

rose only for the purpose of calling attention of hon. members and the public to the absurdity of introducing seven Bills in seven Parliaments on a matter which could be dealt with by one Bill for the whole of Australia. I should also like some information from the leader of the House as to the total number of apprentices. I trust also that some approach has been made to the unions to obtain their opinions on the subject. They are certainly fully entitled to have opinions on such a subject, and it might serve to expedite the passage of the Bill if the assistance of the unions were sought. I ask the Colonial Secretary to tell the House whether any communication has passed between the Government and the trades unions on this matter.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [6.7]: I desire to support the second reading of the Bill, which I look upon as a most important measure indeed. The Arbitration Act limits the number of apprentices who may be employed, and the position now is that many of those apprentices have gone away to the war, and some of them will never return. Their places cannot be filled until their indentures have expired, whether they are killed on the battlefield or not. Mr. Sanderson, in his concluding remarks, suggested that this was a Federal matter; but I think it will be found that the Federal Parliament has no power of amendment in the case of local legislation dealing with matters which come within the province of the State Chambers. While it might be desirable that the Federal authorities in many instances should legislate for the whole of the States, arbitration is a State matter and this measure has been introduced for the purpose of getting over a difficulty created under the State Arbitration Act. I hope members will support the Bill and push it through as quickly as possible. There is a number of young men in this State who are not qualified to enlist and who are awaiting an opportunity for learning a trade. This amending Bill will provide that opportunity.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Drew debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 1st March, 1917.*

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The House met at 4.30 p.m.

### RESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER.

The Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant): It is my duty to announce to hon. members that I have received the following letter from His Honour the Speaker—

Perth, 1st March, 1917.

Dear Mr. Grant,—The vote of the Assembly last night expressing dissatisfaction with an action of mine as Speaker, coupled with the incidents of the night before, satisfies me that I cannot usefully continue to hold the position of Speaker under existing circumstances. Although the vote referred to could easily be reversed in a full House, I feel that a purely party vote would in such circumstances be inconsistent with the best traditions of the Chair, as making the office of Speaker too much a party one. I have therefore decided to resign my position as Speaker. I wish to tender to you and to the other officials of the House my appreciation of your and their courtesy during my brief but not uneventful tenure of office. Yours truly E. B. Johnston.

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.32], addressing the Clerk, said: In view of the resignation of Mr. Speaker just read by you, we must now put someone else in the position. I therefore move—

*That Mr. James Gardiner do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.*

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [4.33]: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion of the Premier.

Mr. GARDINER (Irwin) [4.34]: I cannot help feeling conscious that in offering me the position of Speaker you are offering me a position high above my deserts. I wish to say that twelve months ago I made up my mind that whatever there was in me, either of energy or ability, should be devoted to the winning of the war, and to every method of helping those who are helping to win the war. Further, I have taken a strong interest in the desire at the present juncture to see this State governed by a national Parliament. Before I submit myself to the will of the House, I should like hon. members by their vote practically to tell me that there is nothing derogatory to the high and honourable position of Speaker in my continuing the activities to which I have referred.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. GARDINER: Highly as I value the honour that the House is trying to do me, I consider there is no greater honour at the present juncture than to try to win the war, and I shall endeavour to further that object, for the benefit of the nation and for the benefit of this State, by anything I can possibly do. The House knows my physical disability. I am deaf, and the House knows it. If, in these circumstances, the House in its wisdom and kindness and courtesy is willing to assure me of its unanimous assistance, I with every humility submit myself to the will of the House.

The SPEAKER-ELECT having been conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the motion,

*Congratulations.*

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [4.35] said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate you upon having received the

unanimous support of the members of this House, placing you in the high and dignified position which you now occupy. I trust your tenure of office will be easier than that of your predecessor.

Mr. Taylor: That is a sure thing.

