

# Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 11th August, 1920.

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

## QUESTIONS (6)—RAILWAY MATTERS.

### Season tickets.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that railway season tickets from Boulder to the metropolitan or other districts have been discontinued? 2, Is he aware that passengers from Boulder can only secure these tickets from Kalgoorlie to the places mentioned; and that this necessitates the purchase of a separate ticket to Kalgoorlie and return every time the passenger holding a season ticket desires to travel? 3, If the facts are as stated, will he arrange facilities to be given for season tickets to be issued from the Boulder as previously?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: If the facts are found to be as stated by the leader of the Opposition, I will have the position rectified at once.

### Rocky Bay Railway Bridge.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: Seeing that money is freely offered to the Government, when is it his intention to erect the new railway bridge at Rocky Bay, North Fremantle, for the safety of those working and using the railways?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The Engineer-in-Chief is at present in the Eastern States, and on his return the matter will be further considered.

### Rails for Sidings.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Railways: When does he anticipate that rails will be available for the provision of necessary sidings on the railway system of the State?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I am not aware that any necessary sidings are being held up through lack of rails.

### Fencing.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it the intention of the Railway Department to do anything in regard to the fencing of railway lines? 2, Is he aware that farmers whose properties are bisected by the railway, such as Mr. Job, of Boundain, suffer severe losses through their stock being killed by the trains? 3, What relief or compensation is it proposed to give to such persons?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Not at the present time. Funds are required for more urgent and necessary works in providing facilities for settlers along the railway lines. If, however, owners of land adjoining the railway are prepared to fence their land, the department would be agreeable to supply old sleepers, free of charge, for use as posts. 2, Yes, but it is the duty of the owners of the land to protect their stock and prevent them from trespassing on the railway lines. 3, The owners are not entitled to compensation.

### Motor Trains, Brown Hill loopline.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Have the Government received any reports or information regarding the utilising of motor trains on the Brown Hill loopline? 2, If so, are they satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, See reply to No. 1.

### Railway Extension—Esperance Northwards.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Works: What steps have been taken during recess to fulfil the oft-repeated promise to proceed with the authorised railway from Esperance northwards?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Sleepers for this railway have been sent forward at every available opportunity, and are still being forwarded.

## QUESTION—STATE CHILDREN AND CHARITIES ALLOWANCE.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee's interim report on the State Children and Charities Department presented on 21st November, 1919, particularly item No. 1, which reads as follows:—  
"The present monetary allowance to institutions, foster parents, and natural parents for the keep of children is quite inadequate. Your committee recommends an all round payment of 10s. per week for each child until that child reaches the age of 14 years? 2, If so, when? 3, If not, why not?"

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied : 1, In most cases the Committee's recommendations have already been complied with. The monetary allowance to institutions has not been increased. Foster mothers receive 10s. per week for children under one year; from one year to two years, 9s.; and from two to fourteen years, 8s. Foster mothers of young delicate babies receive up to 12s. 6d. per week. Natural parents for the keep of their own children now receive 8s. per week in lieu of 7s. per week. The additional 1s. per week per child operated from 15th May last. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION—RAVENSTHORPE SMELTER.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it the intention of the Department to run another campaign at the Ravens-thorpe smelter; if so, when? 2, Are the suppliers of ore to the smelter, who have obtained advances on it, being charged interest on such advances? 3, Are such suppliers to be held accountable for any overpayments in advance consequent on delay in starting smelter or of fall in price of metals? 4, Are the overhead charges at the smelter to be debited to the next campaign from the date of closing of the last campaign; if not, from what date? 5, At what fixed charge for (a) treatment, and (b) realisation is the Department prepared to accept ore from producers? 6, Is it intended to issue an amended or alternative tariff for the Ravens-thorpe smelter; if so, when?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. As soon as a working staff can be collected; probably by the end of this month. 2, Yes. To recoup the Government the interest payable by it on the moneys so advanced. 3, The right of the Government to exact repayment for advances must be maintained, but from present knowledge it is unlikely that any reclamation will be necessary, and it has been decided that, in view of all the circumstances, if such should prove the case, no reclamations will be exacted for the forthcoming campaign. 4, Usual charges for sampling and assay will be made, but other overhead charges limited to three months prior to start of smelting. 5 and 6, The whole question of fixing a charge for treatment or realisation does not arise in connection with the forthcoming campaign, advances having already been made against the ore which is now available for treatment. The existing lease of the smelter will expire at the end of December next, but the Government has the option of renewal, and the whole matter will require to be considered in conjunction with these facts.

#### QUESTION—MINES, KALGOORLIE, DEEP BORING.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to

commence systematic deep boring at the north and south ends of the Golden Mile? 2, If so, when is it the intention of the Government to commence operations on this most important work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, A request for assistance to carry out boring operations at the north end was received and a promise given that on a company being formed financial assistance would be extended by the department, but efforts to form a company failed. A similar offer has been made to a company now being formed for boring at the south end and finality is expected to be reached within the next few weeks. 2, So soon as the company is ready to let a contract.

#### QUESTION—BRAN AND POLLARD SUPPLIES.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Have the Government taken any steps to see that an adequate supply of bran and pollard is retained in the State for local consumption, at a reasonable price? 2, If so, what steps have been taken?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Arrangements have been made by the Wheat Scheme to see that all offal from the wheat sold to them for gristing is conserved for local consumption at the prices fixed by the Prices Regulation Commission.

#### QUESTION—EDUCATION, BUSSELTON SCHOOL.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Works: 1, When does he purpose calling tenders for the urgent additions required to the Busselton State school? 2, Is he aware that the temporary accommodation used by the Education Department at Busselton is eminently unsuited for the purpose?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1 and 2, The plans are being revised, and the necessary accommodation will be provided.

#### QUESTION—CONSTRUCTION COSTS AND GOVERNMENT WORKS.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Works: What is the policy of the Government with regard to carrying out urgent works in view of the increased cost of building?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Owing to the present high cost of building the Government can only carry out most urgent works, which will necessarily restrict the extent of building operations.

#### QUESTIONS (2)—JETTY, BUSSELTON. *Extension.*

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Works: 1, Does he purpose making provision

on the Estimates for the extension of the head of the Busselton jetty? 2, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1 and 2, The Minister for Works proposes to visit the District shortly, and will then go into the matter.

#### Repairs.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Railways: 1, If all the repairs necessary to enable ships to be loaded on both sides of the Busselton jetty have been carried out by the department? 2, If not, when will such repairs be effected?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, See No. 1.

#### QUESTION—TAXATION AND HIGHER EXEMPTIONS.

Mr. DAVIES asked the Premier: Is it his intention to introduce during this session an amendment of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act to provide for higher exemptions?

The PREMIER replied: As there are so many exemptions under the Act, it is impossible to know which exemptions the honourable member refers to. This question will not be decided until the matter of taxation receives further consideration.

#### QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: In view of the large increase in the cost of building houses, is it the intention of the Government to amend the Workers' Homes Act so as to permit homes to be erected under the said Act to a value of, say, £750, in lieu of the existing limit of £550?

The PREMIER replied: Not at present.

#### QUESTION—WHEAT FREIGHT CHARGES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that wheat was in 1919 railed to ports from Narembreen at 4¼d. per bushel and from Bruce Rock at 4d. per bushel? 2, That the freight charged to-day is 5d. per bushel from Narembreen and from Bruce Rock 4¼d.? 3, Why a difference of ¼d. per bushel in 1919 and in 1920 ¾d. between the two places? 4, Will he see that Narembreen freight charges shall be in the same proportion as those from Bruce Rock?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 No. The rates charged in 1919 from Narembreen to its nearest shipping port was 14s. 3d. per ton, and from Bruce Rock 11s. 7d. Taking 37 bushels to the ton, this equalled a 4-23/27d. and 3-28/37d. per bushel respectively. 2, Freight since then has been increased by 1s. per ton in each case, equaling 12/37d. per bushel, making the charges per bushel 4-35/37d. ex Narembreen and 4-3/37d. ex Bruce Rock.

#### QUESTION—GOLD, PRICE.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, At what date since the beginning of the war did the price of gold per ounce appreciate over the normal standard price? 2, What was the amount of the first rise in price? 3, What has been the price per ounce for each six months period since the first appreciation? 4, What is presumed to be the approximate tendency in the immediate future?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Gold began to appreciate almost immediately after the declaration of war but until the formation of the Gold Producers' Association in March, 1919, it was not permissible to export gold from Australia. 2, The first dividend paid for the accounting period ended June, 1919, was 5s. 7d. per standard ounce. For the accounting period ended December, 1919, the dividend was 13s. per standard ounce. For the accounting period ended June, 1920, an interim dividend of 20s. per ounce has been paid. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, it is both impracticable and dangerous to forecast.

#### QUESTION—INSURANCE AGENTS' DISPUTE.

Mr. JONES asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that there is a strike of insurance agents in the State? 2, Is he aware that the class of insurance business these men work has been obtained by the assurance that the premiums will be collected weekly or bi-weekly? 3, Does he know that the policy holders are threatened with lapse of their policies? 4, Do the Government propose to take any steps to prevent this injustice to policy holders who took out policies in good faith and on the understanding the premiums would be collected?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, I have no official knowledge of this matter or any knowledge beyond what has appeared in the Press. 3, I have no reason to believe that policy holders are threatened with a lapse of their policies. 4, No.

#### BILL—SUPPLY £2,059,000.

##### All Stages.

The PREMIER and COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.45]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committee of Supply and Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-Reply is adopted.

Question put and passed.

**Message.**

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

**In Committee of Supply.**

The House having resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair,

The PREMIER and COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Mitchell-Northam) I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year ending 30th June, 1921, a sum not exceeding £2,059,000.

I think I ought to explain that it has not been possible to call Parliament together earlier than the first week in August. Hon. members are aware that during the past few months I have been obliged to attend conferences in Melbourne, and after my return, the Prince's visit occupied a good deal of time. Then, following that, other difficulties presented themselves. Hon. members, therefore, will not object to the delay which has occurred. It is not, of course, unusual for Parliament to meet in August. It has assembled as late as that on previous occasions, but money has not been spent without approval. I do not propose to discuss the finances at this stage because I hope to bring down the Estimates before long. But for the unfortunate strike of civil servants the Estimates would have been well under way at the present time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That will cover a multitude of sins this year.

The PREMIER: Everyone knows that the Government offices were closed for three weeks. That fact made a great difference.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Still, it will cover a multitude of sins.

The PREMIER: The hon. member's sins, not mine. I desire to point out to hon. members that the deficit last year was £668,000. The first six months of the financial year were bad, principally on account of the absence of shipping. It will be remembered that shipping was hung up for no less than 24 weeks, and in that period the State went back to the extent of £633,000. When shipping was restored our business went on as usual, and in the second half of the year the position improved vastly. The deficit for the second half of the year was £64,473, while that for the corresponding six months of the previous year was £245,684. I informed hon. members that when trade improved the finances would improve as well. I think the House will agree that I was right when I made that statement. At any rate it is a fact that during the past six months our position has become buoyant again. I may also inform the House that to-day we have at our command in this State and in London loan moneys totalling £1,937,600. Of this amount £370,000 raised in London has been

used towards paying interest and sinking fund.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that two years' agreement up yet?

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then the money has not been paid.

The PREMIER: We have not used the whole of it. We used £461,000. At any rate that is the position. I wish hon. members to realise that there is no need for the State to go on the money market for some time to come. This fact is due to the good seasons which have been experienced. A considerable sum of money was available after the last harvest for payments to the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. P. Collier: That is, you had the benefit of money which we had to find.

The PREMIER: The hon. member need not worry about that. It is a fact that the good season and the money from the farmers did make it possible for us to finance and to have this balance.

Hon. P. Collier: And it is also a fact that this money was found in the bad seasons when we were in office.

The PREMIER: It was found out of the 15 millions which the hon. member's Government borrowed. There was every reason why it should have been found.

Hon. P. Collier: You are getting the benefit now of cheap money which we borrowed.

The PREMIER: That is so. We have on deposit at credit of the Savings Bank account about £800,000. It is not necessary for me to say anything more beyond that I am asking for three months' supply.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the total amount?

The PREMIER: The total amount is £2,059,000. That is for all purposes, of course.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not my intention to go into anything in the nature of a detailed consideration of the finances on the question of supply. Moreover, I have no desire to cover the ground or any portion of the ground I traversed last evening. Before the Committee grant supply to the Treasurer, there are one or two questions regarding which we ought to have some information.

