does not mean that.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That is the trouble we find ourselves in as to the attitude adopted by the hon. member. He does not suggest anything to get over the difficulty. All the hon. member seems to have in his mind is that the increase in freights as adopted by the Government is going to work harshly against the man in the agricultural districts.

Mr. Willmott: Not only in the agricultural districts.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Well, in the remote portions of the State, but the increase in freights and fares is being discussed every day. Do not we get through the columns of the newspapers, even in the columns of the *Primary Producer*, similar assertions that the railways are a national concern, therefore all the community should contribute towards their upkeep and provide for the sinking fund by an unimproved land tax without exemption. Is the hon. member serious in that contention or was it a sarcasm?

Mr. Griffiths: Why a sarcasm?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Because he is not sincere and if he is not sincere then it must be sarcasm. At the time when we reduced the terminal charge on the district railways we endeavoured to meet the loss of revenue by that very kind of tax but we did not get any support from another place. With the construction of every mile of additional railway in our State, either in the mining or the agricultural districts, value is added to property in the city and the owners of that property are not called upon to contribute anything in proportion to the advantage they receive. The leader of the Country party merely said that he desired to sympathise with the motion before the House. I would like to ask him whether he considers he is helping towards that which he asserts

he and other members are aiming at, that is, calling upon those in the cities and towns whose property is increased in value in consequence of the opening up of the mining and agricultural areas by the construction of railways and roads, by supporting the Government who deliberately set themselves against taxation of land values without exemption. The very basis of what the hon. member desires, is the acceptance of our railways as a national concern, and there is only one way of getting to that position and it is as has been suggested. Is there any hope of getting the Government to agree to our proposals?

Mr. Griffiths: Why not?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Because it is against their principles. In 1914 the present Government came into this House pledged to abolish the Land Tax and to put nothing in its place.

The Minister for Works: In 1911.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: No, in 1914. In 1911 they advocated the abolition of the land tax and in 1914 they were pledged to it.

The Premier: Yes, and to increase the income tax.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am not at this stage arguing as to which is desirable. But all I am doing is to ask the member for York whether he would call upon all to make up the loss on the railway system, so as not to increase fares and freights in such a way as to bear harshly on the producer. I would like to ask him what hope he has of getting what we propose from the present Government.

Mr. Willmott: We cannot get it from them: what hope have we of getting it from you?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am not concerned as to how the leader of the Country party regards members on this side of the House; I am trying to show the position he is placing himself in. He is keeping in office a Government who deliberately increased the railway freights and fares by the rule of thumb method of adding 10 per cent.

Mr. Willmott: And they withdrew the terminal charges which was a step in the right direction.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Is that the hon. member's idea of how to meet a national

question? Is there any sincerity in the hon. member about this matter? We endeavoured to keep a promise we made that we would abolish the terminal charge as being an unfair impost, and I still adhere to that. It is an inequitable impost and should be abolished, and I asked those who are seeking to bring about its abolition that they should be honest enough to also understand the financial position of the State and to assist to remedy that position of affairs by at least making good the loss that would accrue to the revenue. We came along and made a deliberate suggestion that we should obtain additional revenue in the direction the member for York now desires, but we get no support from the Country members.

Mr. Griffiths: What year was that in?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: In the year prior to the re-imposition of the terminal charge. I made a statement as Treasurer that unless our taxation proposals were passed in order to make good the loss due to the abolition of the terminal charge we would have to re-impose it, much as we detested having to do so. We had to do so because hon. members in another place threw out our proposals. From the very moment we imposed the terminal charge and had to increase the railway freights in other directions to make up for the loss due to the drought and the war, we found that our Liberal friends became most antagonistic to the action of the Government and the present Premier as late as the 16th August last, in his capacity as Premier, when delivering his policy speech at Busselton, made this statement—

Mr. Scaddan largely won the 1911 elections by promising the minimum of 9s. per day to railway men. This increased the expenditure by £104,000 per year. . . . Further the railway rates and fares were increased considerably . . . Had not the Liberals on all occasions denounced Mr. Scaddan's action in increasing the freights? They had carried out their pledge to remove the hardships at once. Justice should be done though the heavens fall.

Of course our Liberal friends when in opposition, were not concerned about the interests of the State; all that they were

concerned about was finding grounds for attacking the Government of the day, and amongst other things denounced the action of the Government in increasing railway freights. In 1916, soon after the present Government took office, the Premier took credit for having denounced the previous Government for having increased the railway freights. The public were given to understand that as soon as the new Government got into office, one of their first acts would be to reduce freights and bring them back to the original figure. Otherwise there was no ground to make the statement the present Premier made at Busselton, but he accepts the position as he finds it and allows the freights to remain, and then he makes other increases by the rule of thumb method of adding 10 per cent. Then forsooth, we are asked to accept the amendment moved by the member for Nelson that this matter should be referred to the Government for further consideration. This, however, is throwing dust in the eyes of the public. The statements made by the Premier at Busselton were never intended to be applied by the Government. If when the present Government were in opposition they protested honestly against our action, they should now immediately approach the House and say "We are going to abolish those increased freights." Yet all the Country members are prepared to sit where they are and support a Government which accepts increases which they condemned when they sat in opposition, and then go on to make further increases which are not in the interests of the agricultural producer. The rule of thumb method introduced by the Government is most inequitable. It is true, as the Honorary Minister said, our freights were fixed on a sliding scale, but that sliding scale did not work harshly on the man whose produce had to be carried a long distance. Take the man in the mining areas. Everything he requires for his sustenance and for the purpose of working the industry must be carried over the railway system. It is true that a few sheep and cattle are grazing in the mining areas, but outside of that stock it is essential to the maintenance of the individual as well as



for the carrying on of the industry that he should be given consideration so far as railway freights are concerned. The present Government are so little concerned about helping the mining industry that they made an impost which is tantamount to increasing taxation so far as those in remote parts were concerned. I have already pointed out that the man at, say Meekatharra, had to pay 15s. 3d. on every ton of goods essential to his maintenance, carried to him on the railways, while the man living at Armadale, practically in the metropolitan area, had to pay an impost of nearly 1s. That kind of thing is not in the best interests of the State, and it is not considering the railways from a national point of view. It was not the method adopted by the predecessors of the present Government and we were roundly condemned for having made an increase. We started on the basis of 25 per cent. in carrying over short distances and gradually reduced the charges to 5 per cent. to places like Meekatharra. The present Government made it a general 10 per cent. increase, which works disastrously against those who are living in distant parts of the State.

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

Resolved: that motions be continued.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is quite evident by the amendment moved by the leader of the Country party that the Government and their supporters on the cross benches have put their heads together for the purpose of toning down the motion which they recognise would have received the support of the majority of members.

The Minister for Works: Why do you say that?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is a statement I am entitled to make, because it is according to the facts. It is somewhat in the nature of flogging a dead horse to endeavour to get the House to agree to any other action than that which is now proposed and accepted by the Government—the matter of the re-consideration of the action which the Country party and even some direct supporters of the Government have had to condemn during the session. Even matters of that nature must be set aside for

the purpose of saving the Government and keeping the compact which was given in good faith that, come what may, they would get into recess. Although the amendment is toned down, the motion is in the nature of a vote of censure upon the Government, because it says that they should look into the question in order to readjust the fares and freights and make them more equitable. If that is not saying that the freights and fares increased by the Government are inequitable, I do not understand the English language.

The Premier: It may be something of the kind.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: All that boast of business acumen on the part of members of the Government who were going to adjust the finances, their action in throwing over all the financial proposals, and their admission that the only action which would mean any increased revenue requires further consideration, is evidence of the fact that there has been no business acumen shown by them. During the past eight months the Railways have gone to the bad to the extent of £150,000 in comparison with a similar period of last year. That is the period during which the Government have occupied the Treasury benches. They have only reduced the expenditure by £49,000. In round figures the Railways have gone to the bad something over £100,000, worse than they did during the previous year. Notwithstanding the increases in freights and the application of business acumen, and the fact that we have carried more wheat over our railways, it is all to be forgotten for the time being in order to enable the Government to get into recess, so that they may, by their business acumen during the period when things are quiet, and they are not being asked awkward questions about their doings in the past, devote the whole of their time to the Government offices. The Country party have pledged themselves to a readjustment of the incidence of taxation in order that the man situated along our railway system should not have to carry any undue proportion of the burden. They are not prepared, however, to insist that the Government shall meet the House with a proposal to tax land values without exemption in order that the whole of the community may carry

some of the burden of the interest and sinking fund.

Mr. Griffiths: Referring to the tax on unimproved land values without exemption, how are you going to make those who do not hold land pay their fair share?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The whole of our system of taxation to-day is on the basis that all our commodities that are essential to our life are taxed, and every man, whether in possession of land or not, has to pay his share. Even if the method proposed by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) is applied the consumer of the products carried over our railways will still be paying into the Treasury for the purpose of meeting his obligation to the State, but the balance, which is the essential between profit and loss in a transaction of our national concern, the railway system, would be met by applying the tax to unimproved land values, which would cut off some of the increased values given to town properties in consequence of the railway system being extended into more remote parts of the agricultural and mining centres.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [7.35]: I have always opposed increases of railway freights ever since I have been in the House. Like the poor, it appears to me that no matter what Government are in power, these increased railway freights are always with us. Under the conditions under which we have been working in Western Australia for some time, successive Treasurers have always been hard-pressed for money, and when finding themselves pressed for money have followed the line of least resistance, and increased railway freights, thereby putting an unfair burden of taxation on a section of the community who have not been in a position to adequately defend themselves. I refer to the people out-back engaged in mining and agricultural industries. In the past I have always opposed these increases of railway freights when made by the Labour Government, and when the present Liberal Government followed suit and increased them in an unfair and unjust manner, I did my best from this seat in the House to criticise and condemn that action. It appears to me that the position as far as the people living in the country districts, those engaged in agriculture and mining, is concerned, is that the burden of the

increase in railway freights imposed on them has reached a breaking point. They cannot stand anything further.