The PREMIER: I hope that your rulings, when you are called upon to give them, will always receive the support of the majority of the members of this Chamber. I can promise from this side of the House at any rate, and I think on behalf of all members, that our one desire will be to promote the welfare of the State under your chairmanship, to support you in the high office which you are now accepting at the hands of the members of this Chamber, and to endeavour to work in the interests of the whole country, and to conduct the business of the country as expeditiously as possible. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [4.37]: May I be permitted to endorse the remarks made by the leader of the House, and to give you, Mr. Speaker, an assurance on behalf of members sitting on your left that you may look to them for all the support which is essential to the proper conduct of the business of this House. You made reference, Sir, to your disability. From an Opposition point of view, however, I think that disability is rather an advantage. I think it is occasionally of benefit to the conduct of the business of the House that everything should not be heard which may be said across the floor. May I also remark that if your elevation to the Chair will mean the more peaceful conduct of business, then, in the old saying, sometimes good comes out of evil. I congratulate you, Sir.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [4.38]: May I be permitted, Sir, to add my congratulations to those of the Premier and of the leader of the Opposition on your elevation to the office of Speaker. I feel sure the House will at all times unanimously support your rulings. Your well-known impartiality especially fits you, in my opinion, for the high and dignified office to which members have elected you; and I am sure you will occupy the position with satisfaction to yourself and to this Chamber.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogen) [4.39]: I would like the privilege of

adding my sincere congratulations, Sir, on your election to the office of Speaker. I trust, too, that your occupancy of the Chair will be far longer, more peaceful, and more pleasant than your predecessor's occupancy of it. May I say that I have heard the duties of Speaker were monotonous. It was said that listening to the speeches of hon. members became wearisome. I, however, experienced no monotony while in the Chair. Permit me to express the hope that you, Sir, will get less excitement than fell to my lot. I congratulate the House and the country on your election, because I feel, from the speeches which have been made this afternoon, that your elevation to the Chair is a happy augury that public business will receive proper attention in this Chamber.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [4.40]: Last but not least, I desire to offer you, Mr. Speaker, my hearty congratulations also; and they are none the less genuine because they are spoken last. May I say that I am particularly pleased by your elevation to the high and honourable position of Speaker? Your association with members during the last five or six years is sufficient to secure you a unanimous vote. So far as I am concerned, you may depend that I shall be only too glad to render the Chair every assistance I can possibly give.

Mr. SPEAKER [4.41]: Hon. members, with the knowledge of one's own shortcomings, a man's heart sometimes gets the better of his thoughts. From all sides of this honourable House I have received congratulations and desires have been expressed to assist me. I will try to live up to what you expect the occupant of this Chair to live up to. If at times I appear to be somewhat super-sensitive of the privileges and dignity of this House, please remember that it is not in conformity with my own ideas but because you have given to me a trust which every member of this House expects me to keep untarnished. You have given me a trust that I myself will try to observe in a manner worthy of the best traditions of this House. From the leader of the Government, the leader of the Opposition, and the leader of the Country party I am sure I will get that assistance which the office deserves, because, after all, it is as much their duty

to make the tone of the House and keep the tone of the House as it is the duty of the Speaker. If just at the outset I may make one request to the large-heartedness of this House, it is that even in the heat of the debate hon. members may refrain from using those expressions which leave behind a personal feeling and a personal hurt. If hon. members will do that, then my position in this Chamber will, I am sure, be a very light one. I will try to live up to the desire of this House, and I hope I shall be able to do so.

The PREMIER [4.43]: I have now to inform you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. members that His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor is prepared to receive you, Sir, and hon. members who may accompany you.

*Sitting suspended from 4.44 to 5.15 p.m.*

#### PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER-ELECT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have waited on His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and informed him of my election, and the reply His Excellency was good enough to give is as follows:—

It is with much pleasure that I learn that you have been elected by the Members of the Legislative Assembly to the high and honourable office of Speaker of that House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: Audit of accounts of the State Meat Supply.

By the Minister for Works: By-laws for regulation of motor traffic (a) Victoria Park; (b) Subiaco; (c) Westonia roads board.

#### QUESTION—ENEMY SUBJECTS IN GOVERNMENT EMPLOY.

Mr. HEITMANN: I desire to ask the Premier has any further action been taken by the Government in reference to the employment of enemy born subjects in this House?

The PREMIER: I have not heard from Mr. Speaker in connection with the matter.

Mr. HEITMANN: Is it not possible for the Premier to take some action, seeing it is the Government policy, and not the policy of the Joint Printing Committee?