The Premier: I wish you had given notice of them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are questions which are so obviously in the nature of information required that the Treasurer might well have anticipated them. First of all, the Committee ought to be in possession of the fullest possible information regarding the purchase of the timber lease and mills from the South-West Hewers' Society. I am surprised that the Minister for Works, who I believe was the Minister responsible for the purchase, did not avail himself of the first opportunity when the House met to place the whole of the facts and particulars before the country. I say I am surprised, because I have such a lively recollection of the manner in which that Minister, and his colleagues as well, trounced

the Labour Government for withholding information after making what they alleged to be secret contracts. The fact is that this purchase was made during the recess and contrary to the Constitution.\*

The Premier: Oh, no!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I shall show before I have finished that it is contrary to the Constitution in the opinion, at any rate, of the Premier and his colleagues in the present Cabinet. I am not taking exception to the purchase of this proposition on its merits. As a matter of fact, I do not know anything about it. I do not know whether it was a good deal for the State or otherwise, but we are entitled to have information. The man who was foremost in demanding an explanation of the transactions of Ministers during the recess in former years was the present Minister himself. The information should have been supplied to us immediately the House met. The Minister for Works should have realised that it was his duty to place the House in the fullest possession of all the facts and circumstances which induced him to make this purchase. I want to know and the country wants to know what is the area of this concession, was the proposition valued by an independent expert who was qualified to make a report and recommendation to the Government, or on what information or what are the facts which led the Government to make the purchase.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a resolution which was carried here against secret contracts.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and particularly against the Government making purchases or entering into secret contracts during the recess and behind the back of Parliament. The Minister for Works ought to have known about that.

The Premier: There is no secret about it. It was known to members.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was not known to me.

The Premier: Where is the member for Collie?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is utterly childish for the Premier to attempt to saddle the responsibility of the Government on a private member. If the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) carried on negotiations for the purchase of the sawmills as agent or otherwise for the company, which he was perfectly entitled to do, it is ridiculous for the Premier to say that I should go to the member for Collie for my information. I am going to the right source. I have a right to go to the Government who were responsible. I do not wish to be referred to the member for Collie, who had nothing to do with it except in his private capacity.

Mr. Munsie: No one knows yet what the Government paid for it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Very few members of the House know anything of the details of the purchase, except that the purchase was made. We read in the newspaper that the Government had acquired the property

but, beyond that, we know nothing. The Government ought to have justified the purchase and placed us in possession of the fullest information. I do not doubt that it might have been a good business deal from the point of view of the Government, but I want to know how the Government justify their action or square their action in this connection with their attitude in the past. According to the contention raised by Ministers in the past, this is an unconstitutional purchase. When the Labour Government expended some public funds on the purchase of steamships in years gone by, we were challenged not only in this House by men who are now sitting on the Treasury benches but in another place. It was then contended that the expenditure of public funds for the purchase of any proposition of this description without a special appropriation was unconstitutional. I did not altogether agree that that was so. There is a vote every year in the Appropriation Bill from which the money can be drawn for purchases or expenditure of this description. I refer to the advance to the Treasurer.

The Premier: And State sawmills.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, this House did not vote any money under the heading of State sawmills for the purchase of additional sawmills.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They were running the State sawmills on commission at the time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The fact is that the Government, contrary to their professed policy, and not only contrary to their proposed policy but contrary to the Constitution in accordance with their arguments in the past, have purchased this proposition. They are guilty in a double sense, guilty I say of hoodwinking the public or breaking their pledges to the public by extending the operations of the State trading concerns, and guilty of a violation of the Constitution, according to their arguments, in expending public funds without a specific appropriation by Parliament. I go back for some years to the time when the Government of which I was a member took precisely similar action. They made the purchase of a steamship and the amount involved was not as large as the amount involved in this purchase. At that time we were challenged in this House by a direct amendment by the then leader of the Opposition on what he alleged to be our unconstitutional action, and we were challenged by members in another place as well. At that time Mr. M. L. Moss, who was leader of the Opposition in the non-party House, moved this amendment to the Address-in-reply:—

That the following words be added "and to protest against expenditure incurred by your Excellency's Ministers without an Act of Appropriation, such procedure being derogatory to the privileges of Parliament and subversive of the Constitution, while in addition thereto, the proposal contained in your Excellency's Speech, implying that a ratification by the,

Legislative Assembly of such unauthorised expenditure is sufficient in law, ignores the constitutional rights of the Legislative Council."

That amendment was moved by Mr. Moss and was carried in another place. The amendment referred to the action of the Labour Government in spending funds for the purchase of steamships. It was precisely on all-fours with the action of the present Government in purchasing these sawmills. That was the view held by Mr. Moss. It was most vigorously and I have no doubt eloquently supported by the present Minister for Education (Mr. Colebatch).

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He would not support that, surely!

Hon. P. COLLIER: In support of Mr. Moss's amendment this is what Mr. Colebatch said—

Now the Government have reversed that order. They have bought the boats first. There may have been preliminary inquiry, but from what I have been able to ascertain, it appears to me that there has not been. If there had been, surely we should have known something about it. Now we know nothing of the details in this matter, and we can only assume that the Government acted in exactly the opposite direction to that which would be adopted by a trained socialist. They are going to get Parliamentary sanction as a second step—Precisely what the Minister for Education and his colleagues are doing in this instance. and after that I suppose they will consider whether it will pay and achieve the object at which they are aiming. This is not a matter of constitutional technicality, but a disorderly, unbusinesslike, and unconstitutional thing—

Mark those words how definite and emphatic they are.

which might or might not be wrong, but which, if right, must be done in an orderly, business-like, and constitutional manner.

That was the view held by Mr. Colebatch of the actions of the Labour Government at that time. In concluding his speech on that occasion, Mr. Colebatch said—

I shall support the amendment because I do not support any breach of the Constitution.

What a stickler for the strict letter of the Constitution the Minister for Education was on that occasion.

Mr. Hardwick: The constitutional aspect—

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for East Perth does not understand this subject at all.

Mr. Hardwick: I know more about the matter than you do.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If there is one question on which one would not expect the member for East Perth to butt in, it is the constitutional question.

Mr. Underwood: But did your Government observe the Constitution?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We had great difficulties to contend with, including the member for Pilbara. The Minister for Education said—

I shall support the amendment because I do not support any breach of the Constitution. We may be right, or we may be wrong, in our approval or disapproval of the Constitution; but we must be wrong if we disregard it. We may not believe in the terms of the Constitution, but we must abide by it because it is the only means we have of ensuring that the Executive and Parliament shall be the servants and not the masters of the people.

Mr. Underwood: How much notice did you take of that when in office?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is not the point at all. I want to know where the consistency of the present Government comes in. I want to know how they justify their action in carrying through a deal to-day, which in those years they condemned in such strong terms. If the action of the Labour Government in purchasing a ship without a special appropriation for the purpose was unconstitutional, surely the action of the present Government in purchasing sawmills on this occasion is unconstitutional. There can be no question whatever as to the consistency, at any rate, of that argument. I think I am justified in stressing this point, because I know very well that our friends opposite, when in Opposition, made a great deal of political capital out of the action of the Labour Government. It was not a matter of joking to them. They proclaimed what they termed the unconstitutional and illegal action of the Labour Government from Wyndham to Eucla at the time and in subsequent years as well. How soon they have forgotten their professed principles! The present Minister for Works was one of the men who were most frequently on their feet then demanding information. Members of the present Government, when in Opposition, referred to this purchase on the part of the Labour Government as a secret purchase, and said there was something behind it, and complained that no information was given or was obtainable with regard to it. Therefore I am justified in asking why the Minister for Works himself has not taken the House into his confidence at the very earliest opportunity regarding this purchase of sawmills. Apparently he is quite prepared to allow the session to drift on without supplying any information at all to the House concerning the reasons which actuated him in making this purchase. That is the constitutional side of the matter from the Government's own point of view.

Mr. Underwood: From whose point of view?

Hon. P. COLLIER: From the point of view of hon. members now in the Government and who were then in Opposition.

Mr. Underwood: From Moss's point of view.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does not the hon. member know that I quoted someone else besides Mr. Moss? I quoted also the present Minister for Education. However, Mr. Moss, while occupying a seat in another place, was recognised as a high constitutional authority. If I cared to take up the time of the House, which I do not desire to do, I could go through "Hansard" and read for the next two hours quotations from speeches of the present Premier and the present Minister for Works and other members prominent in the Opposition of that day, every one of them strenuously supporting the contention raised by Mr. Moss. The motion referred to was carried in another place—I think three or four Labour members alone dissenting from it.

Mr. Underwood: Did we worry about Moss? No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I did not think an independent member would be so anxious to defend a party with which he is not now associated.

Mr. Underwood: I am not defending anybody.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I say, too, that while, strictly speaking, the purchase does not legally contravene the State Trading Concerns Act, morally it does do so. The Government themselves were responsible for passing through Parliament an Act which forbids the establishment by any Government of any new trading concern without the sanction of both Houses of Parliament.

The Minister for Works: This is not a new State trading concern.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know it is not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It now deals in soft wood and joinery and so on, which it did not do previously.

Hon. P. COLLIER: On a strict reading of the Act, I consider that the Government have probably not broken it, but undoubtedly they have broken the spirit of their own Act. The measure provides that no new trading concern shall be established without the consent of both Houses of Parliament. While the sawmills may not be a new trading concern, the purchase represents an extension of an existing trading concern.

The Minister for Works: A natural extension.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The natural way one would have expected the Minister to deal with State trading concerns would be to get rid of them, and not to provide for their extension, natural or otherwise. That is what he was returned to office to accomplish—the abolition of the State trading concerns.

Mr. Munsie: And what he has not been able to do.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister will say that it is a good business deal, and that the whole enterprise of State sawmilling can be

carried on more effectively now with a jarrah mill associated with the karri, than by the production of karri only, and that, taken as a whole, the State sawmilling business is a better business proposition by reason of the acquisition of this property. That may be so; I am not questioning the business aspect of the deal at all. I am questioning the principle of the Minister in purchasing the property without a special appropriation by Parliament, seeing that he condemned other Ministers in the past for acting similarly. I am also condemning him for not placing the full facts of the purchase before the House at the earliest possible opportunity. That is what ought to have been done. I say, further, that the Government, if they were sincere in their policy of getting rid of State trading concerns, would have no difficulty whatever in disposing of the State sawmills to-day.

The Premier: Would you support the Government in that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would not support them, because it is not my principle to support the sale of these State enterprises. But if Ministers were politically honest, they would sell them, because they profess it is their principle to sell those trading concerns. The Government could sell the State sawmills to-morrow. I believe that if the Minister for Works offered them for sale, he would have a score of purchasers from all over the world. Purchasers for the sawmills would spring up everywhere. Not only do the Government purchase a sawmill during recess without parliamentary approval, but they have prevented the company concerned from accepting two offers made for the sawmill prior to its purchase by the Government. The company were desirous of selling, but the Government refused to allow them to sell to private purchasers. The Government refused to allow the transfer of the property, "because," they said, "we want it ourselves."

The Premier: No.

The Minister for Works: That is not quite correct.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government probably did not say "because we require it ourselves," but seeing that they purchased the property soon afterwards, that would appear to have been the reason.

The Minister for Mines: I can assure you that when the first refusal of transfer was made, the question of whether the Government should purchase was never discussed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What was the object of refusing the transfer?

The Premier: It was refused under the Forests Act.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that the transfer was refused before the purchase by the Government took place, and I believe the company could have sold at a higher price than that at which the Government bought. So far as the merits of the deal are concerned, I believe the Government made a good bargain. They purchased the property for, I think, £61,000 cash, and there were liabilities against the property which brought

the total purchase price up to \$84,000; but as against that there were liquid assets amounting to a very considerable sum—I do not know the exact total—bringing the actual cost of the concern to the Government very much below \$84,000—I do not know to what extent, but by very many thousands. I contend, however, that the present Government, having passed through Parliament a measure which provides that no new enterprise shall be established without parliamentary authority, ought at least to obey the spirit as well as the letter of that law. The Act in question says—

No trading concern other than those to which this Act applies, or shall apply, shall, unless expressly authorised by Parliament, be hereafter established or carried on by the Government of the State, or by any person acting on behalf of such Government or under its authority.

As I have already said, I agree that this is not a new trading concern, but an extension of an existing trading concern. Nevertheless, the Government responsible for the passing of that Act have broken, if not the letter, the spirit of the section I have quoted. I do not wish to pursue the subject any further, but I hope the Minister for Works will, not justify the deal from the business aspect, but justify his action on the point of principle. He can only justify it by somersaulting. I would like the hon. gentleman to tell the Committee, when he speaks, whether he agrees with his colleague the Minister for Education that such a purchase is unconstitutional. Does he agree to-day with his own utterances of a few years ago? Does he agree with the view of the Minister for Education that the purchase is unconstitutional?

The Minister for Works: I have not done anything unconstitutional.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then the Minister's colleague is wrong.