Mr. Underwood: Positively awful, notwithstanding the two millions of deficit.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is driving people out of the agricultural and mining districts. It is depopulating these districts, both as regards our farms and country towns. Let us take the position of people with a small income—soldiers' wives, and others who have very little to live on. These find that the increases in our railway freights mean an increase in the cost of living in the country towns, and that they cannot live there, and prefer to come to Perth to dwell. I am certain that these increases of railway freights are bad, and that they are encouraging what is so evidently undesirable in our Australian national life, namely, the big congested cities to which people gravitate. It is purely a class tax, a tax on the people living inland, and on production, and our farmers and miners and timber workers, who bear it, have no means whatever of passing it on to the consumer. It is entirely taken out of the pockets of these sections of the community. It is a tax on these particular sections of the community, namely, the people engaged in agricultural and mining industries, from which other sections of the community are entirely excluded. If we in the House have the power to impose taxation of a general nature, surely some regulation or law should be passed under which increased railway freights should not become operative until they have been approved of by Parliament. We have all sorts of small regulations that either House of Parliament has a right to veto within a certain time after they are made, and yet in an important matter like this, affecting the whole of our inland community, we find that when these increased freights are imposed, Parliament has no power to veto in regard to them. Something more than the power to veto should be given to Parliament in this matter, and no increase in railway freights should become operative until they are approved by the popular Chamber. I had a good deal of sympathy with the remarks which have been made by the leader of the Country party and others, to the effect that the Country party have a right to endeavour to see that these railway freights

are reduced at least to the basis operating in 1911. In fairness to the Government, I want to remind the people that we have something to thank them for, something of great moment, in regard to the railway freights, namely, the reduction of the freights on super and the abolition of those iniquitous terminal charges which were so roundly condemned by our friends opposite when they were in Opposition, but which they subsequently reinstated. I do think it is a duty we owe to agricultural interests in this House to see that the freights are reduced at least to the basis prevailing in 1911. I am entirely in accord with, and support the view thrown out by the leader of the Country party and others, to the effect that the interest and sinking fund on our existing railways should be borne by the general community who receive the whole benefit from the construction of these railways. The construction of railways is not a benefit merely to the people who use the railways. It is a benefit to all those who have land, even out of use, in the districts served by those railways. It is particularly a benefit to the owners of valuable rent-producing property in the City of Perth and the metropolitan area, which receive great benefit and increase in value from the extension of our railway system, and in the opening up of outside and far-back portions of this rich State. That being so, I hope that we shall see the leader of the Country party go on the national lines that he has outlined in his speech to-night. I hope too, that we shall see the Premier come down, after reviewing the matter, with absolutely definite proposals, and that the interest and sinking fund charges on the cost of our railways are removed from the backs of the people who use the railways and put on to the community as a whole. It is quite sufficient for us to make the people outback pay their railway freights and fares for the maintenance and working expenses of the railways. That is all the burden that, in my opinion, can fairly be put upon the country people, and if the Government will go into the matter on these lines, I am satisfied that they will be able to reduce the freights very largely, and at the same time will, in a just and equitable manner, be making the owners of valuable rent-producing city properties, that benefit by

the construction of our railways, pay something towards the interest and sinking fund of such railways. As regards the motion and the amendment which are before the House, I have one duty to perform, and that is to cast my vote in the direction which will be of most benefit to the people who use the railways. I am firmly convinced that by carrying the amendment we shall gain a ray of hope for the reduction of railway freights. I have in mind an interjection made by the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) to-night. That hon. member was Minister for Railways in the late Government for a considerable period. His interjection to-night was to the effect that railway freights should be somewhat increased in this State. I am not prepared to subscribe to that Labour view. Regarding the motion and the amendment from the standpoint of obtaining reductions in railway freights and of doing justice to the people outback in the agricultural and mining districts, I feel it my duty to support the amendment.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [7-47]: The member for Leonora in moving the motion gave the House such a quantity of interesting figures that it is needless for me to bring forward some statistics which I had prepared for this debate. The figures given by the mover show how the outback man suffers from the increases in railway freights; and that suffering is also borne, though in a lesser degree, by the settlers in the wheat belt. In another place yesterday an hon. member voiced practically what was urged at a recent conference of roads boards in Victoria. At that conference the mayor of East Ballarat, Councillor Levy, urged—

That the conference affirm the desirability of the adoption of a new scheme in relation to State railways which will include the following :—(a) That interest on railway loans shall be a national burden, and not a charge against railways; (b) that railway freights shall be reduced by an amount equal to the interest charges so transferred; (c) that the revenue raised to meet such interest shall be raised in a way of more economic advantage to the State, practically by a tax on all unimproved land values without exemption.

Councillor Levy further stated that if the proposal were adopted freights would be reduced by two-thirds and rural production and country industries greatly encouraged. He said that in New Zealand interest and sinking fund on railway construction were paid out of consolidated revenue, and that the resultant low freights favoured decentralisation. Again, he said that New Zealand even went further and carried returned empties and seed free for the primary producer. Councillor Levy pointed out that the Victorian railways last year received £2,887,000 in freights while their interest charge was £1,927,000. The unimproved land values in Victoria amounting to 150 millions sterling, he pointed out, the tax on unimproved values would be 3d. in the pound. The objection to that scheme of taxation is, of course, that the landless classes go free. In my opinion, the Premier would be well advised to go into the matter and see whether such a scheme of taxation could not be scientifically arranged. There should be some way out of the difficulty. The man out-back who pays railway freights is building up an asset for the State, whereas the people in the City contribute practically nothing towards the State.

Mr. Underwood: What rot!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Pilbara in his usual classical style breaks in with a pleasant remark which I shall pass by. If Perth were burned down to-morrow, the City would be re-built in short order on the backing of the country districts. But if a wall were erected around Perth so as to prevent the product of the toil of the miner, the timber getter, and the wheat grower and others in the back country from reaching Perth, this City would speedily revert to a Swan River Settlement.

Mr. Underwood: Rubbish! The miner pays more freights and higher freights than the farmer.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member ought to be more careful before he interjects. I mentioned the miner. The remarks of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) have my endorment. If Mr. Short could only be told that he had not to raise interest and sinking fund on the capital cost of the railways, but

need only charge for services rendered, it would be a great relief to him, and the burden would be more equitably distributed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [7.53]: I am of opinion that a rise in railway freights is absolutely warranted. The rates were fixed some years ago, since when the cost of running the railways has risen materially. Wages and cost of fuel—and, indeed, almost everything connected with the running of the railways—have increased very considerably during the last few years. If the costs of running the railways increase, the freights must be correspondingly increased in order to make the department a paying proposition. The only way some men have of getting into Parliament is to promise to give the people everything for nothing and without any taxation. Some men get into Parliament on that platform, and have not the ability to get in on any other. In all seriousness, however, it must be realised that this country is two millions to the bad. We cannot continue to run losing propositions and allow the deficit to increase, because the people who are lending us money will stop lending. We must get more payment for the services the Government render to the people. The railways appear to me to be a legitimate business, and one that certainly should pay its way and also return some profit to the consolidated revenue. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) as usual made some very sensible remarks. He tried to persuade this House that it is owing to the increase in railway freights that soldiers' wives have come to live in town.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is one of the factors—increase in the cost of living.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A picture show would have infinitely more influence than railway freights in that respect. I think members addressing the House should use arguments which have some semblance of sense. I have listened for half an hour without hearing a word said about anything but the agricultural areas. Let me point out that the people living in the suburbs have to bear a much greater increase in railway charges than the agriculturists. Anyone would imagine that the people in Perth pay no railway freights at all

but travel free. The suburb in which I live, Leederville, is positively paying the highest railway fares in the world with the exception of the district I represent, Marble Bar and Port Hedland. Yet the impudent proposal is put forward that interest and sinking fund on railways should be paid out of consolidated revenue, the users of the railways thus getting the benefit of payments by those who do not use the railways. Speaking for people who do not use the railways because they have no railways, I say it is utterly unfair to ask the pioneers in the North, in Kimberley, Roebourne, and Gascoyne, to pay interest and sinking fund on railways used by people living in the South under infinitely better conditions. That is I think the most impudent proposition ever put before the House. Because a man happens to be growing a bit of wheat, he must have everything in the world and everybody in the world must work for him. On the Marble Bar railway the rate of freight is 6d. per ton per mile. Here in the South superphosphate is carried at 4d. per ton per mile. Now it is asserted that the people of Marble Bar and in that district should by taxation pay interest and sinking fund on the railways in the southern portions of the State. I repeat, when the cost of running railways or of running anything else increases, increased revenue must be obtained by way of increased charges. What I complain of is the unscientific nature of the present Government scheme. I do not complain of the rise in freights and fares, but I do contend it is not in reason that a second class return ticket from Perth to Leederville should be increased 63 per cent. in price. Under such conditions the Government are not giving the people of Leederville a fair chance. Many other anomalies exist in the system adopted. If the Government had the business acumen about which they talk so much, they should have been able to devise something better than this. I am convinced that the business acumen of the Government is a pure myth, a thing unknown. The system adopted by them is on a par with practically everything they have done and all the legislation they have introduced. Their legislation has been the most haphazard ever submitted to this Chamber. In con-

nection with railway freights, as I said on a previous occasion, they must have got the office boy in the Railway Department to make these increases, and Short sent them on to the Government, and the Government were too busy appointing a vicarious Royal commissions and fixing up trips to the East for the Royal Commissioners to go into the matter and put it on a fair basis.

Mr. Thomson: That is absolutely what your Government did—accept Short's recommendations.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member is absolutely mistaken. My Government, as he calls it, did not accept the recommendations of the Commissioner for Railways, but altered them very materially.

Mr. Thomson: The member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) said he accepted the responsibility.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) is talking without knowledge, which is not unusual with him. I trust the Government will go into the matter not altogether with a view of reducing freights but with a view of putting the increases on a scientific basis. I contend that the rate charged for stuff carried over the railways should be such as will pay for the carriage, whether the stuff be superphosphate or anything else. I hope some better system of increases will be submitted, though not with the idea of decreasing the revenue from the railways.

Mr. NAIRN (Swan) [7.59]: I was very pleased to hear the Premier express some consideration for the feeling of the people in regard to the increase in railway freights. Had it not been for the promise of the Premier, it would have been my bounden duty to vote with the mover. I think we are all indebted to the member for Leonora for bringing this subject forward. It is the first occasion we have had of dealing with the matter as it should be dealt with. I do not quite agree with the hon. member when he says that there was almost a demand by the public for increased railway rates.

Mr. Underwood: I said generally a commonsense demand.