#### QUESTION—ESPERANCE WHEAT.

Hon. T. WALKER: I desire to draw the attention of the Minister for Industries to a paragraph appearing in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* with a view to asking a question with regard to the sale of wheat. The paragraph says—

Regarding the sale of mallee wheat, Messrs. J. Stevenson and Stearne, of Kalgoorlie, approached the State Wheat Board regarding Esperance wheat, and received a reply that they are not buying it. The farmers are, therefore, thrown on their own resources. Some are now selling to Mr. Harvey, of Boulder, and he is engaged carting to Norseman by motor wagon. The member for the district has asked the Government to help the farmers to dispose of their wheat. This year's yield is a very good sample of milling wheat and too good to be made use of for feeding stock.

I desire to ask the Minister if his attention has been drawn to the paragraph and if the statements in it are true, and if the Government and he, as Minister, have taken any steps to meet the requirements of the farmers there in regard to the sale of their wheat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I must ask the hon. member to give notice of the question. I have not the papers with me.

Hon. T. WALKER: I give notice for the next sitting of the House.

#### QUESTION—HANSARD TYPISTS.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Chairman of the Joint Printing Committee: 1, Is it a fact that it has been decided to increase the payment of four *Hansard* typists from £120 to £150 per annum? 2, Does he think that such increase is warranted at the present juncture?

Mr. ALLEN: At present there is no Chairman of the Joint Printing Committee,

but the reply to the questions is as follows: 1, The matter has not been brought before the Committee. 2, Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION—PRIMARY PRODUCER AND MR. WILLMOTT.

Hon. J. SCADDAN asked the Premier: 1, Whether his attention has been called to an article in the *Primary Producer* of Friday, 23rd February last, entitled "The West will not report Willmott"? 2, Will he make representations to the editor of the *West Australian* in order to insure to the hon. member for Nelson his fair share of newspaper publicity?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No, with the exception of the leader of the Opposition remarking to me that such an article had appeared. 2, No.

#### QUESTION — GOVERNMENT TAXATION PROPOSALS.

Hon. J. SCADDAN asked the Premier: 1, Whether his attention has been drawn to a paragraph in the *Primary Producer* of 23rd February, under the heading "Notes and Comments," as follows:—

"Before Mr. Frank Wilson, Premier and C.M.G.—and, by the way, Treasurer, left for the Eastern States some two moons ago he selected a quartette of well-known politicians, filled to the brim with enthusiasm, righteousness, and business acumen—in fact they could almost be termed a national quartette, to scheme out a set of taxation proposals against the day of his return. Visions of these taxation jugglers were constantly before our eyes wrestling with thousands and thousands of figures, scheming how to make 10s. a pound. Our deepest sympathy went out to these good men and true because we had so often tried to do the same thing ourselves. We waited in patience for the result of their labours, wondering whether they would bring forth a mountain or a mouse, but up to date the Treasurer has failed to publish their report. Has Mr. Wilson thrown their concentrated financial wisdom into the waste-paper basket, or is he afraid to carry out their proposals, or did they make any proposals worth while? These questions should be answered by the

Premier or the committee of financial experts specially selected for the job. One noticeable feature is that all the taxation proposals were dropped for this session, but the one that hits the farmer and the country people hardest—increased railway freights. We wonder how long the C.P. members intend to stand this injustice and daylight exploitation?"

2, Will he enlighten this House and the paper referred to in connection with this matter?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, No report has been submitted by the gentlemen referred to. Valuable suggestions, however, have been made and are receiving the most earnest consideration.

#### QUESTION—MINING SUPPLIES, EASTERN GOLDFIELDS.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that the present retail price, compared with the pre-war price of certain mining supplies in the Eastern Goldfields district is as follows:—Zinc, per. cent., present price £9, pre-war price £2 10s.; cyanide sodium, per case, present price £14 10s., pre-war price £10; fractureur, per case, present price £3, pre-war price £2 3s. 9d.? 2, Is he aware that many mining plants on the fields were working at a very close margin of profit before the war, and the present rise of prices is falling very hardly on a large portion of the mining industry? 3, If the facts are as stated, will he introduce a short Bill to regulate the price of mining supplies, and so assist the mining industry? 4, If he is not in favour of this course, is he prepared to assist the mining industry by introducing cheaper railway freights on zinc, cyanide, and explosives, on similar lines to the cheap freights at present in vogue with regard to super. and wheat for the assistance of the agricultural industry?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No. 2, Yes. 3, No. 4, I will have inquiries made.