The Minister for Works: I could not say even that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister for Education, since the days when he gave expression to the views I have quoted, has been associated with the Minister for Works in Cabinet, and no doubt has been converted by that Minister. As a matter of fact, there is not in the Cabinet another Minister whom I appreciate so much as I do the Minister for Works, because that hon. gentleman, though entering upon Ministerial office with the avowed object of destroying all the trading concerns of this State, has become the most whole-hearted supporter of those enterprises that is to be found within the walls of this Chamber. I am pleased that the Minister for Works is administering these affairs, because with all his experience he is placing them on a sound business footing. Many of them are paying concerns, and this fact is helping to establish our policy in the minds of the public as a sound one. So long as Labour alone supported this kind of trading, a section of the community was sceptical as to its being a wise policy, but, seeing that it is, now being wholeheartedly pushed along by our friends

opposite, this should have the effect of convincing many thousands of persons who hitherto were opposed to the principle. No doubt we shall shortly have all the people in the State enthusiastic supporters of the principle of State trading. Why did the Premier pursue the unusual and exceptional course of not making available for publication the report of the Royal Commission which dealt with the Nationalist workers at Fremantle? I have never known of an instance in which the report of a Royal Commission has not been made available immediately for the information of the public. The report of this Royal Commission was submitted to the Government early in the recess, but was withheld from publication. Further, the amount of compensation paid by the Government was also withheld. Why were the Government so modest in this matter? If they have performed a worthy action and given compensation to highly deserving persons in the community, why have they not let the whole world know? This involves the expenditure, we are told, of £17,000 of the taxpayers' money, but this information was only obtained yesterday in answer to a question.

Mr. Munsie: The Nationalist scabs have had over £22,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I presume the Government have acted in what they believed to be an equitable manner and that they have only done what they consider to be an act of justice to the men concerned. But if that is so, why have they not given the information to the public?

The Premier: There is nothing to hide in the matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why has it not been made public? Does the Premier think that the handing over of £17,000 of public funds is of so little concern as to be unworthy of mention? The report of the Royal Commission should have been placed on the Table of the House on the first day of the session. Apparently the Government have felt themselves bound to pay whatever was awarded by the Royal Commission. I well remember during last session, with regard to the payment of this particular Commission, that when the point was raised that whatever was recommended would have to be paid, it was strenuously denied by Ministers that this was so, and they stated that the Government were free to pay what they liked. Certain amounts were awarded by the Royal Commission, and we should be in possession of the information without having to ask for it. I am opposed to giving the Government supplies for a period of three months.

The Premier: One month has already gone.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No one can deny that our finances are drifting; and if the Government will not take control of the finances it is time the House did. We should not be doing our duty to the public if we voted a sum of two million pounds to cover one-fourth of the year's expenditure, *en bloc*, without first receiving the fullest information in regard to that expenditure. I have never known of such



an amount being asked for before without information being supplied. I intend to move an amendment to reduce the amount by £686,333 and shall expect to receive the support of members on the cross benches. In the House of Representatives, members of the Country party, when Mr. Hughes asked for a three months' supply, voted for an amendment to reduce the amount so as to grant only a two months' supply, and the amendment was only defeated by three or four votes.

Mr. Johnston: The Government accepted it as a vote of no confidence.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Notwithstanding the fact that the Prime Minister threatened that if the amendment was carried it would mean a dissolution of Parliament, our friends of the Country party in the House of Representatives voted for the amendment in order to endeavour to check the reckless expenditure of public funds, which has characterised the Government during recent years. Unless this House resumes control of the finances and closely analyses and examines the expenditure, we shall never get back on to the road of prosperity again. If we agree to vote two million pounds in a few months, after such a long recess, it will be an indication to the Government that we endorse their policy of reckless expenditure and drift, and serve to show that we are not concerned in the matter. Parliament is in session and if the Government want more money after the two months have expired, they can readily come to the House and ask for it. It is better for this Chamber to grant only a two months' supply, and for the Government then to ask for further supply at a later period. I move an amendment—

That the amount be reduced by £686,333.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition knows that supply is asked for at the beginning of every session. We have asked for supply for three months. This period covers July, August, and September. The leader of the Opposition says that two months' supply will carry us on to the end of August, and that then we must come along for further supply to carry us on to the end of September. I would point out that the end of August will be here in a fortnight. His proposal is a ridiculous one, for he asks us to bring down a second Supply Bill in a fortnight.

Hon. P. Collier: If necessary.

The PREMIER: It would be necessary. Apparently the hon. member is willing to vote a two months' supply without a word of protest.

Hon. P. Collier: I have been protesting for half an hour.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member had the vote reduced by the amount suggested he would be still willing that the remainder be passed, and apparently he would be willing before the end of August to vote another £686,333.

Hon. P. Collier: It will depend; but the House will have an opportunity of discussing the matter.

The PREMIER: Surely the hon. member is not serious in suggesting that we should have a Supply Bill to-day and another in a fortnight's time.

Hon. P. Collier: At the end of August if necessary.

The PREMIER: It would be necessary.

Mr. Munsie: It is necessary for us to get some information before we grant you the money.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that this money is used to carry on the work of the Government as approved by Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: As approved subsequently.

The PREMIER: The items on which this money will be expended have been approved.

Hon. P. Collier: No.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: When did we approve of them?

The PREMIER: The hon. member approved of every item.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, to the end of June last. We did not approve of the expenditure of the £17,000 or of the £84,000.

The PREMIER: We are asking for supply to enable the Government of the country to be carried on for three months. When the leader of the Opposition sat on this bench he usually asked for three months' supply.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not listen to the hon. gentleman. Why should he say that the work of the country is not to go on?

Hon. P. Collier: I am not stopping expenditure.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is doing so.

Hon. T. Walker: All he asks is that the Premier should come back next week and ask for more.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not refuse the amount. With regard to the purchase of the timber mill, the leader of the Opposition would have hon. members believe that its purchase is on all-fours with the purchase of the steamers. He knows full well that the House was not sitting. Moreover, his was an entirely new venture.

Mr. Munsie: And you have sent a man home to oversee the purchase of other steamers.

Mr. Jones: You would not sell the "Kangaroo" for £170,000.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition wishes the House to believe that the purchase of steamers without the authority of Parliament or the addition of other steamers to those already owned by the State, is entirely the same thing as the purchase of a mill. It is not so at all.

Mr. Munsie: No; one is a steamer and the other is a sawmill.

The PREMIER: There is not an hon. member opposite who has not at one time or

another asked for the erection of a State battery somewhere. It would be just as logical for the leader of the Opposition to say that we have no right to instal a State Battery without first coming to the House. It is exactly the same thing. Would the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) object to the erection of a State battery in his electorate without appealing to Parliament?

Hon. P. Collier: There is a vote on the Estimates every year for the erection of State batteries; there was no vote on the Estimates last year for the purchase of a saw-mill.

The Minister for Works: There was no necessity for the vote.

Mr. Munzie: You did what was wrong.

The PREMIER: There have been no special votes on the Estimates for the erection of batteries.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes.

The PREMIER: I assure hon. members that there is not one who would not enter an emphatic protest if we refused to erect a battery in a district in which that battery was required. The purchase of the mill did not mean setting up a new State enterprise. It merely meant that we secured a mill to cut timber on a reserve set apart for State sawmilling purposes. When the State sawmills were started, the land in the karri country was set aside for State sawmilling purposes, and jarrah country was also reserved because it was known and understood by the leader of the Opposition and others that it would be necessary to have jarrah in conjunction with karri if it was desired to sell the karri. Therefore, both areas were set aside. Mills were erected in karri country and it was also necessary to erect a mill to cut the jarrah. As a matter of fact we were buying £25,000 worth of jarrah a year in order to sell our karri, and I contend we had a perfect right to erect a mill in the jarrah country.

Hon. T. Walker: Nobody denies that.

The PREMIER: We had a perfect right to do so under the Act and under the votes of Parliament. The leader of the Opposition now says that we have done something unconstitutional, something that is not right.

Hon. P. Collier: Where is the vote of Parliament for the purchase of a mill? Will the hon. member quote it?

The PREMIER: Yes, I will. There is a vote for the purpose of carrying on the timber industry, and the jarrah timber in question was set apart by the Minister for Forests in the Administration of which the leader of the Opposition was a member, and as it was cheaper to buy the mill than to erect a new one, the present Government decided on the purchase. The timber that was bought was, of course, bought for ordinary trade. I do not know whether the leader of the Opposition would like to hear that the deal was a good one, or whether he objects to be told that. I will, however, tell the House that when the offer was made we found that the amount paid would be covered

by the mill and by the timber, both of which we should have had to purchase. In addition, we had 360,000 loads of first class jarrah, which are required for our railways. That jarrah country was handed over to the Railway Department.

Mr. O'Loughlin: You do not suppose this mill is cutting sleepers for the railways. That was the statement given to the Press; it looked a bit better. You know where the supplies for the railways come from.

Hon. P. Collier: You are carrying out our policy very well.

The PREMIER: We are making good.

Hon. T. Walker: Making good the mess of other people.

The PREMIER: I hope hon. members will be satisfied that whether we bought this sawmill or not the money would have had to be spent on timber so that the industry could be carried on profitably.

Mr. O'Loughlin: You do not suppose it could have been done immediately.

The PREMIER: Yes. If the industry is to remain with the Government we must endeavour to make it pay. I will tell the House later on that there is a loss each year of nearly £700,000 on the railways and State trading and business concerns, and we must endeavour to make that good. If we are to keep those enterprises we must do the best we can with them. We do not wish to extend them.

Hon. P. Collier: That is why you purchase others.

The PREMIER: Hon. members say, "Look after the finances; straighten them, and practise economy." But they handed over to us these concerns. Now we have to carry them on and endeavour to make both ends meet.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not necessary to carry them on; you can sell them for more than they cost. If you are honest in your policy you will sell them.

The PREMIER: If a cash deposit had been lodged last year the timber mills would have been sold. Next, the leader of the Opposition stated that we did not make public the report of the Royal Commission on the Nationalist workers. This House approved of the appointment of that Royal Commission, but I think that the less said about the matter the better.

Mr. Munzie: Will you supply a list of those who got the £17,000?

The PREMIER: I will supply the hon. member with the fullest possible information. There is nothing to hide.

Hon. P. Collier: Why did you suppress the report of the Royal Commission?

The PREMIER: We did not suppress it.

Hon. P. Collier: It was suppressed.

Hon. T. Walker: Why was it not tabled before?

Hon. P. Collier: And even to-day the information regarding the expenditure of this £17,000 has not appeared in the Press.

The PREMIER: I do not control the Press.

Mr. Munsie: The "West Australian" covers you up pretty well.

The PREMIER: It would be just as reasonable for the hon. member to accuse me of controlling the "Worker."

Mr. Jones: I would not accuse you of that.

The PREMIER: I wish it would control members of the Opposition. This information can be obtained. We have no wish to hide it.

Hon. P. Collier: You have taken an unusual course, and the fact is you have hidden it.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Hon. P. Collier: It has never been done before.

Hon. T. Walker: Is not this a new State enterprise, paying scabs?

The PREMIER: I do not know anything about that, but if the hon. member asks us what we have paid, I can tell him.

Mr. O'Loughlen: This is the only report which was not published.

Hon. P. Collier: It is the only Royal Commission report which was not published when the report was made.

Mr. Jones: The Government are ashamed of it, and quite right, too.

The PREMIER: I suppose that reports of other commissions have not always been published at the time, but the facts connected with this inquiry were made public through the Press.

Hon. T. Walker: All fiction.

Hon. P. Collier: And perjury, too.

The PREMIER: I have no wish to hide the report.

Hon. P. Collier: But you have effectively done so.

Mr. Jones: The evidence is against you.

The PREMIER: Not designedly.

Hon. P. Collier: You are very innocent.

The PREMIER: What is there to hide?

Hon. P. Collier: You were not too proud to hand out the £17,000.

Mr. Munsie: Especially when you promised that it would not be done.

The PREMIER: I think I have replied to the two questions which the hon. member raised. I ask the Committee to refuse to be influenced by the leader of the Opposition in the way he requested. I ask members to realise what it would mean if we had to come here every fortnight for supply until the Estimates are brought down. This House would be devoting all its time to the consideration of Supply Bills. I have no objection to the House controlling the finances to the fullest possible extent.

Hon. P. Collier: What control would we have if we voted you two million pounds without consideration?

Mr. Jones: You might have more people to whom to pay £17,000.

The PREMIER: No more money will be spent than is absolutely necessary.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is an old tale.

Hon. P. Collier: We have used it ourselves.

Mr. Munsie: Is it unnecessary then to have the two millions? If so, why ask for that sum?