Mr. NAIRN: However, I can agree with him that the cost of railway running in this State has been considerably increased during the last few years. But the hon.

member must have forgotten that the first increase of fares and rates was intended to, and indeed did almost completely, make up for whatever extra cost was incurred. So this new increase stands alone and cannot possibly be justified on the score of increased cost. I believe the Government were forced by absolute necessity to again increase the fares and rates. But I protest against the illogical attitude taken up by those in responsible positions. It has been said this evening that in many instances fares have been increased by as much as 66 per cent. Obviously it is an absurd increase. I think the reason for it can be easily traced. The Commissioner in his lack of wisdom, which is not unusual coming from him, decided that every fare should be increased, whether single or return, quite regardless of the original price of the ticket, and equally regardless of the distance travelled. It meant in effect that a penny each journey was put on to a three-penny return ticket, and so we had an increase of 2d. on 3d.; whereas on a single journey costing 6d., only 1d. was added, showing a marked discrepancy in the percentage of increase. It is obviously unfair that on a suburban fare 1d. should be charged, regardless of the value of the ticket. In respect of suburban and outer-suburban railway fares, it is an almost universal principle to encourage the people to use the railways and live on the outskirts of a City. The first means of thus encouraging the people is to reduce the railway fares, in order that they may be induced to live in the outer-suburban parts for health and other obvious reasons. But our railway Commissioner has entirely reversed the principle, and by this ridiculous system of discrimination against outlying parts is forcing the people to live in congested areas. The principle is wrong, and it is for us to use what influence we have to urge its correction. Coming to the question of rates, I am pleased to say that the electorate which I represent is not considerably affected by the increase; but the principle on which the increase in railway rates has been based is equally absurd with that underlying the increased railway fares. No intelligent person with any consideration for the financial position of the State can object to an increase in railway fares and rates, but we do expect

that the Government should show some regard for the outlying people who are to-day penalised through no fault of their own. I have in mind at present the people of the gold-mining areas. I can easily understand how thoroughly convinced are they of their unjust treatment. Whatever loss there may be on the railway system, it has not been contributed to by the people of the goldfields. Those of us engaged in business enterprises realise that if it had not been for the stability of our goldfields and the ready cash they have put into circulation, most of the businesses down here would have been very seriously affected. It is safe to say that there is not a goldfields main line in the State which is not paying fairly handsomely. The actual figures are denied to us, but we know enough to conclude that the mining centres are virtually keeping the railway system going. Why, therefore, should the people living in those remote parts be compelled to carry practically the whole of the extra charge on the railways, which has been brought about by a variety of reasons? Because we have a shortage of wheat in one part of the State and of timber in another, the railway revenue has fallen; but the mining areas have not in any way contributed to that condition of affairs, notwithstanding which they are asked to carry almost the whole of the burden. It is altogether wrong. Coming to the question of food-stuffs, we find that it is here the impost is falling most heavily and unfairly. The leader of the Opposition said it was unwise to offer any remarks on a question of such importance unless one was prepared with some solution of the problem. I do not know that the hon. member offered us much of a solution. He suggested an unimproved land tax, but I do not think such a suggestion is within the region of practical politics. At all events, it has no bearing on the question. Since the financial position of the Railways has been brought about by a condition of affairs over which we have no control it would be only fair and equitable if a surcharge of so much per ton was imposed on every ton of material carried over the railways. In the Commissioner's annual report I find that something like 2,482,000 tons of goods were carried over the railways during last

year. To impose a surcharge of 6d. per ton on that freight would bring in a revenue of £62,000. I do not mean that it would be possible to impose a surcharge on every commodity, but a basis could be established upon which every industry could carry something in the nature of a surcharge.

Mr. Collier: It would be difficult to arrange, because a large proportion of that tonnage is made up of small quantities.

Mr. NAIRN: No, those figures deal with larger consignments, such as coal, coke, charcoal, ores, and other minerals, wool, hay, straw, chaff, and wheat. This brings me to this point: I venture to say that the producer of wheat would receive very much greater benefit by an abolition of the present additional charge on the commodities he requires, and the imposition of a surcharge of 6d. per ton.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are on forbidden ground now.

Mr. NAIRN: In my opinion it would have been much more reasonable to endeavour to equitably distribute this temporary disability over the whole of the people. Probably one-third of the people of the State are living in the metropolitan area; yet not one of those people has to pay a fraction towards making good the loss of the Railway Department. Even if they bring their produce from Fremantle to Perth by railway they pay only 4s. 6d. per ton. Moreover, a very considerable proportion of the goods imported into the State do not touch the railways before leaving Perth for the interior. They come up the Swan River. This means that practically the whole of the people of the metropolitan area entirely escape contribution to the railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The goods come up the river because they then pay smaller harbour dues.

Mr. NAIRN: We should endeavour to distribute the railway loss over the whole of the people. The people living in the remote parts of the State are practically carrying the whole of the burden. The outlying parts of the State have been keeping the metropolitan area going at top speed, and yet it is the people of these remote districts who are required to carry the loss on the railways. The metropolitan area should contribute to this by a sur-

charge on all goods passing through the City. The goods distributed from the metropolitan area are to all intents and purposes untouched until they arrive at their destination. I intend to vote for the amendment. I will do this, not because I am satisfied that the mover of the motion is not quite right in his contention, but since the Premier has given us his promise I feel sure that he will make an honest endeavour to fulfil it.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [8-15]: I desire to make a strong protest against the imposition of any further burdens upon the people outback. The people of Meekatharra bear a heavier burden under these railway rate increases than the people in any other part of the State. I was very pleased to hear the last speaker (Mr. Nairn) say a word on behalf of those people outback. The increased railway freights on goods in the case of Meekatharra works out at 13s. 2d., first class 20s., second class, and 24s. 9d., third class, while the rates in the metropolitan area are about 4s. 6d. or 5s. per ton. But not only the people of Meekatharra have to be considered in this matter, for there are the residents of places farther out, such as Wiluna, where, after the goods have reached the end of the railway system, they have to be carted another 150 miles per team. Then again, there are such places as Peak Hill, Mt. Egerton and other centres, where the people have to bear greater burdens even than do the people of Meekatharra. That condition of affairs obtains over every part of the outback portions of this State, and unless some relief be given, those people will be driven from the places in which they at present live. The mining returns show that the gold yield has been falling, and the reason for it is that the people in the outback parts cannot exist under present conditions. No only have they to bear heavy costs in the way of railway freights, but every other form of taxation is also borne by them. For instance, in connection with the income tax, the man who is engaged in prospecting often finds, when he comes to pay his income tax, that, although he has spent more than he has actually received during the year, he is called upon to pay a heavy income tax. An instance of this comes t,

my mind. A man who is in receipt of an income from one mine, and who pays the whole of the money so received, and much more, into prospecting ventures, found when he sent in his taxation returns, that he had to pay £30 income tax, although he had not received a single penny profit during the year, nor, for that matter, during the past two years. He is engaged prospecting the back country and that has cost him thousands of pounds. Everything he has has been expended in the opening up of the country. In comparison, the people of the metropolitan area have not had an impost placed upon them at all. The Premier has promised that he will give consideration to this matter, but I am satisfied that that was an evasive reply. The promise made by the Premier is only a temporary method of getting over the present difficulty. I am satisfied that, when the Government get into recess, this promise will be held over until next session and that nothing more will be heard of it in the meantime. I assert that the people outback have not received any consideration at all. Promises have been made, and one made by the Minister for Mines is, I believe, to be given effect next month, when a conference will be held. I trust that the conference will do some good. Not only in the matter of high railway charges are the people outback suffering an impost, but in many places they cannot even get schools for the education of their children, and in regard to water supplies, instead of their paying 1s. per thousand gallons, as in the metropolitan area, the people of Meekatharra have to pay as high as 10s. per thousand. The people of the metropolitan area do not give any consideration at all to the conditions under which the people outback live. It is rarely indeed that in this House a member on the Ministerial side is heard to say a word on behalf of the people outback. I trust these people will get the consideration which they deserve, because if they do not, I fear that, in the near future, many of them will be forced to leave the places where they now reside and remove to other parts where they will be able to exist. They are the people who have made this country what it is and we should not impose extra taxation upon them. I am sorry that the Commissioner of Railways did not give this

question greater consideration before the freights were increased. We have heard sarcastic remarks that this railway rates increase is the work of an office boy, but I do not think even an office boy would perpetrate such a mistake.

Mr. Thomson: That is what we are paying him £2,000 a year for.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, and I do not think we are getting a fair return for our money. I think the matter should have further consideration and there is another aspect—the railway service to outback centres. In most places they have only two trains per week and we can easily realise the amount of the losses, particularly in perishable goods, which occur in a 600 miles railway journey. I trust that the promise made by the Premier will not be an empty one, such as many which have been made in the past by Ministers.

Mr. Thomson: By your party, too?

Mr. HOLMAN: No, our promises were always kept. I repeat that, unless something is done in the very near future to relieve these people, the gold yield, which has fallen away to the tune of 20,000 ounces per month, during the past two years, will fall still more in the future. It is the duty of this House to consider what would be the position of Western Australia if our gold yield were to fall very much lower, and to avoid that it is our duty to encourage people to go outback, so that new mineral country may be developed.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [8-24]: I admit at the outset I recognise that the railways must be made to pay. At times I have considered myself extreme, and that the views I held bordered almost on socialism; but I find I have to go to the Country party to find Herod out-heroded. They are communists. They require that the railway system shall be nationalised, advocating some nebulous scheme such as has never been even outlined by me in my wildest dreams, a system under which everyone is to be charged alike, or rather that no one is to be charged at all, and the people as a whole will make up the immense deficit which must arise as a consequence. But we are not told how this is to be done. Advanced as I have prided myself on being, I cannot subscribe to such communistic views even



though they would benefit my own electorate considerably.

Mr. Carpenter: What about the unimproved land values tax?

Mr. GREEN: The land tax does not come within the purview of the motion before the Chair, but I do recognise that one of the main reasons why our railways are not paying is that nine-tenths of the farming land along our railways is not put into cultivation. And I realise, too, that a tax on unimproved values would make a difference. I do complain, however, about the lack of equality in the treatment of industries. In answer to questions a few weeks ago the Minister replied that it was anticipated the revenue during the remainder of the financial year from the increased railway freights would be £33,000. It would be much larger for the full 12 months—somewhere in the vicinity of £40,000. Which serves to remind me that there has been a loss of £40,000 in a certain direction, and that that £40,000 has been lost to the railway revenue through the decreased charges for the carriage of superphosphate. That is to say, superphosphate is being carried at the rate of one farthing per ton per mile, which is being paid by the farmer, and the rest of the community are paying another three farthings. With conditions such as these the railways can never be expected to pay. Superphosphate should pay precisely what it costs to transport it. The member for Murchison has pointed out that in the case of Meekatharra, which I admit is an extreme case, the people pay through the nose, primarily because other people do not pay for services received. In Kalgoorlie the prices of certain mining requisites have risen since the outbreak of war. We find that zinc, which cost £2 10s. before the war, now costs £9 per cwt. The freight on zinc has gone up since 1914 from £4 18s. 4d. to £6 3s. 3d. per ton. Cyanide sodium, which is another mining requisite, has increased in cost from £10 to £14 10s. per ton; and the freight increase on cyanide sodium since 1914 is from £4 18s. 4d. to £6 3s. 3d. per ton. Fracteur before the war cost £2 3s. 9d. per case; the present price is £3, and the freight on fracteur has gone up from £7 19s. 10d. to £10 per ton. As against these rates, were Kalgoorlie fortunate enough to be a

grain railing centre, we would have to pay instead of £6 3s. 3d. only 27s. to send our grain to the coast; or if we were buying super. from the coast, instead of paying £10 per ton, as in the case of fracteur, we should pay 7s. 9½d.