#### QUESTION—WHEAT MARKETING SCHEME.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (for Hon. W. D. Johnson) asked the Minister for Industries:

1, Has the agency agreement under the wheat marketing scheme been finalised; if so, what are the handling charges agreed upon, and will the whole agreements be published? 2, If not, when will the farmers know what this year's handling is costing them?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, No. The delay is due to the fact that negotiations are in progress in Victoria between the acquiring agents and the Wheat Marketing Committee of that State for a reduction of the charges agreed upon before the sale to the Imperial Government of 3,000,000 tons was completed. A similar reduction in the charge is to be made in our case. 2, As soon as possible.

#### STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [5.14]: I move—

*That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all stages in one day, and Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received.*

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.20]: I do not propose to offer any serious objection to the motion as I recognise the Government should decide, or largely decide, how to proceed with the business before the House; but I want to draw the attention of the Premier to the fact that there is quite a number of private members' notices, and I understand before the Christmas adjournment that the Premier would give an opportunity to members to discuss them. One notice of motion is very urgent and the House should have an opportunity to discuss it at an early date. There is notice of motion No. 12 in the name of Mr. Collier.

Mr. Holman: No. 6 as well.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: There is a good number of them, but on this one an understanding was arrived at. The Premier should at this stage say whether he is prepared to set aside a private members' day for the discussion of these motions. We have not had a private members' day since Christmas.

Mr. Hudson: Could not the Premier outline the business he intends to proceed with?

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.21]: In addition to the motions in the names of private members, some of which are really important, it would be well if the Premier would indicate to the House the Orders of the Day he proposes going on with.

The Premier: I did it a short time back.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would have been better had the Premier postponed this motion until the House had dealt with the disposal of the question of the Orders of the Day. If the House decides that some of the Orders should not be postponed, it is highly unfair that we should discuss them with the Standing Orders suspended. It is only a fortnight ago since the Premier indicated that certain Orders were to be discharged but they still occupy a position on the Notice Paper.

The Premier: We will come to them directly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps, in reply, the Premier would indicate the business he proposes to discharge from the Notice Paper and then we could judge whether the Standing Orders should be postponed at this juncture.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.22]: The Premier, in replying, should not only give the House the information as to what Orders of the Day he intends to discharge from the Notice Paper, but what new business he intends to place on the Notice Paper. Three new Bills are down for this afternoon and there are some measures to come from another Chamber.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): They are very small though.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I think it is necessary to know what is going to be done. It is all very well to say that we should postpone the Standing Orders and to bring amendments before us. No one knows what amendments are made and therefore we do not know whether to agree or disagree with them. As they are not placed on the Notice Paper. Do the Government intend to bring additional legislation down?

Mr. FOLEY (Mt. Leonora) [5.23]: Before the Christmas adjournment the Premier gave us to understand that motion

No. 6, dealing with railway freights, should be dealt with and I think the House understands that the Premier will not break his word in that direction.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [5.24]: I think the Premier might ask the Attorney General or the Minister for Lands to reply to the questions which have been put to him, because if the Premier gives us the information he will be replying to the motion and that will close the debate. Therefore, I ask the Premier to allow one of his Ministers to reply to the questions asked.

The Premier: What questions?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Speaker says he is deaf, but I do not think the Premier can come at that too. The position is quite clear. Once the Premier rises to reply, the discussion is closed. Before closing the discussion, we would like to know what he is going to do.

The Premier: I will tell you if you sit down.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes; and then we are finished. We want to know before the Premier finishes. The hon. gentleman might allow another Minister just to indicate shortly the Government's reply to the questions which have been asked. The leader of the Opposition has put a question about the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill; the member for Leonora about his motion; the member for Boulder as to what Bills are to be dropped. Again, the member for Fremantle wishes to be informed whether any new Bills are coming down. We should have all this information before the discussion is closed.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [5.31]: I would like to ask the Premier whether, in his reply, he will indicate to the House if it is the Government's intention to give hon. members an opportunity of discussing the Government's proposals regarding land settlement of returned soldiers. I have pointed out more than once that, in my opinion, the House should have an opportunity of discussing that very important matter. It has been discussed in other Parliaments, where special Bills have been introduced and members have been enabled to debate Government proposals. Up to the present we here have merely been in-

formed by the Minister for Industries that the Government intend to deal with the subject not by Bill but by regulation. I believe I voice the opinion of members generally when I say that the subject is too important to be left to the Government to deal with by regulation under the existing land legislation, without its receiving the special consideration of Parliament.