The PREMIER: That sum is necessary for the conduct of the government of the country and the payment of wages and salaries and expenses which have to be met day by day.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am sure the Committee cannot but think that the speech delivered by the Premier is unsatisfactory. He has not given us one word of apology for having kept the House waiting for fully eight months without giving us a statement of accounts, and the Government have been operating in secret absolutely behind the backs of the people and of Parliament. Now, when he should be ready with his Estimates—we have always heard talk of the necessity of meeting the House with the Estimates ready—the Premier comes down with the Supply Bill to cover weeks—I was going to say months—ahead. The Premier assumes an appearance of virtue, and asks the Committee deliberately to refuse to be led by the leader of the Opposition in his proposal to shorten the period of financial trust. I ask the Committee to be guided by common sense. Why should there be an extension of trust beyond what is absolutely necessary for the Government who have shown such a capacity for ignoring Parliament absolutely? The Premier comes down after eight months recess without a scintilla of a financial policy. Here was a chance for the Government to take the House into their confidence. Here was a chance for the Government to say what they intend to do financially during the ensuing session. But not a word have we of that. A Bill is quietly thrown down upon the Table and a murmured introduction of it is given to the Assembly, but not a word of explanation as to what the Government intend to do financially, and yet there stands against them this evidence of reckless expenditure—I use the word without any disrespect—of which they have been guilty during the time that Parliament has been in recess. Can the Premier justify the expenditure of the £17,000 or nearly £18,000 referred to by the leader of the Opposition?

Hon. P. Collier: Paid for perjury.

Hon. T. WALKER: Paid without the sanction of Parliament. Has there ever in the history of the country been such a departure from fixed rules and principles as is exemplified in the expenditure of this money?

Hon. P. Collier: A gang of perjurers who told lies to the Commissioner.

Hon. T. WALKER: Was not this something new for any Government to have to deal with? Is not this the introduction of a principle with which no Government has been faced in the history of Parliamentary Government up to the life of the present Government? Yet not one word about it is breathed to members. The whole thing was

done, as members of the Government when on the Opposition side were wont to say, in the dark, done quietly, under the rose—

The Premier: Every day the evidence was published.

Hon. T. WALKER: And the report of the commission which alone could be their justification for expending that sum of money has not been placed before the public. It is this of which the leader of the Opposition is complaining, that this was done sub rosa, in the dark, behind the backs of the people. No one knows a word about it or the reason for it. It is this of which we complain. It is for this that we require a defence from the Government, but not one word has been uttered, not even a word of excuse or apology. Have we come to the state that we can allow the Government to drift on and do absolutely what they like without uttering one word to Parliament?

The Premier: You are having plenty of say now, anyhow.

Hon. T. WALKER: We now have an opportunity after eight months of silence. We are now entitled to speak, but during the eight months, what kind of an orgy—to use the old word once so popular with present Ministers—has there been?

The Premier: The whole of the deficit was incurred while we were sitting.

Hon. P. Collier: No, only in the last three months.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Hon. T. WALKER: Deficit or no deficit, I am asking whether Parliament is to have a say in the management of the public purse. I do not care how well the Government might act. We cannot ignore the principle that Parliament has control of the purse. No king and no Minister has power over the purse. It is the people's representatives who have that power, and what little regard is being shown for them by the Premier to-night! We might as well work without a Constitution. What is the value of it if it can be put aside? If the country can be run on spec and trust and credit without the members of the Chamber having one word to say upon the matter, we might as well shut up Parliament altogether, and commit the whole of the management of the country to the hon. member and his colleagues. That is what it really amounts to as things have been going. What can we expect from a Ministry who show such an absolute disregard of their own honour and principles? I am not saying that in a personal sense, but in a political sense I emphatically say that is so. In a political sense I say there was never any such hypocrisy and dishonesty as the volte face exhibited by the Government with regard to the State trading concerns.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense!

Hon. T. WALKER: I say it is so.

The Minister for Works: It is nonsense.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Minister for Works, when on this side of the House, dealt with the purchase of steamships, and every

night for a week was loud in his protest against the purchase of those steamers.

The Premier: It is easy to call everyone else a fool and a rogue.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had any amount of it when we were in office. We were called thieves, too.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am not using the word "rogues" in the sense that renders people liable to a police court prosecution, but I am accusing the Government of dishonesty politically. Politically, the Government stand condemned by their own actions as dishonest.

The Premier: That is cheap stuff.

Hon. T. WALKER: Because I declare definitely that when the Minister for Works was on this side of the House, he said if he had an opportunity, he would get rid of the State trading concerns.

The Minister for Works: Give me a rest.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Minister for Works has repeatedly said he would get rid of the State trading concerns. The purchase of the steamers and the purchase of timber mills has been condemned up hill and down dale the whole length of the session, and all-night sittings have been held, and though members condemned those things, the Government now send Home their representative to purchase more steamers.

The Premier: We have not.

Hon. P. Collier: To negotiate and advise, anyhow.

Hon. T. WALKER: To negotiate and advise regarding the purchase of steamers, and they have purchased another State sawmill.

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

Hon. T. WALKER: Before tea I was endeavouring to show in what sense the Government might be accused of dishonesty. Prior to their assuming office, no words were too strong for them in which to condemn State enterprises. Every night, through session after session, that was their one theme. They alleged that it was inimical to the welfare of the State, inimical to sound financial policy and to the progress of the community, that we should indulge in such extravagance and in such ruin of personal, individual enterprise as was exemplified in the establishment of State trading concerns. That was the scheme the leader of the Opposition of those days. It does not seem to be understood by the present Premier. His weakness of perception in that respect may be illustrated by his attempt to draw a parallel between the authority for purchasing new sawmills and the authority for the erection of additional State batteries. He could not have hit upon a more unfortunate comparison. For the purpose of erecting State batteries and for extending the system of State batteries, Parliament is consulted every year through the Loan Estimates. On the Loan Estimates there is every year a vote for the erection of State batteries and for the provision of treatment plants. Where have we any vote authorising the Government to ex-

tend the State sawmills, or to purchase additional sawmills? What vote have the Government, either on the Revenue or on the Loan Estimates, permitting or authorising such a course? The Premier cannot point his finger to one item on the Estimates that would enable him to follow the course that his Government have adopted during the recess. Let it not be supposed that the leader of the Opposition, or myself, or any member on this side of the Chamber, objects to an addition to the State sawmills, which represent a valuable asset to the State. I long to see the day when every citizen will be a profit-sharer in the works of the whole community; that is to say, when we shall be a co-operative commonwealth in the strict sense of the term, every member of the community being a member of the great national company, doing his share in contributing to its wealth and having his share in the profits arising therefrom. I am longing to see that day; that is the goal towards which I work. We do not object to this purchase, but we do object to those who are everlastingly condemning the principle of State trading, now quietly assuming the role of its champions—going into office to destroy a principle, and, the moment they get into office, swallowing that principle and trying to extend it. Surely the Premier must recognise that that is not the kind of conduct usually designated honest. Surely such conduct deserves condemnation. When the public recognise the enormity of the fashion in which they have been fooled, surely they will have good cause to be resentful and to show their resentment in the severest manner. What is the proposition contained in the amendment of the leader of the Opposition? It simply amounts to this, "We will not give you a longer time than two months to run in the loose fashion in which you have been running. Public attention must be drawn to you at an earlier time than you would like."

The Premier: It has been drawn to you plenty of times.

Hon. T. WALKER: No doubt; and most wrongfully at times. Whilst we sat on the Ministerial benches, there was no member of this Chamber so continuously at work trying to belittle the Government of that day as the present Premier; and the belittlement was directed towards those of our actions which the hon. gentleman now says we ought to have done. The Labour Government had the moral courage and the foresight to establish a shipping enterprise, a sawmilling enterprise, and State enterprises generally; and for that reason they were thrown out of office. The moment their successors stepped in, they adopted precisely the same policy; and the only excuse they had for doing so was, "We found those things there, and we had to carry them on and make them successful and extend them." Could any greater laudation be bestowed upon the policy of the Labour party when in office? The State enterprises have been found to be in the right place, and to fill the bill, and must be extended. And then those who put the Labour

Government out of office for establishing those State enterprises go there and enjoy the fruits of the Labour policy.

The Premier: Fruits do you call them?

Hon. P. Collier: There have been substantial profits from the ships, you know.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, and there is the probability of profits from all these enterprises. They are found to be public necessities when the present Government take office. And yet members now on the Treasury bench tried to fool the people by besmirching these State trading concerns. There is another good reason why the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition should be carried. We want to return to our old principle and get the Estimates before the House as soon as possible. If we give the Government supply to the end of September, goodness knows how long we may wait for the Estimates. We should have had the Estimates now. When Parliament went into recess we were promised that the Estimates would be brought down early in July. We were promised repeatedly that we should meet in July to discuss the Estimates.

The Premier: Who said that?

Hon. T. WALKER: Hon. members on the Ministerial benches said so at the close of last session, and it was so understood. It has been repeatedly insisted on in this Chamber that we should have the Estimates in July.

The Premier: In July? You never had them here until much later.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, we did. What paltry excuse does the Premier offer for not bringing down the Estimates in August? That we have had a civil service strike. That has been the cause of the delay. The Premier makes that an excuse for not having called Parliament together earlier. Surely he must see that it is a childish subterfuge. For that matter Parliament could have met while the service strike was on. In fact, it might have been advisable for Parliament to sit while the strike was in progress.

The Premier: You would not have got your questions answered then.

Hon. T. WALKER: The civil service strike was a great event, an unprecedented event, one in which the representatives of the people ought to have been consulted. The time of the strike was one of those times when Parliament is an absolute necessity. But Parliament was ignored; the date of meeting was put off; and now by this Supply Bill the Premier is trying to put off the bringing down of the Estimates.

The Premier: No, I am not.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is absolutely what it is.

The Premier: No, it is not.

Hon. T. WALKER: How soon may we expect the Estimates if we grant supply up to the end of September? Give us a few supplies like this and the country will be governed by Supply Bills. The House will have no say in a general review of the Government's policy. Two million pounds at a time are to be spent without Parliament knowing the details of such expenditure. Whilst we

shall shortly be facing our masters, the people, at the far-end of the session we shall be called upon to discuss the important questions raised by the Estimates. Most of the money by then will have been spent, and we shall be unable to alter a single figure without doing injustice in some quarter or other. It is the wrong way to conduct the affairs of the country. Let us have business methods and let us know what we are doing. To govern for three months at a time by Supply Bills is to govern in a blindfold way.

Mr. Pickering: Is this a new practice?

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, and it is getting worse. The Labour Government did try to live up to their honest engagements, and keep faith with Parliament and place a knowledge of their doings before the general public.

The Premier: They were full of merit.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, in that respect. The Government are drifting into the worst kind of negligence, apathy and indifference in regard to the vital necessities of the State so far as the finances are concerned. It is absolutely necessary that we should know from day to day what we are spending, and it is one of the most important principles of responsible government that there should be strict confidence between the Government and the representatives of the people. We should be told what the Government propose, and should keep alert as to their policy, but we are treated as if we were nonentities and as if we were here merely to vote "aye" to anything proposed by the Government. By the amendment of the leader of the Opposition we shall be saying to the Government, "We will make you keep faith with the people; we will not allow you to do any work that you please, but we will compel you to render an account of your doings to your masters, and will not permit you, further than is necessary, to go on in this indifferent way." In effect, we on this side of the House will not allow the Government to go on any longer than the end of this month.

The Premier: We will see about that.

Hon. T. WALKER: There may be servile followers of the Government who will not check them, but the Opposition are determined to keep them to their duty.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: The Premier, in his capacity of Treasurer, might have avoided a considerable amount of criticism if he had taken hon. members into his confidence when moving the second reading of the Supply Bill. This Chamber is very jealous of the fact that it controls the finances of the country, and when the Treasurer asks for confirmation of expenditure, which the Government intend to make, he should take hon. members into his confidence. We have a somewhat unusual position here. Last year the Treasurer, when moving the Supply Bill, informed the House that the supply was based on the expenditure of the previous year. The expenditure last year was over six million pounds, and we are now asked for a supply of over two million pounds, which is in excess of the rate of expenditure for last year. The Premier should inform hon. members how this expenditure is

likely to be incurred, and I regret he did not follow the usual precedent and take hon. members into his confidence. We should certainly know how the Government propose to spend something like eight million pounds in the twelve months. I do not mind the Government spending money in directions that will be of advantage to the country, but a Supply Bill of this kind foreshadows an expenditure very much in excess of last year's expenditure, and it is only due to us that we should be given the details of such expenditure.

Mr. PICKERING: In reply to the leader of the Opposition, I would inform him that I do not place myself in the same position as members of the Country party in the Federal Parliament. In the Federal Parliament there is no coalition or understanding between the Country party and the Government, but in this State, owing to certain exigencies, the Country party coalesced with the Government.

Mr. Munsie: There is no necessity for a coalition in the Federal Parliament, because they are all one.

Mr. PICKERING: They are not all one.

Mr. Munsie: There is no Country party in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. PICKERING: We coalesced here to such an extent that we have three members of the Country party in the Cabinet, and it is not to be expected that we would take up the same stand as members of the Country party in the Federal House. The position of the Country party here is in the melting pot so far as the Government are concerned.

Hon. P. Collier: You are taking instructions from an outside body now, are you?

Mr. PICKERING: I am speaking for myself. When I first became a member of the Country party, I did so in the belief that it would be a distinct party.

Hon. P. Collier: They have drifted somewhat since.