Mr. Thomson: You are quoting minimum rates only.

Mr. GREEN: That is so but the lowest freight on mining requisites from the fields is £6 3s. 3d.

Mr. Thomson: Fracteur is not a necessity.

Mr. GREEN: It is just as much a necessity for mining as super is for agriculture. Zinc is just as necessary for the mining industry as super for the farming industry, and it is astounding that any Government should make such a discrimination between the two. The gold mining industry is responsible to a large extent for the present position of the farming industry, and the farming industry is in a paramount position at the present time. Can anyone imagine the Minister for Railways proposing that on super, carried 375 miles the charge should be 7s. 9½d., while the minimum charge for requisites for the gold mining industry should be £6 3s. 3d.? I would like to say that the farming representatives would be well advised not to ask for a further decrease of the rates. It is up to the Government to see that there is an equitable distribution of railway rates as far as all the industries are concerned. The present rates are having a harmful effect on the mining industry. The farming industry is in a much better position if we take the increase in production. In 1907 the production of wheat for this State was 2½ million bushels; in 1916 it was 18½ million bushels. That is to say, it increased 700 per cent. On the other hand, the great gold mining industry in 1907 produced 7½ million pounds worth of gold, while last year the production was worth only 4½ millions.

Mr. Harrison: That is not the result of railway freights.

Mr. GREEN: It has a great bearing on it, when we consider there is no other industry in Australia to which the researches of science have been applied to the same extent. All the best brains of Australia have given the greatest thought to it, and at the present time on the goldfields every-

thin; is being done to reduce the cost of production to the lowest possible fraction commensurate with the wages paid, and I might remark incidentally that the gold miner is worse off to-day than he was 16 years ago, because to-day he is working at a greater depth where the conditions are ten times worse than they were previously. Moreover, the price of living commodities has considerably increased, not only because of the war, but on account of the added railway freights. I do not wish to labour this subject. There has been a good deal said upon it, but I consider the time has arrived when we should deal with the railway freights in such a way that they should not prove a burden. Of course the railways must be made to pay, but it is not fair that one great industry should have to carry a greater burden than another. Every year many mines are being closed down and if the railways are to be used with the object of helping industries, we should do our best not to make the freights press heavily on the mining industry.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [8.35]:** I have listened to the discussion with considerable interest, and one would imagine that the increased freights had placed an enormous burden on the industries of the State. I quite agree that something might be done to adjust the freights. The increases may be pressing heavily on a section of the community, but I think that the freights over long distances compare more than favourably with those over shorter distances. The 10 per cent. increase was brought into existence under the zone system. When we put on freights it is done in that way. Of course anomalies are bound to arise. If this increase of 10 per cent. had been enforced over the whole of the first six months of the financial year, the total amount it would have raised would not have been more than £14,920. The total freights received from the three classes increased is £149,000 as against £185,000 last year. When I listened to the speeches of hon. members I almost felt we were doing something that would wipe out our great industries. I admit the railways should be used to help the industries, but it must not be forgotten that they have to be made to pay. I would

like the agricultural members to realise that, whilst the increase would amount to £14,920 for six months, the reduction in the fertiliser freights added to that in connection with the terminal charges was something like £58,000. It is suggested that we should put an average rate per ton on all goods carried. I have not had an opportunity of working that out, but so far as the agriculturists are concerned, it would cost them twice as much as it does at present under the 10 per cent. increase.

**Mr. Thomson:** You are wrong there.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** They would have a million tons of produce to carry this year, and at 6d. per ton it would be £25,000 or nearly as much as we would get from the whole state from the 10 per cent. increase. I want hon. members to realise how small this 10 per cent. increase is, and how rapidly freights are decreasing. It is to be remembered that the timber trade has practically gone, and that condition of things is likely to continue until the war ends. Year by year, as the last Premier remarked during the middle of last year, the trouble with the railways will become more acute, and the revenue will become less. I need not say much more about this matter to-night, but I would like hon. members to treat the position reasonably. Something has to be done to meet this £144,000 which we have gone to the bad during the past six months. We have to pay our way, but the railways are bound to make a loss, no matter what we do, until the war is over. I do not think the small increase should be objected to. The method of collecting it has been objected to, and the Premier has promised that it will be looked into.

**Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.40]:** I desire briefly to reply to the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) who said that I was easily gulled. I may be gulled sometimes, but when the Premier makes a statement that he is going to consider this question, I, as a supporter of that Government, have to accept that statement, and I think the remarks made by the member for Murchison were somewhat uncalled for, so far as I am concerned.

**Mr. Holman:** You have been asking for them for a long time.

**Mr. THOMSON:** If I offer a retort to the hon. gentleman I will do so in a gentle-

manly manner. With regard to the increase I am somewhat surprised at the figures the Minister has quoted, but there is one question which has been lost sight of, and it is that if we are dealing with the flat rate, bearing out the arguments used by the Opposition, and also on this side of the House, then a flat rate of 6d. per ton would be more equitable than the 10 per cent. increase. The system might easily be adopted and when the railways return to their normal paying condition, it will be a simple matter to say that we shall drop the 6d. charge. There has been some comment on the increased fares in the suburban areas, and I must say that they were imposed in an unscientific way. I would draw attention to one of the reports of the Commissioner for Railways when he made this statement —

At the time when revenue is required, why does the railway department pick out the agricultural industry and make it pay 80 per cent. of the increased charges when it is admitted in the Commissioner's own report that for every passenger train mile the department is losing 1s. plus 1s. 9d. sinking fund.

I draw the attention of the House to the difference in the charges made, something like 1s. 1d. for 12 miles here and 1s. 10d. in the country districts, and I agree with hon. members opposite if we are going to develop this country we want to give those who live inland as nearly as possible the same facilities as those which are enjoyed by the people living in the metropolitan area. The member for Kalgoorlie has touched upon a question dealing with zinc and other materials which are required for the goldfields. If it is necessary that these requirements for the mining industry should be carried at a cheap rate on the railways I trust that the matter will be brought before the Minister, and that he will give it favourable consideration. The gold mining industry is entitled to as much consideration as the agricultural industry, and I have always given it my support. I support the amendment which has been moved by the leader of the Country Party, and accept the Premier's statement that the railway freights will be reconsidered during the recess.

Mr. FOLEY (Mount Leonora—in reply) [8-46]: I have never had so many bouquets [80]

thrown at me since I have been a member of this Chamber. There is evidently something in what I have said which strikes a chord in the heart of every member. With regard to the arguments used in support of the amendment, I say in all sincerity that if the Government do something in the direction stated I believe every member of this Chamber will be satisfied. We do not care how it is brought about so long as it is brought about. If, however, the Government come back after recess having done nothing, I say that the criticisms which have been levelled at them to-day will be fully justified. Their position will be very warm for a few hours at any rate. A statement has been made by the leader of the Country party that all our railways should be nationalised. I would point out that every railway in the State but one is nationalised. I do not know whether the Country party are going to purchase the Midland railway line, or whether the present Government are intending to sell the railways. At any rate if that were the intention of the Government I think the House would be absolutely against it. The member for York, backed up by the Leader of the Country party, said something about the nationalisation of railways, that the people should be given every facility on the railways and that a tax should be obtained from the unimproved land values. Every time these hon. members have had an opportunity of voting in the direction of supporting a land values taxation without exemption they have voted against it. They have voted in a direction diametrically opposed to a tax on unimproved land values. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) put up a good case for the furthestmost point of our railways. He showed conclusively that the outback districts are handicapped. If the Premier can influence the Government to rehandicap, as it were, the State and put the outback districts on a better mark and on a fair handicap, I am sure he will meet the wishes of this House. I am glad to find that most of the debate has consisted of solid arguments, to the effect that the Government during recess must do something, and if that is not done the duty of every member, whether supporting the amendment or the motion, is to send the Government back to the Coun-

try. I am not going to offer much opposition to the amendment because if something in this direction is done, what I set out to accomplish will be made manifest and that is all I ask for.

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended put and passed.

#### MOTION—REPATRIATION SCHEME.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [8.50]:  
I move—

*That in the opinion of this House, the Government should at once submit to the House its proposals for settling returned soldiers upon the land, giving full particulars as to—(1) The sum at its disposal for such purpose; (2) The areas upon which such settlement is intended; (3) The localities in which such areas are situated; (4) When such land will be available for settlement; (5) The maximum sum of money to be allowed in respect of each settler; (6) The terms and conditions upon which such advances will be made.*

I noticed one day last week that a speaker at a military meeting expressed very strong disgust because no action had been taken by this House with reference to the settlement of returned and discharged soldiers upon the land. The speaker was evidently not aware that the House and myself particularly by this motion, which has been upon the notice paper for several weeks, were asking the Government to make some pronouncement as to their intention upon this very important matter. It has been mentioned to myself and other hon. members again and again, and we have been told, when the Government have condescended to make any response, that they were considering measures and that they did intend to do something, and at last we were informed that the amending Land Bill would reveal what they intended to do. Now that we have a declaration in black and white of what the Government propose, I can only say that I am extremely disappointed, and consider that their proposals so far as we have them are entirely inadequate. So far as the question of making this provision for our returned soldiers is concerned, I am quite sure that every member of the House, and indeed every Minister, will regard the subject with

sympathy, but what I am most afraid of is that history will repeat itself, and that after the fighting is over and the danger is past we shall forget how much we owe to those who have risked their lives, many of whom have made the supreme sacrifice. If we want to deal with the question thoroughly and adequately, as it deserves to be dealt with, there is no time like the present for doing so, when we are all fully alive to the value of the work these men are doing, and have, therefore, a higher appreciation of what our duty is to them in return. We have been told by the Minister for Lands that the Government propose to set apart certain Crown lands, to make grants to discharged or returned soldiers under the existing Land Act. I need not waste any time by telling the House that they propose nothing new in that direction, because that is something that the Government could have done months ago, something which did not need to be restated in the amending Land Bill introduced by the Minister for Lands yesterday. The only new proposition of which the Minister informed the House was that the Government proposed to deal with the whole subject by regulation under the existing land laws, and that the scheme which they proposed to put into operation included the making of certain improvements upon the land before it was thrown open for occupation by returned soldiers. This summarises all that we know of the Government's intentions. In view of what is being done elsewhere, that is not treating the House fairly.