The Premier: There is a Bill on the Notice Paper for the purpose.

Mr. CARPENTER: I want to know whether we shall have an opportunity of discussing that Bill. I ask the Premier to indicate his intentions.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [5.30]: Several measures will remain on the Notice Paper to be dealt with, and, in all probability, if we rush the business through, amending legislation will be needed at a very early period. If the session is to be closed speedily, legislation of a controversial nature should not be dealt with at all. Such legislation had far better stand over. As regards the Fire Brigades Bill, for instance, although undoubtedly legislation is required in this connection, the measure is in need of rectification in several respects. It involves the alteration of the administrative system of fire brigades throughout the State. If the Bill goes through in its present form, without certain important amendments, a great deal of trouble will result. There are several other measures similarly circumstanced. The Premier would be well advised if he considered the necessity of getting into recess at the earliest possible moment, and then doing everything possible to put the affairs of the State in proper working order.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope the Premier brings on a general election.

Mr. HOLMAN: My own opinion is that we should go to the country at once. It would be wise to go to the country and come back as soon as possible with a mandate to make ample provision for the thousands of soldiers who, we hope, will be returning in the near future to this State, and who will require to be looked after. The passing of an important motion such as this means that the whole of the Stand-

ing Orders will be suspended, and that business will be rushed through without our knowing what we are doing. In those conditions members have not printed information before them to enable them to know what is being done; and it has happened that members have afterwards said that they did not realise the effect of legislation passed in such circumstances. The Premier, in submitting this motion, should have outlined his intentions. The hon. gentleman, however, merely moved that all the Standing Orders be suspended. Any member who has been in this House a few years knows what that means. In the closing days of the session, sometimes as many as six, eight, and even ten Bills are dealt with during one sitting, without any printed information being available to hon. members. Such proceedings are absolutely unfair to Parliament and to the country; and the sooner we do away with that haphazard method of legislation, the better. The Attorney General is to-day to introduce some measures of far-reaching effect, which should receive full consideration. Even after the items which the Premier proposes to discharge from the Notice Paper are wiped off, some very important matters will remain to be dealt with; and, moreover, important measures will be received from another place. I am sorry that the Premier did not, on this occasion, adopt the usual course of outlining the Government's intentions. The member for Leonora was promised an opportunity for full discussion of a motion he has on the Notice Paper. If the only motive of the Premier's motion is to get into recess and let the Government stop where they are, I do not think we would be doing justice to the country in carrying the motion. If, on the other hand, the Premier's intention is to go to the country at the earliest possible moment, I would say, "Shut up at once, and let the people elect a House more in accordance with their opinions than they have at present."

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex—in reply) [5.38]: In moving this motion I followed the ordinary course taken by every Government towards the end of the session.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Not with a Notice Paper like this.

The PREMIER: The carrying of the motion will not interfere with my promise that private members will be afforded opportunities for the discussion of certain motions. I am ready to give them every facility in that respect. Indeed, the carrying of this motion would help in that direction by allowing more time for the discussion of the motions of those private members. The object of my motion is simply to facilitate the transaction of the business of the session between the two Houses. If the leader of the Opposition will confer with me at any time, I shall be glad to consider with him what motions he wants put forward; and I shall certainly allow opportunities for their discussion.

Mr. Holman: The carrying of the motion means passing Bills through all stages at one sitting, which is a very important matter.

The PREMIER: If there is any objection to a Bill passing in one day, further time will be allowed. Any new legislation, such as the Bills of which notice will be given this afternoon, is absolutely non-controversial, comprising Bills which in most instances, I think, the leader of the Opposition has been consulted about, as to whether they should be put through or not.

Mr. Foley: Does not the Premier see that even a consultation between the Premier and the leader of the Opposition may not be what the House desires? Those hon. gentlemen may not think a motion sufficiently important to be discussed, while the individuality of a private member is ignored by them altogether.

The PREMIER: Not at all. Besides, the leaders of parties are supposed to have some idea of what individual members require. At any rate, leaders can consult their followers, and if a member wants more latitude, or more time, he will be granted it. I am not going to close up Parliament at a moment's notice, I can assure hon. members. Further, I assure them that any business to be done will not be business requiring lengthy discussion. We may differ with regard to it on one or two points, per-

haps. The member for Murchison has referred to the Fire Brigades Bill. If it is of as much importance, as a number of members say, that the measure should be laid aside, it will be laid aside.