Mr. PICKERING: Matters in connection with the war warranted the attitude I adopted in that regard, but now that the war is over our position can be reconsidered.

Hon. P. Collier: Reconsidered by an outside body.

Mr. PICKERING: Our position can be reconsidered by our organisation in conjunction with ourselves.

Mr. O'Loughlin: I thought we were the only party which took instructions like that.

Hon. P. Collier: To-day you are a supporter of the Government, and the day after to-morrow you may be an opponent.

Mr. PICKERING: I may be an interested party.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know what this has to do with the motion before the Chair.

Mr. PICKERING: Being a supporter of the Government, I support them in this instance.

Hon. P. Collier: If you, Sir, knew the ramifications of the party to which the hon. member belongs, you would understand.

**Mr. PICKERING:** The ramifications of our party may be a bit obscure for the moment.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The motion before the Chair is to reduce this item by £686,333.

**Mr. PICKERING:** I will speak to that. I think, with the member for Moore (Sir Henry Lefroy), more information should have been given to the House when a vote of this nature was brought before us. I regret that the Government have not seen fit to supply the information as fully as we think we are entitled to receive it.

**The PREMIER:** The Committee have not been denied information. All the information that is usually given has been supplied. It would be impossible to give all the details. The amount may seem large, but when hon. members realise that the soldier settlement scheme is included in it, it will be recognised that the amount must be larger than usual. Hon. members know that when supply is asked for certain information is furnished. That information has been given to hon. members to-day.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** If you were on this side you would require full details.

**The PREMIER:** No. Every hon. member knows that just now we are spending a considerable sum of money on the work of settling returned soldiers on the land.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** I gather that the complaint of the member for Moore is that not sufficient information has been placed before him to enable him to say whether he should agree to the vote. In effect he says, "I do not object to granting the Government three months' supply but I certainly think more information should be given to hon. members." We have been told repeatedly that by increasing taxation the deficit would be reduced. The increased taxation has produced, as the leader of the Opposition pointed out last night, no less a sum than £400,000. That additional taxation was required, we were told, for the purpose of reducing the deficit. Instead of that being done, however, we have gone still further back in our finances, and now we are asked to vote over two millions of money in the dark, in fact, to give the Government a blank cheque, and in spite of the fact that though they had a considerably increased revenue last year, they went nearly a million pounds to the bad. If there had not been increased taxation the Government would not have had the additional £400,000 to squander. Those further burdens were added when it was pointed out that it was necessary to reduce the deficit, and every person in the State in receipt of a salary of £100 and upwards was compelled to contribute to the revenue. I want to repeat to-night—I sounded a warning last year—that the more taxation we impose the larger will be the deficit of the present Government. It is fooling the people; it is drawing money from their pockets so that

the Government may squander more. The increased taxation has not reduced the deficit one bit. I admit that there are heavy demands on the Government, but it is necessary that there should be a Government in power able to say "No." It is all very well for people to come along and declare that they want this, that, and the other thing. The Government, however, should be able to say "No."

**The Premier:** We have to say "No" far too often.

**The Attorney General:** Can you say "No" to the Arbitration Court award?

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** That has not accounted for this great difference. Let us take the position in regard to the water supplies in the country last year. Look at the reductions which were made there in the face of a loss. They were made because pressure was brought to bear on the Minister, and in the latest report there is no record of the receipts and expenditure as was always previously disclosed. Hon. members are being bamboozled by the Government. It is about time that we realised the position we are in, and it is about time also that action was taken to curb the expenditure of the Government. The Government should have brought down a Bill to provide for two months' supply, and some notification should have been given as to when the Estimates were likely to be brought down. Of course the strike is going to be given as an excuse for the delay. I want, however, to impress on members that we are asked to vote for over two millions of money without having any information as to how it is to be expended. Last year the Government went to the bad to the extent of a million pounds.

**The Premier:** We did not.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** No less a sum than £400,000 was collected by additional taxation for the purpose of reducing the deficit, and the deficit is higher than it was before. The only thing to do is to show the Government that we intend to have something to say in regard to the position of the State.

**Mr. MUNSIE:** According to the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) the members of the Country party evidently do not know exactly what their position is. Therefore, I suggest to the Premier that it would be wise to adjourn the debate until the members of that party know where they are. To-morrow they will know how they stand and then they will be able to vote conscientiously. I object to casting my vote in favour of a Supply Bill to grant £2,059,000 to the present Government, who have, during the last seven months, absolutely thrown away £29,000 of the taxpayers' money.

**The Premier:** On what?

**Mr. MUNSIE:** The sum of £1,728 10s. 9d. was thrown away on a ridiculous prosecution of goldfields men.

The Attorney General: That was a necessary proceeding.

Mr. MUNSIE: It was absolutely unnecessary expenditure, and the Attorney General knows it. Everyone knows that it was not possible to get a jury to convict any one of those men prosecuted on the evidence which was submitted. Why, therefore, was the prosecution, which cost £1,728 10s. 9d. undertaken? During the discussion on the Estimates last year I, on four occasions, refused to take the word of the Premier. I wanted to get a definite assurance from him that no money would be paid out of the Treasury as compensation for the men who worked on the Fremantle wharf until Parliament had an opportunity of discussing the matter.

The Attorney General. And starve them during the six months.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want to tell the Attorney General that I know of at least three of those men who have boasted of the fact that they each got between £70 and £80 as compensation and took a trip by train to the Eastern States and then returned to Western Australia and are at the present time still out of work. Are the Government feeding those men now? I would like to know. The Government fed them for a considerable time.

The Attorney General: Because your fellows would not let them work.

Mr. MUNSIE: It is a damned pity they ever came back. The Government spent £17,000 illegally in connection with this matter; they spent it behind the back of Parliament, and now they come along and ask hon. members to vote them over two millions for supply without stating how the money is to be spent. I want to know how it is to be spent before my vote will be recorded. Again, the Government last year spent £6,754 7s. 6d. in the payment of special constables at Kalgoorlie, at the rate of 12s. 6d. a day, when there was no occasion whatever for their employment.

Mr. Thomson: That is why some of the fellows up there were nearly kicked to death.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is an absolute untruth. If any prosecution was rendered necessary in connection with the trouble that took place in Kalgoorlie the one man who should have been prosecuted was Morrison, the leader writer of the "West Australian," who was responsible for inflammatory articles containing absolute untruths, recording things that never took place. He is the man who should have been prosecuted, if any prosecution was justified. I could not help reading one of the articles, because it was published under a three-column headline and in big black print, about an awful riot that was supposed to have taken place in Kalgoorlie. The riot consisted of a man getting a punch on the nose; it was a pity he did not get two. That is all the harm that was done. I hope I

have satisfied the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) as to where some of the money went, which I contend was spent illegally. The procedure adopted by the Government with regard to the appointment of the Nationalist Workers' Commission was wrong. If the truth could be ascertained it would be learned that the Commissioner was instructed to grant compensation. It was not a question whether the evidence would prove whether or not the nationalists were entitled to compensation. The Commissioner himself, at the second sitting of the Commission, said he was there for the purpose of granting compensation, and he had to find out how much.

Mr. Duff: Had not they been promised compensation?

Mr. MUNSIE: Who promised them compensation?

Mr. Duff: Mr. Colebatch.

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Jackson did, I think.

Mr. Duff: On the strength of the Federal Government's promise.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you the extra Honorary Minister?

Mr. MUNSIE: Mr. Jackson, the solicitor for the Employers' Federation, who was responsible for the employment of these men on the wharf, did say, I believe, that they would receive compensation. It is his business to disrupt the trades unions so far as he can by bringing in these bogus organisations. He got one in there. He promised that they would receive compensation, and the Government handed out £17,000 without any justification whatever. The request of the Premier for supply to the extent of £2,059,000 is, to use a sporting phrase, "over the odds." If as the member for Moore pointed out he had asked for supply amounting to one quarter of the sum actually expended last year, there would have been some justification for the request. If we take his request as representing a three months' basis, the Premier intends to expend this year over eight millions of money. Members have a right to know whether the Government intend to increase the expenditure to that extent during this financial year. It is the duty of the Premier to tell us how he intends to spend the money. This is only a fair proposition, seeing that to-morrow the Government might not enjoy the confidence of a majority of the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would advise him to get it through to-night.

Mr. MUNSIE: Why should we vote them £2,059,000 when to-morrow they might not have the confidence of the House? I hope members will agree to the reduction moved by the leader of the Opposition.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A good many red herrings have been drawn across the track to-night.

Mr. Green: And another one is coming now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I would like to summarise for members on this side of the House, at any rate, the arguments ad-



vanced as to why this vote should be reduced. It is alleged that between £20,000 and £30,000 has been spent without the authority of Parliament, and therefore the Committee would be justified in reducing supply by one-third, which would amount to £700,000.

Mr. Munsie: There is £84,000 over and above that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is alleged that £30,000 has been spent without the authority of Parliament, but when we come to analyse the figures in that amount, it will be obvious to anyone that this is simply put forward as a trap. It is not put forward on sound, logical arguments at all. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) instanced two items.

Mr. Munsie: Three.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I shall deal with two of them. One was that an expenditure of £1,700 by the Crown Law Department in the prosecution of certain individuals who were committed for trial by the Resident Magistrate at Kalgoorlie—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wish you had kept him there.

Mr. Munsie: No, they never got a hearing in Kalgoorlie.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They were committed by the Resident Magistrate at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. P. Collier: No, they were committed in Perth.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is so, but it does not make the slightest difference to my argument. The Resident Magistrate committed them to stand their trial in the Supreme Court. Now it is advanced that because those men, who were committed to take their trial, were acquitted by the jury, therefore that money has been thrown away and spent without the authority of Parliament. Where is this sort of thing going to end? According to the argument advanced, when any man is committed for trial at the criminal sessions by proper authority and as a result of the Government carrying out their duty, the cost incurred represents money spent without the authority of Parliament, and therefore the Government's Supply Bill should be reduced by £700,000. Is that a logical argument to advance in favour of a reduction? Take another argument—

Mr. Lambert: Why did not you do the same thing when a lot of drunken larrikins smashed up hotel property in Kalgoorlie?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Lambert: No notice was taken of it. It was a most disgraceful affair.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is said that £17,000 was paid pursuant to the award of a Royal Commissioner. I do not wish to say anything which might cause irritation to members, and I do not wish to remind members of what unfortunately took place in this State many months ago, but there can be no doubt that a majority of the men who shared that £17,000 were unable to earn their living, and were deliberately prevented

from earning their living for a very considerable period.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is not so.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I believe that a majority of them were. I am not blaming anyone, and I do not wish to cast a reflection on anyone. I am speaking of facts as they appear to me. A majority of those men—

Mr. Munsie: They all wanted to start businesses.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A majority of those men were unable to and were prevented from earning a living.

Mr. Munsie: They would not do a day's work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A Minister of the Crown promised that they should be compensated and when the Commissioner was appointed to inquire into the matter and assess compensation was it reasonable to expect the Government, before paying that compensation, to wait until the House met six months afterwards? During that time many of the men would be starving. I do not desire to exaggerate the facts at all. I believe there were very few indeed who did not deserve the compensation they received. These two arguments are advanced as authority for reducing the Supply vote by £700,000. I hope members will appreciate them at their true worth.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I had no intention of returning to the subject but for the specious arguments, if they may be called arguments, of the Attorney General. The Attorney General has given the House some information to-night which apparently he and his colleagues deliberately and wilfully withheld from the House last session. He has now stated specifically that this payment of compensation to the Nationalist workers was made in pursuance of a promise by a Minister of the Crown—presumably a promise made by the Minister for Education who was Premier of the State at the time the men withdrew from the wharf. All through last session it was denied in this House that any promise whatever had been made for compensation to be paid to these people.

Mr. Jones: Absolutely.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is the way in which Ministers trick or wilfully deceive members of the House. After a promise had been made that compensation would be paid to these men, this House should have been informed of it, and the fact should not have been denied, as it was repeatedly denied when the subject was under discussion last session. The Minister for Mines for one declared that there was no promise whatever, that the subject was entirely open, and that the functions of the Royal Commissioner were to ascertain whether the Government were liable for compensation, and if so, to what extent. Now we are informed by the Attorney General that there was a pledge by a Minister for the payment of compensation, and that the only function of the Royal Commissioner was to assess the amount that ought to be paid.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Who was the Minister?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not concerned who the Minister was. That is the fact. I am glad that the Attorney General, thinking he had a good reply to make to the arguments of the member for Hannans, has given us this information. The point made by the Attorney General was that, because this amount of £17,000 was paid improperly, the Supply Bill should not be reduced by £700,000. That is a point on which a trained lawyer might succeed before a bush justice of the peace, but it will not carry much weight in this House. My colleague did not advance the argument that because £30,000 was paid in such a manner, therefore the Supply Bill should be reduced by £700,000. He advanced the argument in support of the contention that the Government are not entitled to supply beyond what is necessary. This is evidence of the fact that the Government are not to be trusted with unlimited amounts of money by way of supply. The member for Hannans, however, did not say that because £30,000 had been improperly spent, the amount should be reduced by £700,000.