The Premier: What is being done elsewhere?

Mr. CARPENTER: I will tell the Premier directly. In view of what is being done elsewhere it is not fair either to the soldiers, or to the State, or to the House, if the Government go into recess, as they wish to do, in a day or two, leaving a question of this magnitude—for it will become a very big question as time goes on—to be dealt with by regulation under existing land legislation without having something more special, more particular, more favourable on behalf of the returned soldier. The Premier asked what is being done elsewhere.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Well, what is being done elsewhere?

Mr. CARPENTER: I hold in my hand a measure passed by the Queensland Parliament about a month ago. I have referred to this measure previously.

The Premier: What have the Queensland Government done?

Mr. CARPENTER: I will inform the Premier if he will listen. Instead of simply telling the returned soldier that he is free to apply for a block of land under the existing laws of the State, the Queensland Act makes the following provision—

It shall not be necessary for a discharged soldier who applies for such selection to deposit with his application any amount or sum by way of rent or instalment of survey fees, but such application shall be accompanied by the applicant's military discharge or other evidence of his qualification as a returned soldier.

I ask the Minister for Lands to note that one point as something more liberal than anything the present Government of this State have conceived, so far as we are aware. If they are going to do as the Minister for Lands tells us—act under the existing land laws and do everything by regulation,—Western Australia is going to fall woefully short of what is being done in Queensland in that one particular; that is to say, the payment of money down before the returned soldier can become the holder of a piece of land. Here is a second liberal proviso which I wish our Government to consider—

During the first three years of the term the annual rent shall be a peppercorn if demanded.

The Minister for Railways: Five years are allowed here.

Mr. CARPENTER: Let me continue. I have read only a part.

The Premier: But it is not so good as what we offer here.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Queensland Act continues—

After the expiration of the first three years of the term the prescribed survey fees shall be paid in ten equal annual instalments.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Ours are to be paid in 30 years.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Act proceeds—From the fourth year to the fifteenth, both inclusive, of the term, the annual rent shall be a sum equal to £1 10s. per centum of multiplied capital value.

What are we going to charge?

The Premier: We are going to give free homestead farms.

Mr. CARPENTER: We are going to charge £3 10s. per centum.

The Minister for Lands: That is for improvements.

Mr. CARPENTER: But the Government of Western Australia intend to make the returned soldier put down a lump sum first of all.

The Minister for Lands: No. Nothing at all.

Mr. CARPENTER: Under the existing law the Government must do so.

The Minister for Lands: No; we must not.

Mr. CARPENTER: That is where we are at a loss, because the Government say they are going to do it all by regulation. They will not tell us what they are going to do.

The Premier: You have studied the Queensland Act, but you have not studied the laws of your own State.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Queensland measure further says—

Provided the Minister may remit wholly or in part, and for such period as he thinks fit, any such rent, or may postpone for such time as he thinks fit the due date for the payment of any such rent.

Are our Government going to do that?

The Minister for Lands: Five years are allowed under our Act.

Mr. CARPENTER: This amuses me. Here we have the Government telling us in cold blood that they are going to give the returned soldier the opportunity of taking up land on the same terms as any Tom, Dick, or Harry that comes along. And this, they say, is going to be provision for the returned soldier.

The Minister for Lands: It proves that our present land laws are more liberal than the soldiers land laws in Queensland; and yet you do not know it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But the Queensland land is a different kind of land from ours. The Queensland land is better.

The Minister for Lands: Have you been in Queensland?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No; but it is generally known

Mr. CARPENTER: The point is that the Government have secured half a million sterling from the Commonwealth to make special provision for returned soldiers. I make bold to say that when that money was handed over—if it has been handed over—it was not done with any intention on the part of the Commonwealth that the Government of Western Australia should use that money simply for the purpose of assisting ordinary land settlement in the ordinary way. The money was given for the purpose of making specially favourable provision for the returned soldier. If the Government are simply going to put the half-million into the Agricultural Bank or some kindred institution, saying "We now have this money instead of having to borrow new capital, and we are going to carry on land settlement with it in accordance with the existing law," I say the Government will not be doing what the Commonwealth intended should be done, and that they will not be doing what the House and this country expect them to do.

The Premier: You are drawing upon your imagination.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am bound to do that, because I have no information.

The Premier: You have the statement I made on my return from the Premiers' Conference.

Mr. CARPENTER: All I have is the statement of the Minister for Lands, made on the Land Act Amendment Bill and backed up by applause, that the Government were going to do the whole thing by regulation under the existing law.

Mr. Munsie: We have the statement of the Minister for Railways that there is no scheme.

The Minister for Railways: No; you have not.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Government may be contemplating something. For aught I know, they may have something in their minds as liberal as the provision made by any other State. But what my motion asks is that the Government should submit their proposals to the House and give us a chance of making any suggestion we think worth making, or at least to give us the satisfaction of knowing that some-

thing special is to be done for the returned soldier. We are meeting returned soldiers every day who ask "When are you going to throw open the land for the men who have to come back?" I do not contend that there will be a large proportion of returned soldiers desirous of taking up land. Certainly, the returned soldier will not be very eager to go on the land if he knows that he is simply to come along like anybody else and get land on the same terms as a man who has not been to the war. Seeing that we have many soldiers back already, and a considerable number of them looking for new positions—I refer to men who cannot follow the occupations they followed before the war—it is almost a scandal that the Government have not long before this told the House and the country and the returned soldier the terms and conditions upon which he can secure land and the special consideration which is to be offered to him in return for the work he has done for his country. I would be quite satisfied if the Government would say honestly, "We have not yet perfected out scheme"; then we would know where we are. But I do object to their putting something into an amending Bill which amounts to nothing at all, which is simply a declaration that they will do something which they could have done without that declaration, something which the existing law gives them power to do, while at the same time they avoid the very duty which was cast upon them when they secured that money from the Commonwealth for the special purpose of extending the most special consideration to the returned soldier. So far as we can gather from the very meagre information furnished by the Minister for Lands, the Government scheme is to be confined to Crown lands. We are informed that for the present the Government's proposal is confined to land in the South-West. I am quite prepared to admit that in the South-West there are lands suitable for the purpose, but we must not forget that the South-West contains heavily timbered lands which have been occupied for years by men trying to make a living upon them in the ordinary way.

Mr. Thomas: They are all successful.

Mr. CARPENTER: Some of them are not.

Mr. Thomas: There are very few exceptions.

Mr. CARPENTER: With assistance from the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Thomas: The South-Western settlers have had less assistance from the Agricultural Bank than the settlers in any other part of Western Australia.

Mr. CARPENTER: Unfortunately, some of them have had too much assistance.

Mr. Thomas: Not in the South-West.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do not make the least objection to returned soldiers being settled in the South-West; but there are other parts of the State equally favourable for their settlement and much nearer to a market. In those parts small blocks can be cut up and the men set to work immediately at clearing. In those parts they will not have to wait so long as elsewhere for some return for their work. If the Minister will be gracious enough to give the information, I would like to know just what improvements he proposes to make upon the land. We have no interpretation whatever of the word "improvements" as the Minister uses it. While I have gathered from him in a private conversation that he proposes to clear a portion of the land, to fence some of the land, and to erect a dwelling upon it—

Mr. Thomas: That is my scheme.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is none the worse for that. While we have that declaration from the Minister, we must go further. If we are to give the returned soldier a chance to make a livelihood, we shall have to give him something more than the land, with portion of it cleared, and a house to live in. He will need something in the way of stock if he is going in for pig raising, for example. He must be furnished with everything he requires to give him a fair start. I repeat, I believe this was the intention of the Commonwealth when they handed over that money to the Government.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): What money did they hand over?

Mr. CARPENTER: The Government were going to get half a million. Whether they got it or not, I cannot say. At any rate, the Government have received or are to receive half a million.

The Minister for Lands: The Premier told you about that a month ago. He

gave the House full particulars with regard to the matter.

Mr. CARPENTER: Full particulars of what? We have had no particulars at all. We simply had a statement that they were getting half a million of money and proposed to spend it under the existing Land Act, with certain amendments, and to deal with the whole thing by regulation. The objection I take is that they have not given the House an opportunity of considering their proposals. On many details we have a right to express opinions, and offer suggestions. I do not want men to go on the land and spend the money granted to them, and then leave the land in disgust and so cause a loss. Unless we have some well-devised scheme we cannot express any opinion upon it, so I have moved this motion, not because I pose as an expert on land settlement, but because I am meeting every day men who want to know what is being done, and I cannot tell them. I ask the Minister now to take the House into his confidence and tell us all about the scheme.

The Minister for Industries: You would not be bothering about it if it were not that there are some soldiers at Fremantle.

Mr. CARPENTER: That is worthy of the hon. member. It is not a question of Fremantle with me. If it was I would be inclined, not to have the soldiers put on the land at all, but to have them kept in Fremantle. I ask that the Minister for Lands, who is of broader mind and bigger heart than his colleague—

The Premier: I can assure the hon. member that both Ministers have big hearts and broad minds.

Mr. CARPENTER: All I ask is that the Minister for Lands, with his breadth of view and sympathetic heart, shall be allowed to tell the House something of what is proposed to be done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [9.17]: The hon. member has dealt more particularly with the question of the settlement of returned soldiers. He has told the House that in other States special laws dealing with this question have been passed, and he asks why we are not doing this here. The reason is because we have all the machinery already available under the Land Act, in conjunction with the amendments I have

brought down to the House. The hon. member knows that our land laws are the most liberal in the world. In some of the other States it was necessary to pass special Acts to deal with the question of returned soldiers, because they had not power under their existing laws. The hon. member lays emphasis on the fact that the returned soldier is to be given the land free of rent for a certain number of years. If the Bill becomes law the returned soldier will be able to get his land free of rent for five years, and will get 160 acres for nothing, together with an advance of money to improve the land, for which he will be charged  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest for the first year, rising by annual instalments to the rate, whatever it is, that was paid for the money—something like  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Mr. Carpenter: Anybody can get all that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; the hon. member could not have heard what the Premier told the House on his return from Melbourne. The Premier stated that £500,000 had been allotted to Western Australia for the purpose of settling returned soldiers. This money cannot be used for any other purpose, and it must be accounted for to a board in Melbourne.

Mr. Carpenter: Will any portion of that money be in addition to what he can get from the Agricultural Bank?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; that will be the first amount. The Agricultural Bank can advance in addition to this money, provided the Bank gets its security.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The bank cannot advance for the same purpose, because there is only the one security.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member has told the House that he has met numbers of men anxious to go on the land, and who did not know how to get there. I have not had one returned soldier come to me to know how he can secure land.

Mr. Carpenter: They are waiting to hear all about your scheme.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There may be some soldiers anxious to get land in the neighbourhood of the City, where perhaps there is no Crown land available. Generally speaking, these men have not arrived here yet. This matter cannot be

fixed up in a minute. It would be very unwise to rush such a question. We require to see the men placed on land where they can do some good, and for that purpose we have surveyors selecting land in the South-west for the settlement of returned soldiers. The House will recognise that the South-west is more suitable country for the returned soldiers than are the outlying eastern wheat areas. The South-west will be more congenial to them, and we will be able to place them there in communities, where they will not feel that they are isolated.

Hon. P. Collier: And where they can sit round the camp fires and fight their battles o'er again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is what we desire.

Mr. Lambert: They will fight their battles o'er again when they get up against the timber of the South-west.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We must not be afraid of the timber if we are going to settle this country. The South-west is eminently suitable for mixed farming and dairying. The Minister for Industries is working with me in this matter, and will have the control of this fund through the Agricultural Bank. The money will not all be placed to the credit of the State at once, but as it is required it will be drawn and will go to the Agricultural Bank, which has all the necessary machinery for its distribution.

Mr. Thomas: What amount will each soldier receive?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are to have up to £500. Any money required beyond that will be advanced through the Agricultural Bank, on the usual security. It is intended to endeavour to get a number of these men together in a community, and to clear for them a portion of the land. It is intended also to find water for them, and to put up on the holdings certain buildings of such class as will protect the settlers from the weather until they themselves can erect more suitable homes.

Mr. Carpenter: Is any provision being made for stock?

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have all the machinery available for the purpose. If we were to start down there with hun-



dreds of men clearing all the land in the South-west and spending a lot of money without proper consideration, I am sure hon. members opposite would be the first to take us to task.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The timber would be re-growing at one end of the paddock while you were clearing it at the other.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. We require to be careful not to clear this land too far ahead, because in that event before the soldier got on to it it would require clearing again. We have to go quietly. We will get a certain area ready. Probably many of the soldiers to return will be able-bodied men, and will be able to clear some of this land themselves, for which of course money will be advanced. When we have the scheme finalised we shall be only too pleased to give the details to the public.

Mr. Carpenter: Would your scheme apply to a man who enlisted in England and came out here to settle?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Certainly; it applies not only to Australian soldiers but the soldiers from the mother land, but the latter cannot obtain assistance from the money advanced for returned Australians.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Commonwealth funds will be applied to that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We assist them in just the same way as we assist other people. Commonwealth funds will not be applied to this work. The hon. member asked certain questions which can be very readily answered. One question was as to the amount at the disposal of the Government for this purpose, and the reply is £500,000 for the year. It is intended that the settlement shall be established in the South-West, but the localities are not yet determined upon. That will be done in a week or two. It cannot be said to-day just where land is available for settlement. It will take a little time to decide that. I told the hon. member that the amount of money which would be allowed to an intending settler is £500, and the terms upon which the money will be made available to him are that each advance will bear interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for the first year, gradually rising until the rate of interest is the same as is paid by other selectors.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Has the Federal Government handed over portion of this money to you?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have not got it yet.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The scheme you have outlined has been in existence for the past three years. We were only waiting for the money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Exactly. We have been waiting for the money. I can assure the hon. member that we have all the necessary machinery in the Land Act and also in the Agricultural Bank Act to carry out successfully the scheme I have outlined. But things must be done regularly. We must see that there is no waste in the expenditure of public money, and we must see that these men are settled upon land in districts where they are likely to make a comfortable living.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury) [9.34]: I think the mover of the motion is to be congratulated in that we have now obtained from the Minister information of which I, at any rate, was not in possession before. I am satisfied from the remarks of the Minister for Lands that he has been quite sympathetic, but the object of the mover I understand was not necessarily to find fault, but only that he was desirous of ascertaining from the Government exactly what their plans are, so that the whole of the intelligence of this House might be used, in order that we might make that scheme as perfect as is humanly possible. If there was ever a question before this Chamber in which we have a right to be generous, if ever there was a proposal in which we have a right to put aside all pettifogging considerations, it is this proposal for the settlement of returned soldiers on our lands. Even though we make a mistake or two, it is excusable in the circumstances. Whatever we may do, whatever kindness or generosity we may bestow upon them, we cannot do too much for those who have done so much for Western Australia. I am satisfied that both the Minister for Industries and the Minister for Lands are fully seized of the facts and that to the best of their ability they will do all that can be done in this matter. At the same time, there are 50 members of this House, and many of those members may

have valuable suggestions to make as to how the work may be more effectively done. This is not a party question and can never be construed into one by any possible stretch of imagination. I think that honestly. Whatever is done should be done with the unanimous will of this House, and if afterwards some little fault is found we should, all having taken part, as I think we should do, in the completion of this business, bear whatever blame there is for any faults that may be found in time to come. I think further that the greatest care should be exercised in selecting men suitable for settlement on the land, not because we are not desirous of giving them every assistance, but it would be neither a kindness to the selector nor of assistance to the State to place on the land a man who is not fitted for that occupation. Of course, there will be the question of providing for other returned soldiers following other occupations, but that is a matter for later consideration. At the present time, the question is the settlement of returned soldiers on the land. The Minister for Industries has taken a keen interest in this matter, and I am pleased to think that both he and the Minister for Lands have determined to make their first essay in the South-West. I have long been of the opinion that that is the only part of Western Australia where closer settlement and comfortable, happy homes by small farmers can be created. The Eastern wheat belt is by far too much of a gamble in my opinion to be altogether a suitable place for any large settlement. But the South-Western portion of this State is a most desirable country with one of the most beautiful climates in the whole continent. We have there an area larger than the whole of the State of Victoria, with a certain rainfall, with a soil in many instances second to none in Australia. In my opinion, small holdings with close settlement, intense cultivation, and with consequently the most happy and satisfactory results both to the State and the individual, can be established there. That being the case, it is only right that the first essay should be made in that part of the State. I know the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) has no appreciation of the possibilities of the South-West. He has been down there on one or two flying trips when

from the window of a railway carriage he has seen a few trees and patches of the soil as he went by.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have seen more of it than you have.

Mr. THOMAS: But he has no real appreciation or understanding of the country, or of the possibilities that exist in that favoured spot. I am satisfied that a new era in the development of Western Australia will be opened when at last the South-West comes into its own, when we have placed on its soil our returned soldiers, who have by virtue of the bravery they have displayed when fighting at the Front, and the honours they have won there, will be some of the finest men we have in the State. It is a splendid combination indeed when we have these returned soldiers working with the older settlers who are already there and who have won success without any assistance. I have previously stated by way of interjection that less money has been advanced through the Agricultural Bank to the settlers in the South-West than to settlers in any other portion of Western Australia. I am not satisfied that in charging  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest we are doing all that we might for the returned soldier. I have always held the opinion, and many years ago at the Labour Congress in Bunbury I advocated it, that in connection with land settlement for three, or even five, years a selector should not be called upon to pay a brass farthing in the way of rent. I understand this interest is to be charged the returned soldier from the outset; but in my opinion he should not be called upon to pay interest on the money for at least five years. During the first five years a man puts in on the land he has his chief struggle. He has then to get his land ready for cultivation and to make the necessary preparations for bringing it into use. Those are the years of his greatest difficulties and we should say to the returned soldier that for five years he shall have nothing whatever to pay, nothing to do except to go on with the cultivation of the land given to him to bring it into active production, and that before we expect anything from him he will be in a position to make a prosperous living for himself and those dependant upon him. I be-

lieve that when the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) and the Minister for Lands (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) consider this matter they will concede my point. If the land selected is right and the situation is right, and there is no reason why they should not be, I am confident that these men who make up their minds to settle on that land will never regret it. In future years there will be found there a happy and prosperous settlement in that portion of the South-West. I also think that it would not be desirable to settle these men in large colonies. I do not think that would be desirable even though there were large areas available for the purpose. If you can place 20 or 30, or even 40 at the most, in one spot, mixed up with the old hands who have gone through the mill, who know the difficulties and will be able from time to time to advise new settlers on the land, it will be better than to establish them in large colonies. I do not care who the man is, until he has gone through the hard practical experience and overcome the many difficulties he cannot be a thorough success. I feel sure that wherever they may be settled those men who have been on the land in the same district will be only too happy to give the returned soldiers every help that is humanly possible and every sympathy and advice. If that is so, the smaller settlement will no doubt be the most effective. I do not, as a rule, advocate the repurchasing of estates, but in travelling through parts of my electorate I have heard many of the settlers say, and I think they were in earnest, that they would be very pleased to sell some of their land which is partially improved, at a reasonable price for the purpose of placing it at the disposal of returned soldiers. Some of these holders of land may have more than it is desirable for them to retain and they desire to see their districts come under more intense culture. If the land can be obtained partially improved at a reasonable price and it can be settled upon immediately, it will be much better than clearing virgin soil. I know of many places where a good number could be settled and I sincerely hope that the scheme will be so arranged that the land will be obtained as close as

possible to existing railways, because we have reached the stage that there is no earthly use of putting men 20 miles or even 15 miles from a railway with a promise that in years to come further lines will be built. Western Australia has reached the stage that we have a greater mileage of railways to the population than any other State in Australia and probably more than in any other part of the world, and I do not think for many years to come our finances will permit us to go on with a vigorous construction of railways policy. As one rides about in the various trains in the South-West one sees enormous areas of land lying idle and vacant. If it is not Government land, the common sense of this Parliament should devise some means by which the individuals owning it should be compelled to use it to the fullest extent of its capacity, or part with it to the Government so that it might be utilised for the purpose of settling returned soldiers. I think that could always be kept in view because there should be plenty for a long time ahead without the consideration of the construction of further railways. I know the Minister for Railways has some scheme in his mind for settling the first lot of returned soldiers somewhere near the Nornalup Inlet. If that is so, the means of communication to that inlet will be exceedingly difficult.