Mr. Munsie: And I did not infer it, either.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. That is a cheap kind of argument. It is evidence of the fact that when Ministers deliberately deceive the House and deliberately withhold information from the House, the Government are not entitled to supply beyond the amount necessary for the services for the time being. I would not be moving to reduce the Supply Bill if the Government had presented to the House any indication of a policy in regard to the financial situation. Here we are nearing the end of August; nearly two months of the financial year have gone. We have started with the month of July in the same old way—a deficit of £106,000. If the Government had met the House and said they wanted three months' supply pending the introduction of the Estimates, and that in the meantime, in order to meet the financial situation as a result of which we have a deficit of £700,000 each year, their policy was to introduce taxation of this kind or that kind and to exercise economy in this or the other direction, then I would have said that the Government were entitled to three months' supply. But it is altogether a different thing to be asked to vote this enormous sum when the Government have not said one word as to how they propose to meet the deficit or upon what lines they mean to proceed. A Government absolutely bankrupt of any financial policy, at all events so far as we know, with eight months of the year gone, ask us to vote blindly £2,000,000 for three months' supply. That is why we are moving to reduce the amount. By the end of August the Government surely can propound a financial policy and let the country know what they propose to do. For that purpose three weeks' supply should suffice. This Chamber would be false to the interests of the country if we signed a blank cheque covering the expenditure of the Government to the end of September.

Mr. MUNSIE: I must say a word or two in reply to the Attorney General. I would not have spoken now had not the hon. gentleman begun with the statement that the Government were being accused as regards the expenditure of money for the prosecution of 12 men who were committed for trial by a magistrate in Kalgoorlie. Probably there are some members of this Committee who do not know what really took place. Had the Attorney General's statement been correct, I would not have raised the question of the expenditure of the £1,700 at all. But what really happened was that extra police and detectives sent from the coast to Kalgoorlie were going about from midnight until 3 a.m. to the houses of various men and taking the men out of their beds and lodging them in the Kalgoorlie lockup. The men were refused bail of any kind. The next morning they were brought before the Kalgoorlie magistrate, who refused point blank to hear the case; and as a consequence all these men were sent to Perth in order that it might be determined whether or not they should be committed for trial. The bulk of the £1,700 represents money expended in fees to bring witnesses for the accused from Kalgoorlie to Perth. If the Attorney General had had any backbone, or if the Government had had any backbone, the case would have been heard in Kalgoorlie, and the cost instead of being swollen to £1,700, would not have amounted to much more than £17. The men should never have been sent to Perth for trial; they should certainly have been tried in Kalgoorlie. Why should 30 or 40 witnesses be dragged all the way from Kalgoorlie to Perth to give evidence in favour of the accused? I may mention that about 700 men offered to give evidence for the accused. And then the Attorney General tried to convey to this Committee that the Kalgoorlie magistrate had committed these men for trial.

The Attorney General: I altered that afterwards.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, after many members had received a wrong impression. With regard to the amount of £20,000, I advanced that expenditure as a reason, in conjunction with the other reasons such as the expenditure of £80,000 on the purchase of saw mills—

The Minister for Works: That was not illegal.

Mr. MUNSIE: A few years ago it was "State steamers" morning, noon, and night from the present Minister for Works. He was never done talking about the Labour Government's illegal purchase of a steamer. However, I applaud the attitude of the Minister for Works in encouraging State enterprises, which he was elected to oppose. I rejoice in his conversion to a reasonable policy in the interests of the people of Western Australia. The member for Moore said that the Premier had given the Committee no information. During the nine years I have sat in this Chamber I have never before heard a Treasurer introduce a Supply Bill with so little information as the present Premier has

done to-night. However, that is in conformity with the measure of information accorded to us by the Government right through the piece. The Governor's Speech is a long document, but there is nothing in it. There was nothing in the Premier's speech to-night, except the amount of money that he wanted. Before I vote supply to the present Government even for the purpose of encouraging soldier settlement on the land, I want some more definite information from the Premier. The Governor's Speech would make one believe that the Premier had settled 3,000 extra soldiers on the land. But the Premier, when challenged by the leader of the Opposition last night, admitted that two-thirds of those soldiers were men who had bought improved farms. Even if all the money asked for was for the purpose of soldier settlement, I would support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. We want to know how many estates have been bought. It is only fair that we should oppose the granting of three months' supply especially when the Premier is asking for about £600,000 more than he expended during the same period last year.

The Premier: No.

Mr. MUNSIE: I understand that some of the money is to come from loan funds, but why does not the Premier give the Committee more information? It is only fair that we should ask the Premier, just as he asked a former Treasurer, "What are you going to do with the money?" On the basis of his expenditure for the current three months, I should not wonder if the Premier required eight millions for the year.

The Premier: You had about eight millions.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Labour Government had eight millions, they expended the money well, and in the interests of the people, whereas the Premier has squandered the six millions he has had.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against	..	10
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#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Roche
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Jones	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Draper	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Duff	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Foley	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Veryard
Sir H. B. Lefroy	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Maley	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Supply Bill introduced, etc.

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill was introduced providing for the expenditure of £944,000 from Consolidated Revenue Fund, £750,000 from General Loan Fund, £50,000 from the Government Property Sales Fund, £15,000 from the Land Improvement Loan Fund, and £300,000 from the Public Account for the purposes of temporary advances to be made by the Colonial Treasurer.

Bill passed through all stages without debate and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [8.55]: The leader of the Opposition has found fault with the Governor's Speech. One would not expect otherwise of a leader of the Opposition. It is usual for the Opposition to say there is nothing in the Speech, and no life in it. I will deal with the objections raised by the leader of the Opposition before I sit down, and hope to be able to show the House that in every one of his objections the leader of the Opposition is absolutely wrong and wide of the mark.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Every one?

The PREMIER: Yes. In reply to the remarks which have been made regarding the extravagance and mismanagement of the Government, I would say that the policy of the Government suits the country very well.

Mr. Green: It is for the country to say that.

The PREMIER: I think the country does say it, and that every member of this Chamber should say it. We have had a busy year, and a year in which there has been a lot of reconstruction. Much constructive work has been done by the Government. In the north of this State a great deal of work has been done during the past year. In the south-west we have had men busy at work in the district represented by the member for Forrest, and these men have been classifying the land for survey and subdivision, and settlement of the country. We have been equally busy in the eastern portion of the south-west. During the year there have been many gold discoveries, some of which should prove of great advantage to the country.

Mr. Munsie: Is this due to the policy of the Government?

The PREMIER: Every one of our industries shows a considerable improvement. Timber to-day is worth more than double its previous value. If we only had the shipping we could export large quantities of our local timbers.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It was not the action of the Government that raised the price of tim-

ber, but this was due to the world-wide shortage.

The PREMIER: The fact remains that the price has gone up.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Of course, so long as the Government will not take the credit—

The PREMIER: We take credit for everything that has happened during the past 12 months. When discussing the financial position of the country, I want hon. members to bear in mind that during the first six months of the year the business of the country was interfered with by shipping troubles. There were no ships, and as a result our activities were more or less stagnated. We have, however, done much during the past 12 months. After all, it is not so much the work of the Government that counts as the influence of the Government. The influence of the Government has been good. Private enterprise is active, and there is no unemployment with us to-day. Fifteen months ago, I suppose, there were two or three thousand men out of work, and in addition we had 11,000 soldiers coming back to us. It is surely somewhat of a test of government that unemployment is done away with. When work is plentiful, and capital is sufficient to keep our industries going and establish new ones, all will be fairly well.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What new industries have you established?

The PREMIER: There are many new ones. During the year we have had a very considerable amount of land development, and there has been a considerable increase in the area put under crop. All along the line we may say that we have never had more solid prosperity ahead of us than we have now. There never was a time when the wealth of the country was more widespread, and when the people generally were more prosperous.

Mr. Munsie: Then we have seen bad times indeed, if we were never more prosperous than we are now.

The PREMIER: The State was never more prosperous than it is to-day.

Mr. Munsie: The working classes were never worse off.

Mr. Lutey: They are starving now.

Mr. Munsie: They cannot get enough to eat or enough clothing for their children.

The PREMIER: The people generally have never had such an opportunity for employment as they have to-day. At any rate, they have never had such good wages.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That is the trouble. They are worse off than when their wages were 7s. a day.

The PREMIER: I admit that the cost of living is high. When I came into office, I received deputations asking me to find employment. Hon. members will recollect that there was trouble at the time. At that time it seemed almost impossible to find employment for all of those who were out of work. It was due, I believe, to some extent to the influence of the Government, and to private people who were moved to provide the opportunity for work, that the unemployment question was so greatly relieved.

Hon. P. Collier: The unemployment was due to the large number of soldiers who were coming back, who could not be absorbed as fast as they came back.

The PREMIER: They have all been absorbed now.

Hon. P. Collier: But they could not be absorbed as fast as they were coming back.

The PREMIER: We have heard a good deal about the deficit. It is true that it is far larger than one likes to see it, but I wish to point out that of the £668,000 a sum of £319,000 had to be set aside as a sinking fund contribution. A great deal of the revenue that we have heard so much about from the leader of the Opposition has come from the business undertakings and trading concerns. Last year this amounted to £3,181,938 from business undertakings, and £175,605 from trading concerns. This left a clear balance of revenue, including earnings, of £2,505,958. The ordinary expenditure was £1,883,299, and on business undertakings, and trading concerns the total was £2,586,388, while the interest and sinking fund charges came to £2,062,035. I wish the House to realise that the ordinary clear revenue of the Government is sufficient to meet the ordinary expenses of Government. The cost of the borrowed money with the earnings set against it, leaves a shortage of £635,000. There we have the deficit accounted for. It is a serious matter and the position is one that we should try to rectify.

Mr. Munsie: What are you going to do to rectify it?

The PREMIER: The business undertakings can be made to pay, and I suppose they can when the shipping is sufficient and we are able to sell all the timber that we can cut.

Mr. Munsie: You can sell three times as many bricks as you make, but you will not make them.

The PREMIER: The position will be improved. We had troubles during the first half of the year, troubles over which we had no control. For the six months ended 31st December, 1918, the deficit was £406,000. In the corresponding six months of 1919 the total deficit was £603,000. For the first half of the year 1919 the total was £245,000, and for the first half of the current year it was £64,473. I would like hon. members to understand that the difference of £180,000 between the first six months of 1919 and the corresponding period of 1920 is due to the increased activities on the part of various departments, and also because of the increased freight which was available. When we come to decide what is to be done, it will be seen how difficult it is to determine how much taxation we will need to impose. I venture to say that if business had followed its usual course we should have had a very much reduced deficit. It is not too much to say that the deficit would have been a couple of hundred thousand pounds less than it is at the present time. The leader of the Opposition had something to say with regard to increased taxation. I stated last night that the in-

creased taxation is due entirely to increased prosperity. There has been no increase in the amount of the taxes during the past year. We collected on the same basis as in the previous year.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not assert otherwise; I said that the increase had taken place during the past four years.

Mr. Munsie: The National Government were responsible for the whole of the increases.

The PREMIER: That is so. I do not deny that the increase is due to the Act passed over two years ago. If we compare last year with the previous year it will be apparent to members that something must have happened to increase the amount collected. The increase was not collected purely on the same amount of income.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You cut out the exemption and included many more people.

The PREMIER: The exemptions were cut out before last year.

Mr. Munsie: There was not a great difference between last year and the year before.

The PREMIER: Yes, a considerable difference in the amount collected. The increase is due to the fact that people had larger incomes on which to pay taxation. Probate duty was much higher than usual, and every other form of direct taxation showed a marked improvement. Will not that be accepted as evidence that the country is more prosperous?

Mr. O'Loughlen: The working men have motor cars now.

The PREMIER: What I have said is a fact, and there is proof of it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Everything is artificial today.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Good incomes are no indication of prosperity in these times.

The PREMIER: I wish hon. members would realise that the increased taxation is due to increased prosperity. It is true, as the leader of the Opposition claims, that in 1920 there was collected £400,000 more than in 1916, and the hon. member was perfectly justified in claiming that that increase was due in a measure to the increased taxation. We have heard a good deal about taxation, and I am surprised at members opposite offering to support any increase except of course an increased land tax. Everybody else must escape except the man on the land.

Hon. P. Collier: Everybody else has had it in the last four years except the man on the land.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows full well that the land owner is already fairly heavily taxed. His income is taxed, and I suppose there is no member of the community who pays more than does the farmer. He is taxed not on the actual money he makes, but on the increase in his stock, on the money he spends in keeping his farm in order and in keeping himself up to date, and in every pos-

sible way that a man can and must spend money on his holdings.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is not a Country party member in the House to say "Hear, hear" to that.