Mr. Carpenter: Better give up the idea.

Mr. THOMAS: I am afraid that there are possibilities of failure ahead. I would suggest that in arranging for these individuals who are to be settled upon the land, if they are to be selected, it may be desirable to have someone on the board from the Lands Department itself and I would suggest that at least two men of long experience, two successful settlers should also be on that board, to assist in the selection of the men most fitted to follow the occupation of farming. I am satisfied as far as lies within his power that the Minister for Industries will do the right thing. I do not think there is any member of the House, for a variety of reasons, who would be, and who could be, and who is, more honestly sympathetic towards the men who have done their bit in the interests of Western

Australia than the Minister for Lands, and I am satisfied he will do the right thing. I would appeal to him that where it is possible to consult Parliament, he should do so. There are many here, perhaps not possessed of all the knowledge he has, but who are quite as enthusiastic and quite as anxious to do something that will be fair to these men. And that will be what Western Australia will expect us to do. I trust the Minister will take that into consideration and I feel sure, even before Parliament adjourns, it will be possible to lay something in the nature of a scheme before us, so that we may go to our constituents and tell them the proposals of the Government in regard to repatriation.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND INDUSTRIES (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [9.52]: The hon. member who has just sat down asked me to place the papers dealing with this matter on the Table of the House so that hon. members might know what is happening regarding the repatriation scheme. Last year the hon. member for Guildford, who was then Minister for Lands, attended a conference in Melbourne and there submitted a scheme to Ministers which was acceptable to them. It was just the thing that was wanted at that time. This is Australia's opportunity and particularly West Australia's opportunity to settle, not only Australian soldiers, but probably the soldiers of other countries on the lands of this State. The Minister for Lands to-day was called upon by an English soldier who has come out seeking land. At the conference held in Melbourne in February 1916, the Minister for Lands from this State offered to take a large number of soldiers if money could be found. When I went over in December I learned that that scheme could not be gone on with. We had to start again. We had to have another conference and in January the Premier attended a conference, and at that it was determined that money should be made available. The Commonwealth will pay half the difference between  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest which we shall get from the soldier and the amount it costs to raise the money, but they will not do anything else for us.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That was my grievance against them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The only help we get is that small assistance in connection with the interest. We submitted a scheme and it was accepted by the conference as satisfactory.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It was practically a repetition of the other scheme.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They wanted more details.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It was the £500 advance and the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The South-West of this State offers golden opportunities for the settlement of returned soldiers, because there is a great deal of land untouched there. The Minister for Lands will survey the blocks and the land will be improved by the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank. The Nornalup Inlet is about the pleasantest and best spot in Western Australia. We have land from Pinjarra down, but the member for Guildford knows that we will have to spread afield a bit. At Nornalup there is no railway within 40 miles, but the two farmers who are settled there carry their produce to Albany by boat at a comparatively cheap rate. We have to make a start somewhere and I think we should start at Nornalup. The reports of the officials who visited the land are very satisfactory indeed. Mr. McLarty and Mr. Hewby of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. Brockman of the Forestry Department, and Mr. Camm of the Survey Department have visited Nornalup and have written very favourably about it. There are several rivers opening into the inlet which is a magnificent sheet of water. It is full of fish, and there is abundant game there, and moreover, the land is particularly good and it will make splendid lucerne and clover country. As I have stated there are only two settlers there now, but they have done enough to test the country. I will be able to get the reports of the officers who visited the district and will present them to the House in a little time.

Hon. P. Collier: Is it not too far away from the market for lucerne?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I think by the time the land is improved and settled we will be able to provide means of communication. In the meantime the produce can be removed by sea.

Hon. P. Collier: It will be very costly.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** It is not particularly costly. Hon. members will see the proposals in the papers which I am placing on the Table of the House. Since the 24th August I have been working at this scheme almost continuously. It is a very big work. I do not anticipate at all that anything more than 20 per cent. of our own men will care to become settlers. I realise that we have opportunities of settling people on the land which are not possessed by any of the other States, except Queensland.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the unfairness of making this a State scheme.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** We may offer to settle as many men as they like to let us have.

Hon. P. Collier: Have any steps been taken to keep a register of the men who desire to go on the land as they return?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** They will be given an opportunity when they return. We propose to cut up this land for them and to improve the blocks by clearing at least 20 acres in each block. We propose that the settlers shall have this 20 acres to work and in addition they will work at further clearing under the Bank's system, each on his own holding, so that he may earn something for the first two or three years beyond the production of his cleared land. He would have a contract to effect improvements on his own land. He would have the money earned by this means, and in addition we propose to find under this scheme a house, which in the timber districts would naturally be of wood, at a cost of about £150. We propose to fence in the land cleared and to buy a certain number of cows for the soldier settler, as well as a horse and dray and other implements. We propose under the scheme that the soldier settler shall be set up in life. He will not be asked to pay a penny for his land up to 160 acres, which will be free of any charge except the survey fee, which

should not amount to more than £10. That fee will be spread over 30 years under Agricultural Bank conditions.

Mr. Carpenter: That is what we are waiting to hear.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** We cannot have anything better than that.

Mr. Lambert: What safeguard will the Minister provide against speculation?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** One block, one soldier. A soldier will not be able to transfer to an outside person without the permission of the Minister. If he gets a free homestead farm he has to reside on it for five years under the Land Act. I do not think we need take any special precautions in that regard. If hon. members will look through the papers which are lying on the Table of the House and which were asked for by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) they will be satisfied that every step which can be taken to safeguard the interests of the soldier settler will be taken. Something has been said about the land of the South-West becoming grown over. It will have to be utilised whether the soldier is on it or not. Such land will be utilised, but I do not know where we shall get the labour from in order to clear a large number of farms until the soldiers return. My idea is to have the surveys completed and if possible have the timber pulled down, and that we should be in a position to employ a large number of returned soldiers in that work. When the war is over employment will be scarce and difficult to obtain, and we ought to be ready to give as much employment as possible by this means. If we have to wait to do the work of clearing until the soldiers return we should at least get some sort of a training farm in readiness, so that they can be housed and looked after in comfort. I think we have ample provisions for every detail of the work to be carried out. If there is any remark that hon. members would like to make in connection with the file that is lying on the Table of the House, or information they would like to obtain from me, I hope they will not hesitate to ask for it. So far as we can say, the soldier will have the best assistance that can be given to him and the best land that is avail-

able in the State. If the soldier settler does not succeed—and they will not all succeed—we ought to see to it that the failure is due to no fault at all of the Ministry dealing with the question.

Hon. P. Collier: You will make careful selection, I suppose?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think that every man who desires to go upon the land should satisfy a board that he is strong enough and capable of doing the work.

Hon. P. Collier: It would be a mistake to give everyone who applied for a block, simply because he was a soldier.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Whenever one has to select men to do work for one mistakes are frequently made in summing up the character of the man who is applying for employment. It is a very difficult matter to select the right man. All that can be done will be done for the returned soldiers. We have had same communication from the Imperial Government. They asked if we could submit something for their consideration. I want to see this country settled and the sooner the better.

Mr. Lambert: That is for their soldiers?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. If we can, by building railways through the South-West, develop our timber industry and at the same time make way for a large number of soldiers, we shall be doing a great good for the State.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [10.6]: I view with great anxiety the responsibilities of the State and the Commonwealth during the time when our soldiers return in large numbers from the front. In spite of this anxiety, I trust that they will be returning in large numbers at an early date. I think we have to view the question from a practical point of view. At the first conference I attended in Melbourne I endeavoured to view it in that light. I am still of opinion that it is distinctly unfair, on the part of the Commonwealth, to put the whole of the responsibility, as they have done, of providing for the returned soldiers on to the shoulders of the State. We have not an opportunity of raising by taxation the necessary revenue, whereas the Federal authorities have a bigger scope and there is the responsibility apart from everything

else. It is true that the State has the land and I made it perfectly clear, on behalf of Western Australia, feeling sure that Parliament would endorse it, that we had an abundance of land here and that we are only too pleased to make it available on the most liberal terms, but that the whole responsibility of selecting and financing the men on to the land should not be the duty of the State but the responsibility of the Commonwealth. Because I took up that attitude I have been misrepresented. In the *West Australian* an attack was made upon me on one occasion when this paper published an unfair article accusing me of opposing the assistance to returned soldiers. That is only by the way, however. After endeavouring to get the Commonwealth Government to realise that after all it was their main responsibility, I endeavoured to do what the member for Bunbury suggested, namely to get the Commonwealth to advance money free for three years, so that the burden of interest paid would not be added to the returned soldier, the soldier settler, until his land started to produce, or he had an opportunity of making his improvements pay for the interest bill. I failed in that regard because the other States did not support me. Ultimately, a compromise was arrived at which has been outlined by the Minister, namely, that we should charge 3½ per cent. for the first year, increasing the interest at the rate of one half per cent. until the total cost of the money was placed upon the shoulders of the soldier settler. The difference between the amount charged and the cost of the money was to be borne equally by the Commonwealth and the State. I still maintain that the State could not be called upon to make that contribution at all. We are giving the land, and will play the greater part in the way of encouraging and assisting the soldier settler and doing everything we can to make his life on the land a success. Whilst we are relieving the Commonwealth of a great burden, they ask us to share with them the small amount of consideration they are extending to the returned soldier in the shape of a reduction in the interest bill for the first year or two. I realise the difficulties surrounding Ministers at the outset in preparing the scheme, and the difficulties under which they are labouring in not know-

ing what provision is actually required and for how many soldiers. We have in Western Australia large areas of land already surveyed and we could settle men almost immediately, but we have no indication at all as to the number of men whom we will be called upon to settle within a reasonable time. I am just as enthusiastic about opening up the South-West as is the member for Bunbury, but I am not with him in all his schemes. He is the most impracticable member in the House. I know that he would rush into all sorts of expenditure in the South-West and would repent later, and I want to save him from the repentance which would come if he carried out some of his ill-considered ideas. The Minister for Industries has realised the important point. We can only clear in the South-West a limited area of land ahead of settlement. We must keep it under cultivation until we get it settled, otherwise the regrowth will be greater than the original growth, or almost as great, and the expense of clearing will be almost equal to that of the original expense. Before we start clearing areas of land we must have some idea as to the number of settlers to be provided for and some idea, if it is possible to get it, when these men will be available to us, so that we will not go on clearing and cultivating land for a number of years with the limited amount of labour that we have in the State to-day. Although I am in favour of the most liberal terms being extended to the soldier settler, and the greatest encouragement offered to him, I do trust that we shall not rush into this without appreciating the difficulties concerning the clearing of land ahead of cultivation, especially in our South-West areas. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) has stated that there are men complaining that they cannot get land to-day. I have received a letter to-day from a returned soldier. He has been trying to get land for some three months. He came to me asking what he should do, and I suggested that he should either see the Minister personally or write direct to him, pointing out that he was anxious to get on the land. He has a small pension, but in the course of running about the City he has reduced the little savings he had before he went to the war, and this

has had a demoralising effect generally upon him. If there is one case there is a great possibility of there being others. I would suggest to the Minister that if he does not get the land committee to consider all these men the Minister for Industries should endeavour to settle them immediately they make application. The sooner we get these men back to work, so to speak, the better it will be for them and for the State. There are men complaining to-day, and in all such cases I would advise them either to see the Minister for Lands personally or write to him direct, so that they may have some consideration extended to them.

The Minister for Railways: They are entitled to the cheap money and any help that can be obtained, the same as any other person.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: This returned soldier, whom I know personally, submitted a proposal to the War Council.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is this the same man about whom I wired you to Melbourne?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. We fixed that man up. This is a goldfields man, and I have known him for some time. He applied to the War Council, who referred him to the Land Settlement Committee, and eventually he communicated with Mr. Morris. Mr. Morris replied, stating that there would shortly be a meeting of the Land Settlement Committee, when the soldier's proposal or requirement or suggestion would be considered. He has been waiting for some time; and because he received no further reply he wrote to me inquiring whether the matter could be expedited. He wants to go into the wheat belt, and he thinks if he could get a piece of land he might be able to do a bit of seeding this year. But time is flying fast, and naturally he wants to get going.

The Minister for Railways: There might be a suitable farm on the Government's hands.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will accept the invitation of the Minister for Railways and ask the soldier to see him at an early date. Another point I wish to touch on is the proposal to settle some of the soldiers at Nornalup Inlet. Like the Minister I have never seen the area, but I have heard

glowing reports of the fertility of the soil and of the possibility of irrigation. It is generally believed that at Nornalup Inlet farmers can be established with some guarantee of success from the very outset. The only difficulty I see is the isolation. I do not think it would be wise to ask soldiers to settle at Nornalup Inlet, and go through what Mr. Thomson and our friend "the Count"—I do not know his name—went through. In early years at Nornalup Inlet those men had to pass through trials and troubles which the returned soldier cannot fairly be asked to undergo. Before we proceed to settle that area, better means of communication than exist to-day must be provided. The Minister might go into the question whether water carriage should not be established in preference to railway communication. After all, water carriage is considerably cheaper than railway communication, and Nornalup Inlet is not very far from Albany. According to what I hear, a reasonable jetty for loading and unloading could easily be established at Nornalup; and, if a small boat could be got running, the area might be opened up by a tramway connecting with the jetty. That would serve for a considerable time. While advocating this scheme of development for Nornalup, I am not prepared to say that that particular area should be reserved for returned soldiers. In my opinion, better areas can be found to start with. We shall have other settlers besides returned soldiers, and I think Nornalup should receive consideration, because it is an area of country well worth exploiting. I congratulate the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) on having initiated the discussion, because it has shown that, while there has not been much talk about this matter, something is being done. The words of the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) may be generally accepted as correct—that every member of the House is deeply anxious to do everything possible for the returned soldier. While we talk so much about land settlement, however, let us not forget that there are men returning who do not desire to go on the land. The State Government cannot do much for those others, but let us show that we realise our responsibilities to the re-

turned soldier who does wish to settle on the land. I think some valuable information has been obtained as the result of this motion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.20]: It seems that the experience of the Minister for Railways with land settlement in the past has taught him something as regards land settlement in the future. The question that has struck me most during the debate is, what shall the returned soldier do to live until such time as his land provides him with a livelihood?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): It is all provided for in the scheme.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The repatriation fund is supposed to deal with that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The repatriation fund may be supposed to deal with that; but lately it has been proved that a good deal of land in the South-West can be cleared at a considerably reduced rate by machinery as compared with the cost of clearing by hand. Land clearing, instead of costing £30 or £40 per acre by hand, can be done for £5 or £6 per acre by machinery. The difficulty I foresee, however, is that returned soldiers settled in the South-West will require something to do in order to obtain their livelihood while their land is reaching the productive stage. Only a few months ago, when visiting the South-West, I was interviewed by several men with a request for work. These men had established orchards, but they pointed out that unless they could obtain employment of some kind while their trees were growing they could not remain on their holdings. They asked whether it was not possible for the Government to give them some hewing work for the express purpose of enabling them to retain their holdings. The same position will arise with regard to the returned soldier unless he has something to fall back on, some work near at hand to his orchard. It is a matter of impossibility for the man to leave the district to obtain work that is absolutely necessary to him for obtaining a livelihood for himself and possibly a family. I regret that something has not been done with a view to inducing the Federal authorities to assist the returned soldier during the first few years of his settlement. Once the man gets established, there is un-



doubtedly a possibility of his making a success of an orchard. The member for Tood-yay (Mr. Piesse) knows the difficulty attendant on fruit growing, and the impossibility of making a living from an orchard during its early years. I am greatly afraid the Minister for Railways is disposed to take too optimistic a view of the settlement of soldiers on the land. It would be a great mistake to settle them in the South-West unless we can see that they will make a success of it. If the attempt turns out a failure, the result will be to damn the South-West for many years to come. I hope the Government will make representations to the trustees of the repatriation fund. Money has been subscribed, and I know that the Governments of this and other States intend to contribute to the fund. Moreover, subscriptions are being made to the fund by private persons. No interest is to be charged on loans. Surely those in charge of the fund would assist the soldier in the first instance by paying the interest on money loaned to him by the State Government. I trust Ministers will closely consider how the men and their families are to live until such time as the orchards may yield a livelihood.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle—in reply) [10.26]: I wish to thank Ministers for having given us the information for which we were waiting, and to say that the object I had in view in moving the motion has been fully met. It was stated by way of interjection during the discussion that we were not dealing with the soldier who would not go upon the land. In this connection we are not discussing that particular phase of the subject. A little time ago, speaking on another motion, I mentioned the fact that that was a separate proposition which would have to be undertaken either by the State or the Federal Government in the near future. In both Great Britain and Ireland special industries are being established for broken men who cannot compete in the open market. I hope that in the near future steps will be taken in that direction for men leaving our hospitals minus a limb or with shattered nerves, who cannot possibly earn their livelihood in the ordinary way. For them some special provision must be made. Reverting to the subject of my motion, I am

glad to find that the Minister for Railways, in spite of his apparent indifference, has been at work upon the subject; and I hope the papers which he is about to lay on the Table will satisfy the men who are most concerned. I am fully aware that the project is a very big one, and that none but a man of wide experience in land settlement could possibly tackle the problem with any hope of success. Even with all the Minister's experience, there will be some failures. I do believe, however, that particularly to men who were on the land prior to enlistment, and who now want to get back on the land as speedily as possible, it will be a great satisfaction to know that a scheme at least exists on paper. I trust the Minister himself will be able to announce in a few weeks that a start is to be made with the direct work of getting the land ready. In spite of my lack of practical experience, I wish to add my voice to that of the member for Guildford in a caution against Nornalup Inlet as an initial proposition. Later, when large numbers of men are to be settled and we have taken the first steps, I would not object to settlement at Nornalup Inlet so long as the settlers were told beforehand what they had to face as regards isolation. The Minister for Lands in his remarks sounded a warning against shutting men off from their fellows in such a way. I believe there is land sufficient at least for present purposes nearer to other communities and nearer to railways, where men in the early stages of settlement could at times get into centres of population and earn a few pounds outside during the busy season. But, if isolated at Nornalup, they would be cut off from that opportunity. Further, I can imagine a settler objecting to being dependent upon water carriage for his market, and also for his supplies during the winter months.

The Minister for Railways: That would be only temporary.

Mr. CARPENTER: I understand that; but it is going to be a long time before railway communication with Nornalup Inlet could be recommended to Parliament. A very thriving settlement would have to be established there before a railway would be justified. I think the Minister would be well advised if for the time being he confined his

efforts to land nearer to centres of population. He will not be taking so many risks then, and will not have to ask Parliament to authorise thousands of pounds for another railway while we have ample lands served by railways already constructed. With these remarks I ask leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Ports and Harbours.
- 2, Early Closing Act Amendment.
- 3, Mental Treatment.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

### BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

### MOTION—GOVERNOR OF THE STATE.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.35]: I move—

*That in view of the fact that the term of office of the present Governor shortly expires, this House is of opinion that no new appointment of a Governor should be made during the war, and that thereafter consideration should be given to the fact that the Lieut.-Governor, or some other local representative, is capable of carrying out the duties.*

It appears that another appointment has already been made, and in view of that, the motion which I have moved will be of little value. I am simply moving the motion to give the Premier an opportunity of informing the House of what has taken place.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [10.34]: I merely wish to state that representations were made to the Home authorities prior to the appointment of the new Governor. So far as the Government were concerned we were quite agreeable that the Lieut.-Governor should act until the termination of the war. The Home authorities, however, in their discretion, decided that it was right and proper that they should ap-

point a new Governor, and a new Governor has been appointed and he will arrive here in about a month's time. I do not know that there is any necessity for the motion to be carried or even considered under the circumstances and I hope the hon. member will withdraw it.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [10.36]: In view of the statement just made by the Premier, I can only express my regret that the Home authorities did not have more regard for the wishes of the present Government and also their predecessors in office, and I think I am safe in saying, for the wishes of a large majority of the people of this State. I do not know whether this appointment which has been made so suddenly is due to the fact that the necessity arose to find an opening for the Governor of Tasmania. I am not aware whether his term of office was about to expire in that State but I do not think that was the case. That being so, I think we might well have gone on for a considerable time, perhaps to the end of the war, without the vacancy being filled. I realise now that no purpose will be served by persevering with the motion, but I want to take this opportunity of expressing my dissatisfaction that the wishes of the people of the State have not been met.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.38]: I endorse the remarks of the member for Boulder. There is no doubt to my mind that there are many citizens in Australia who could have filled the position with satisfaction. I regret very much in view of the loyalty displayed by the people of Australia that an Australian citizen was not appointed to the position.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.39]: In view of the explanation made by the Premier I desire by leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

*House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.*