The PREMIER: He has to pay the Federal tax, the State tax, the road board tax, water and drainage board tax, and in fact there is no man in the country so heavily taxed as the farmer. The country roads are entirely maintained by the farmers. All the city dwellers travel over the roads made by the farmers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Everyone pays for the upkeep of the roads.

The PREMIER: No. Very little Government subsidy is paid; almost all the money comes out of the pockets of the farmers. In one road board district I am told the road board taxes are nearly three times as high as the State land tax. The leader of the Opposition said that the increased railway freight might have been avoided if we imposed an increased land tax to cover interest and sinking fund on the railways. I do not know what the farmers will have to say to that proposition.

Hon. P. Collier: The farmers' representatives have already supported it.

The PREMIER: The loss last year on the railways was £400,000, and the interest and sinking fund to be paid is £830,000. The present land tax is £47,000, so it can be imagined what sort of a tax would have to be imposed to cover interest and sinking fund on the railway loan expenditure. My friend calmly supports that proposal.

Hon. P. Collier: The 300 or 400 farmers' representatives in conference should know what is best for them, and they decided last year to support it.

The PREMIER: As Treasurer I should welcome the suggestion, because it would get me out of all my troubles. There would be no deficit if such a tax were imposed. I believe that the additional charge on farmers' produce last year came to £39,000, and the increased payments by the farmers totalled £59,000. The increase was 1s. per ton, no matter how long or short the distance.

Hon. P. Collier: It was as high as 3s. in some cases.

The PREMIER: I am talking about farmers' produce. The people in the city pay their fair proportion of course, but the people who tell the farmers that they should not pay increased railway rates, notwithstanding that there is a deficit of £400,000 on the operations of the railways, are those who should be made to pay. All I can say is that it is quite impossible for the farmers of this State to pay by way of land tax sufficient to cover that shortage.

Mr. Lutey: What about city landowners?

The PREMIER: They would have to pay their share, of course. There are two reasons for taxing land, one to get revenue, and the other to force the land into use. I do not think there are any persons buying land who

are unwilling to improve it and to use it to the fullest possible extent.

Mr. Willcock: Oh, no!

The PREMIER: The man in the country is just as active and enterprising and energetic as the man in the town. Let us look at the work that has been done during the last nine years, and we must remember that the last five years practically were years of war. Between 1910 and 1919 the area of cleared land increased from 1,571,000 acres to 4,365,000 acres. That represents a considerable amount of work for the men on the land to have done in the short space of nine years, especially when we remember that five years were years of war and that hundreds of farmers left their holdings and enlisted. If the land is to be improved, we must have cheap money and very much cheaper fencing material than we have been able to get for some years past. Sufficient labour is essential, and there is not sufficient labour available in the country to-day to carry out the improvements to the extent we would like.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are not likely to get it.

The PREMIER: We hope to get it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Of course you hope.

The PREMIER: And with the assistance of the hon. member, I think it will be forthcoming. In addition, the operations of the Agricultural Bank must play some part. We can get the land which is unoccupied and unused either by purchase or resumption. All land ought to be used, particularly the land near to the railways.

Mr. Munsie: How about taxing those who do not use it?

The PREMIER: If we taxed only those who did not use their land, that would be another proposition. For the present I am merely discussing the land tax which it has been proposed should cover the loss on our railways, and which would also compel people to put their holdings to use. We know that a vast area of land is held under conditional purchase leases and that improvements are compulsory. Members who talk about the land not being used should remember that the men on the land will this year produce a crop which should be worth £8,000,000.

Mr. Willcock: Spread all over the country.

The PREMIER: This wealth will be produced by men who are doing their very best. There is no class doing fairer or better work than the men on the land. Dealing with economies, it is almost unnecessary to mention that we determined some time ago to appoint a business manager in connection with the institutions under the Colonial Secretary's Department.

Hon. P. Collier: Cutting down a few charity votes.

The PREMIER: He has not done that, and there is no intention of doing it.

Hon. P. Collier: Twopence here and threepence there.

The PREMIER: It is not a case of twopence here and threepence there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is he the Minister there now? He has more power than the Minister. I told him to go to blazes, anyhow.

Hon. P. Collier: He has superseded the Minister.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is only robbing the poor children. Once we get over there out he will go quick and lively.

The PREMIER: You are not over here yet.

Mr. Munsie: We will be after next March.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a great economy to start on starving children.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will show where children are being starved—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have shown where I have written about it.

The PREMIER: It will be rectified.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is unanswerable.

The PREMIER: This business manager has been appointed in connection with the various institutions, but has nothing to do with the children referred to by the hon. member.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is doing it.

The PREMIER: In regard to the small departments, we have effected a saving of £15,800 for the year, and we have an increase in revenue of £12,000. I hope the saving will be on that basis for the future. It has nothing to do with the amounts paid to the children. These economies have been effected by the better management of the institutions.

Hon. P. Collier: His first work was devoted to the charities.

The PREMIER: Which branch of the charities?

Hon. P. Collier: Children and old people.

Mr. Munsie: Cutting out rations to old age pensioners.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. member will have an opportunity to address the House later.

The PREMIER: Children outside are getting more per week than ever before.

The Minister for Mines: We will read the Premier's interjections with interest to-morrow.

Hon. P. Collier: He is not having so bad a time as I had last night.

The PREMIER: Members say we should practice economy. During the regime of the late Colonial Treasurer inquiries were made and, partly as a result of those inquiries Mr. Simpson is now doing the work of managing these hospitals and institutions under the Colonial Secretary. There are other economies which should be practised, which economies are more or less connected with our relations with the Federal Government. No doubt duplications do exist, but departments have been duplicated through no fault of the State Government. The duplications are due to the Federal Government. In many cases the duplications are small and are hardly noticed by the public, but so far as possible we hope to prevent these duplications and to use the State agencies to do the work for the Federal Government.

Among the departments where duplications have occurred are the Statistician's and the Electoral departments, and lately the Federal Government have opened a sub-Treasury in Perth.

Mr. Munsie: The work in connection with the soldiers' homes could have been done by our Workers' Homes Board.

The PREMIER: Yes. These duplications are all charges against the people.

Mr. Munsie: An absolute squandering of money.

The PREMIER: We have taken up the matter with the Federal Government.

Mr. Munsie: We have been told that for the last seven years.

Hon. P. Collier: Ten years.

The PREMIER: But we are getting nearer to a solution now.

Mr. Foley: If there is any money in it, the Federal Government will have it.

The PREMIER: I do not suppose that members wish me to discuss at any length the operations of the Industries Assistance Board. I have already told members that as a result of the payments by the farmers under the board, we have a balance in hand of two millions of money. This board has been in operation for some time and has done excellent work. This year 555,823 acres will be cropped as a result of the board's work.

Hon. P. Collier: That is another good policy which we started.

The PREMIER: It was not quite so good in the hon. member's time as it is now. Last year the area cropped was 486,000 acres, and we have had delivered to us 3,667,964 bushels of wheat. Wheat now is worth money. The balance to be carried forward this year is £618,182, so that the men under the board have paid off a very considerable sum apart from their interest. We have heard something from the leader of the Opposition about soldier settlement. I told the House last night that over 5,000 men had applied for land. The actual number of applicants to date is 5,494. We have settled 3,078 men and have approved of loans totalling £2,767,742. We have made advances to the extent of £1,842,845, in addition to which Lands Department expenditure represents £501,132. The average expenditure to date has been £761, but when the authorisation is exhausted, the average commitment, including Lands expenditure will be £1,062. To-day the Federal Government owe us over a million of money on account of soldier settlement.

Mr. Munsie: You need to be careful that they do not owe much more. They might not pay.

The PREMIER: After much negotiation, we have made satisfactory arrangements with the Commonwealth Government for settling 3,100 men and, for public works necessitated by the settlement of these men, we are to draw £4,600,000. This money has not been spent. The balance of £1,250,000 can be utilised for resumption and for

works in connection with soldier settlement. We have authority to settle an unlimited number of men over and above the 3,100, and the Commonwealth has agreed to advance a flat rate of £1,000 per man. The arrangement with the Commonwealth Government is very satisfactory and very liberal, particularly as we receive 2½ per cent. reduction in the rate of interest, which might otherwise be charged for five years on these moneys to cover loss on repurchased land.

Mr. Willcock: The State finds the other money.

The PREMIER: No, that is the average.

Mr. Troy: Do you think £1,000 is sufficient?

The PREMIER: The authorisation to date is £1,062. It is sufficient with the money we have in hand.

Mr. Troy: Are we purchasing estates?

The PREMIER: Yes; it will cover them. The leader of the Opposition is anxious that a return be prepared showing the land purchased and the soldiers settled. I have no objection to the House receiving that information, and I shall see that the return is prepared.

Mr. Troy: What happens to the soldier settlement revenue?

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition said there was no public works policy. True, no such policy has been mentioned in the Governor's Speech, but that does not prevent us from bringing down railway Bills or asking the House to authorise expenditure for public works. The House last year authorised the extension of the line from Renegubbin. The line from Margaret River to Busselton is authorised and some money has been spent in connection with it. We hope that the line from Bridgetown to Albany will be authorised this year. The survey is almost complete; about 50 miles of it remains to be completed. This country will be needed in connection with the settlement of soldiers and of immigrants. We have had a classification made in that area during the last 12 months and the results have been very satisfactory. There is a line, too, from Brookton west into Dale, which will develop a district at present about 30 miles from a railway—too far, of course, for profitable production. The country has been settled for years, and I think that the people who settle on country of this kind ought to receive every consideration at the hands of the Government. Then the Railway Advisory Board have recommended several other small lines. None of these works is of great magnitude, except the Albany to Bridgetown line. The others are all either short extensions or short spur lines. In my opinion something should be done to develop the Geraldton harbour. Last session I promised the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) that money for that purpose would be placed on the Loan Estimates this year. I believe that Geraldton is going to be a very important port before very long. It is distant 250 miles from Perth, and as the only

port between Fremantle and Carnarvon it ought to receive attention. A good deal of work has already been done in connection with the Geraldton harbour, and it remains with the Government to see that the rest of the work is carried out. Of course it will take some considerable time. Then, too, there is a water supply for Geraldton, which would involve considerable expenditure. I hope that work will also be put in hand before very long. The question of a water supply for Perth will receive attention. No city of the size of Perth could for long do without an adequate and good water supply. The Engineer-in-Chief has been making inquiries into the matter, and I hope that before long we shall be able to let the country know just what our policy is in this connection. The leader of the Opposition waxed very eloquent in connection with the proposed appointment of someone to control the State trading concerns.

Hon. P. Collier: I merely made a passing reference to the matter.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman had a good deal to say on the subject, and to-night the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) talked about double-dealing and hypocrisy in connection with the trading concerns. If the trading concerns are to continue, they must be managed; and it is absolutely wrong that they should be scattered about the various Government departments, attached to the ordinary public service. If one goes to the Agricultural Department, one finds the Wyndham Meat Works, capitalised at £800,000, controlled there. The departments and everybody else admits that no Government department is so constituted as to manage trading concerns satisfactorily or successfully. True, there is a general manager of the meat works, but he is at Wyndham. The capital invested in the State trading concerns amounts to no less than £1,800,000, and their turnover is very large; single transactions often involve very considerable amounts of money. If these concerns are to be properly managed, they must be grouped, and must be put under some competent control. It is not economical to have the shipping office in the Mines Department, or the timber mills at the Works Department, or the meat works at the Agricultural Department, and to have the other trading concerns scattered about in similar fashion. What is wanted is keen management.

Hon. P. Collier: Business management, business acumen.

The PREMIER: Yes, business acumen if the hon. member pleases, and a pretty good crop of it, too, to make some of those concerns pay.

Mr. Troy: You expect one man to take control of the whole lot?

The PREMIER: We must have a manager for each of these concerns, but we must also have someone in control of them all.

Hon. P. Collier: Your proposed Commissioner may be an expert at shipping, but if so he cannot be an expert on freezing works.

The PREMIER: That would not be expected. No man could be expected to run

the Wyndham meat works and the Botolph Claydon, and the Manjimup sawmills and the State hotels; but he could supervise the lot. For example, the Government at present has half a dozen staffs of accountants, all over the place, in connection with the trading concerns. What we propose does not mean at all that these enterprises will become permanent if they are well managed.

Hon. P. Collier: They are going to be permanent all right.

The PREMIER: I do not want them to become permanent, but I am afraid that will be because the House will not permit the sale.

Hon. P. Collier: You have not tested them yet.

The PREMIER: We will see when someone comes along with a good offer. Then, too, there are the State implement works. The trading concerns involve not only a heavy capital expenditure, but a very large year expenditure. At any rate, Parliament will have an opportunity of saying whether the concerns shall be properly controlled, whether they shall remain as at present scattered about the various Government departments. We have been asked what we have done regarding the North. It ought to interest hon. members, and I have no doubt it will interest them, to hear that 80 millions of acres of pastoral leaseholds have been inspected; and we hope to complete the inspection of the North-Western and Eastern Divisions by the end of December next, and start appraisal next September. The Kimberley district and the Eucla district we hope to finish next year. Then, of course, the whole of the pastoral country will be classified and re-appraised; and I believe we shall receive a considerably increased revenue. As regards the South-West, I have already told hon. members that we have classified 600,000 acres. We have surveyors at work there now. Of the 600,000 acres classified, some is alienated land, but a great deal is Crown land. In the South-West the question of forest classification has always been a trouble, and generally there is a great deal to do in the preparation of lands in the South-West. Even the survey is a difficult and tedious task. However, we do know now that we have in sight 10,000 blocks of country classified and surveyed. There are 500 blocks not ready for settlement, and 150 have been passed for soldiers as suitable for dairying, potato growing, fruit growing, and intensive culture.

Hon. P. Collier: How close is this land to a railway?

The PREMIER: Some of it fairly close to a railway, and all the rest close to where railways will go. During the past year there has been some activity in connection with land settlement, though not as much as there might have been, because a great deal of land has been held up for soldier settlement. The revenue of the Lands Department has increased from £308,672 in 1918-19 to £339,841 in 1919-20. The expenditure has increased from £44,703 to £59,819, for the same periods. The North-West and



doubtedly offers great opportunities. There is magnificent cattle country in the Kimberleys, and a great deal of country still to be settled. Some 12 months ago I requested the Hon. J. J. Holmes, Mr. P. D. Hutton, Mr. C. Blythe, and Mr. M. P. Durack to form themselves into a board of inquiry in connection with the development of a very large area of land in East Kimberley, stretching away to Wyndham itself. When I was in Melbourne last year the Navy Department told me that they were making an inspection of the coast-line between Derby and Wyndham. The board of gentlemen I have named recommend that a port should be established in consultation with the Navy Department. They recommended, too, that some new conditions be laid down as regards pastoral holdings in that country. One condition is that there should be some plan of subdivision before selection. Another is that we lease 250,000 acres of first-class land and one million acres of second-class land. An efficient steamship service will, of course, be needed. Without that the North-West cannot progress. Some questions have been asked concerning the wheat pool. I think hon. members know that the pool is to continue much as it has existed for the last four years. I wish to mention that the pool has already paid £11,839,509 to our farmers, and that it is estimated there still remains for them £1,500,000 in the pool. Next year's guarantee, as we know, is 5s. per bushel at the sining. That figure should, I think, be considered very satisfactory by hon. members. Fancy the handful of farmers in this State having received for wheat alone nearly 12 millions of money in the last five years! I would like to make a few references to the bulk handling scheme. I have a Bill to bring down to the House, and I believe the Federal Government are financing the co-operative company to a considerable extent. The company are to raise £250,000 themselves, and the Federal Government will find the rest of the money. The scheme is absolutely co-operative. What the Government of this State have agreed to do is to find sites for the scheme. I believe that it will be better for the farmers of this State to have their wheat handled under a co-operative scheme, so long as we are careful to see that the farmers have freedom of trade. We must see that they have the right to sell their wheat where they please and when they please. The conditions introduced into the Bill will safeguard all concerned without doing any injustice to the co-operative scheme itself. It will mean absolute freedom to the farmer, and absolute freedom to the merchants and the people who wish to deal in wheat. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) wanted to know something about immigration. As hon. members are aware, immigrants are coming week by week; not very many, it is true, but still a number are coming. In a month or two we rope to get 1,000 out in one vessel. The difficulty has been lack of shipping. Moreover,

the fares are very high. We pay £11 towards the passage money, which is from £33 to £42. Under the Federal Government's proposal the fares will be paid by the Federal Government. Nothing will be done in the way of sending out immigrants to any State except in close co-operation with the Agents General. Our Agent General must, of course, say the number of immigrants that we can take, and when we can take them, and the class of immigrants we want. We shall have to assume full responsibility for them when they come here, but the Federal Government propose to finance us, should this be necessary, in connection with the settling of the immigrants in Western Australia. It is a very good arrangement for us. If the scheme is gone on with, Western Australia must benefit to a very much greater extent than any other State of the Commonwealth. I believe it will be a very fine thing for us. It will save us a great deal of money, and it will guarantee us wider publicity than we can otherwise secure. If this State becomes known all over Great Britain as a field for immigrants, we shall probably get more men with money than we are getting now. I should like to say a word in acknowledgment of the excellent work the Ugly Men have done for the newcomers. They have taken the immigrants by the hand and helped them as far as they possibly could, getting work for them, and showing an interest which is very useful. For the first time in the history of the State, a number of people have offered to help, and have formed themselves into committees and done all they can to assist in looking after immigrants when they land in Western Australia. We have a considerable amount of land in sight, and there is no danger of our not being able to find suitable land when it is required. I desire to give the House some information under these various headings. I listened to the speech of the leader of the Opposition last night. It was a very good speech, and I have no doubt that to members opposite it was a satisfactory one. It hardly disclosed the true position of affairs, but one naturally does not expect that to be otherwise. I have been reminded to-night that for five years I sat in opposition. That was so, and I always gave the Government an absolutely fair deal, and helped to advertise them when I thought advertisement was good for them. I suppose the leader of the Opposition is doing the same with me now.

Mr. Foley: I suppose they would have got a bit to-night, had the position been reversed.

The PREMIER: No matter how the hon. gentleman may view the position, Western Australia has before it, perhaps as a result of the work of the Government, a very bright outlook.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a modest claim.

The PREMIER: I have no compunction in saying that.

Hon. P. Collier: You have a share in it, but not the whole share.

The PREMIER: We have a big share. Let us say the hon. gentleman has a small share. He complained that he had not before him the policy of the Government. What does he want in that policy? He said we required more legislation.

Hon. P. Collier: Industrial legislation.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not limit it to amendments of the Arbitration Act. He said there was no legislative programme. We have enough legislation on the statute-book to satisfy even the hon. member, and I do not know that we want very much more. We may want some industrial legislation and some amendments to the Arbitration Act. I should like to have a very clear suggestion from the hon. member as to what these amendments should be. It is unsatisfactory to have strikes continually happening. They ought not to happen, and we ought to be able to devise some means to prevent them.

Hon. P. Collier: I will introduce an amending Bill myself during the session.

The PREMIER: It will save a good deal of trouble if the hon. member will do so. I think he will find it difficult to introduce legislation that will be satisfactory. I should like to see some means of arriving at a settlement of these disputes.

Hon. P. Collier: Preventing them, if we can.

The PREMIER: Yes, we ought to try. The country must be ruined if strikes are continuous. It is not only that loss is occasioned by strikes, but the practically continuous trouble that goes on means that men with capital are deterred from coming here and investing their money here. I suppose we have less trouble in Western Australia than in any other part of the world, but if we can avoid such troubles as we have had it would be a good thing.

Mr. Willcock: Therefore we would have more capital here if we had less industrial strife.

Mr. Troy: We have more now.

The PREMIER: We would have more enterprises and more activity. If a man puts a considerable sum of money into woollen mills or cement works, or into the hundred and one industries that are possible in the State, such as gold mining, copper mining, and lead mining, he ought to feel fairly certain that work will be continuous. I do not suppose any section of the people wants to strike. So far as my knowledge goes, and my interviews with leaders of unions go, I know that strikes are not wanted. Everyone seems to want to avoid them, but people are constantly getting into trouble.

Hon. P. Collier: It shows that there must be some cause.

The PREMIER: I admit that. In all my interviews with union leaders there has been absolute frankness and a desire to avoid trouble on their part.

Hon. P. Collier: Absolutely.

The PREMIER: I admit that frankly. Nothing could be more pleasant than my negotiations with union leaders during the

last 12 months. Apparently it has not been possible to avoid trouble. I do not know if by amending our arbitration laws we can devise any means that will bring peace.

Hon. P. Collier: We can reduce the risk.

The PREMIER: Possibly the wage board system would have some effect. We started the session rather badly to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: No.

The PREMIER: We spent a considerable portion of the day in discussing a very simple Bill, the Supply Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: A very important one.

The PREMIER: A very important Bill it is true. I hope the work of this session will be on the same basis as the work of last session. It has been stated that we are not frank, and that we have not given information to hon. members. There never was Government more willing to give information, and never one that had less to hide than this Government.

Hon. P. Collier: It was more forgetfulness, then.

The PREMIER: Oh, no! The hon. gentleman can have all the information he wants, and all we have to give. In dealing with the matter of finances, will hon. members recollect that it is important that taxation should be so imposed as not to interfere with enterprises, and so placed that the burden does not fall too heavily upon the people taxed? I do not know quite how much additional taxation will be necessary. I have told the House that I believe, if we had received a fair run for the last 12 months, I would be satisfied with the financial result for the year. Of course these happenings will occur. No one can guarantee that next year we shall be free from troubles, and that the business of the country will proceed without interruption. If I could do that the position would be quite different. The outlook for the season is bright, and prices for our produce will probably be good. In addition there are other industries which will, if carried on continuously, produce a tremendous amount of revenue. By one means and another revenue is derived from almost every transaction that occurs. I am not anxious to impose additional taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: Let us rather avoid it if we can restore the finances without it.

The PREMIER: We, too, are anxious to get through without it, but we cannot go on with an annual deficit of nearly £700,000 even if a great deal of that is set aside to cover the sinking fund. I would not mind a deficit which was representative of the sinking fund for a year or two until we got on our feet. That would not matter because we would not be going back, as the money would be going into the sinking fund. It is, however, impossible to face a deficit of nearly £700,000 a year. The people are on their feet now, and are better able to pay than they were 12 months ago. The trouble about taxing a new country is that there is taken from the people that which they ought to have to spend in developing their holdings or business.

Mr. Wilcock: And in feeding their children.

The PREMIER: I firmly believe that a sovereign in the hands of a private individual will bring more lasting good to the country than two sovereigns spent by the State. We have to carry on the services of the country and educate our children. We have to provide for the health of the people and those facilities which make development possible. If our railways could be made to balance, if our trading concerns could be made to balance, all would be well, but unless we can bring this about, and speedily too, we shall have to impose additional taxation.

Hon. P. Collier: I think the railways require overhauling. That is where the whole trouble is. If we balance the £400,000 loss on the railways we need not trouble about the other £300,000.

The PREMIER: That would be satisfactory for a time. The running of 7,000 miles of railways in this country, widespread as it is, with our lands in process of development and with very much reduced traffic on the goldfields, is a difficult task. It is a hard thing to square the ledger and to run the railways under such conditions. I should like to thank the leader of the Opposition for the considerate speech he made last night. I do not know that he intended to be considerate, but his was a perfectly proper and right speech to make.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not intend to be unfair.

The PREMIER: I maintain that there is very little to say against any act of government during the last 12 months.

On motion by Mr. Harrison, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 12th August, 1920.*

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—WHEAT BOARD.

Mr. S. J. McGibbon's Position.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35]: In accordance with my undertaking of yesterday afternoon, I now ask leave to make a statement regarding the operations of the Wheat Board.

Leave given.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have been twitted in the Press and elsewhere, if not directly challenged, to give the reasons why it has not been considered advisable to recommend His Excellency the Governor to re-appoint Mr. Sinclair J. McGibbon as the Western Australian growers' representative on the Australian Wheat Board. The executive of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association also asked for the reasons, some weeks ago. I replied that it was unusual to make public the reasons for the non-re-appointment of any officer, except with that officer's consent, but that I would do so, of course, if Mr. McGibbon specifically agreed. The letter of permission suggested was, however, not forthcoming. It is fair to Mr. McGibbon to say that I do not know whether he was ever asked for it. I certainly did not ask him. The executive's rejoinder was that as the matter was one of public interest, the information sought should be supplied. I agreed that if Mr. McGibbon withheld his consent and it were shown that the reason for his retirement was of public importance, I would make the information available in the usual way and at the proper time. Questions have been asked in this House regarding Mr. McGibbon's non-reappointment, and the Government have in reply given a promise that I should take an early opportunity of making a statement. Moreover, other members have informed me that unless a statement is made, further questions will follow. A representative meeting of the wheat growers, sitting in Perth on Tuesday, passed a motion recommending the reappointment of Mr. McGibbon as growers' representative on the board pending the election of a member, in order that Western Australian growers might have immediate representation. It is to be regretted that such a motion should have been passed before the reasons actuating the Government in declining to recommend Mr. McGibbon's further membership of the Australian Wheat Board were known. It is to be assumed that as Mr. McGibbon was present at the meeting, he is prepared to accept such nomination. Under these circumstances it is necessary, I think, that the intentions of the Government should at once be made known on this matter. It certainly is desirable that so many farmers with interests in the present and coming wheat pool who are now in the city should not leave Perth until they have had an opportunity of considering the relations of the Government with Mr. McGibbon. I therefore crave the indulgence of this House in order that I may make my statement this afternoon.

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