Mr. Holman: To lay it aside will be better than to rush it through.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will have ample time.

Mr. Holman: Several important amendments are required.

The PREMIER: I do not know that the House wishes me to outline again the measures which the Government propose to drop. I did that some three weeks ago. Items 2 to 9, inclusive, on to-day's Notice Paper I propose to discharge. The Land and Income Tax Bill I propose to drop, and then ask leave to substitute another Bill, the ordinary taxation measure.

Mr. Willmott: With a proviso altering the date, I hope?

The PREMIER: That comes under the assessment measure. The Dividend Duties Act Amendment Bill will be discharged, and the duties will go on at the ordinary rate. Dividend duties are not like income tax, requiring to be reimposed each year. That leaves very little on the Notice Paper—certainly not much that can be called controversial.

Mr. Foley: What about the Workers' Homes Act Amendment Bill? That raises the question of freehold or leasehold.

The PREMIER: That is not controversial.

Mr. Foley: It is highly controversial.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It is in the last degree controversial.

The PREMIER: Hon. members can show that when they are afforded the opportunity. I cannot go into the merits of every Bill at this juncture.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I will promise the Premier a fortnight on the Workers' Homes Act Amendment Bill.

The PREMIER: The only other measures are small, unimportant Bills from the Legislative Council. There is one amending the Health Act, which is very short; there is another dealing with ports and harbours; and then there is one providing for the



early closing of barbers' shops. I do not think there is anything in those measures which need occupy the Chamber for anything like three weeks or a fortnight, or even three days. Next, as regards the settlement of soldiers on the land, which matter has been referred to by the member for Fremantle. A Land Act Amendment Bill will be introduced, to-night possibly, otherwise on Tuesday, by my colleague; and that Bill makes certain provisions which will afford ample opportunity for debating the whole question of settling returned soldiers on the land.

Mr. Carpenter: That is all we want.

The PREMIER: It will be seen, therefore, that really there is no danger in passing a motion of this nature, which is designed to expedite the business of the House.

Mr. Underwood: What about railway freights?

The PREMIER: I give this promise, that if the leader of the Opposition, or another member, wishes to delay any measure the Government may introduce, further time will be allowed. We do not wish to rush anything through. My desire is to consult the convenience of hon. members, but I also wish to wind up the session as soon as we conveniently can. We have any amount of work awaiting us in our offices.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The Workers' Home Bill merely represents a party movement.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will have an opportunity of discussing it. The other measures before the Council are those which we have already passed. I know of no other Bill of sufficient urgency to warrant our introducing it now, at so late a stage. I hope the House will agree to the motion.

Question put and passed.

#### BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1. Public Service Act Amendment.
2. Horseracing and Trotting Restriction.
3. Roads Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Attorney General.
4. Bunbury Town Lot 318.  
Introduced by Mr. Thomas.

#### BILL—AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

#### BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS (No. 2.)

*Third Reading—Amendment, Six Months.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.55]: I move—

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

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.56]: Even at this late stage I still hope the Minister will withdraw the Bill. It could have been made a good Bill, but in its present form it is unworkable and contains nothing that will be of advantage to the trading concerns. The sole object of the Bill is to prevent any Government engaging in trading concerns. What would have been the financial position of the Government to-day were it not for our trading concerns? A little while ago we used to be told that the trading concerns were responsible for the deficit, but we find now from authoritative statistics that within the last month the business undertakings and trading concerns have shown a surplus of revenue over expenditure amounting to £107,063. I admit that a fair proportion of this is in respect of railways and water supplies, but even taking out these two items we find that for February the remainder of the business undertakings and trading concerns showed a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £44,049. In other words, if we had not these trading concerns other than railways and water supplies our deficit to-day would have been £44,000 greater than it is for the month of February. Yet the sole intention of the Bill is to restrict the establishment of any further trading concerns. If Ministers are honest in their expressed desire to drop party tactics in this time of national crisis, the Bill ought to be withdrawn. During the eight months of the present financial year the trading concerns and business undertakings, apart from railways and water supplies, have shown a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £136,342. Clearly, then, had we not had

these trading concerns the deficit to-day would have been £136,000 more than it is.

The Minister for Works: You are including the "Kangaroo" in that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will deal with that presently. The very undertakings to which hon. members opposite have offered so much opposition are now materially helping the Government in their finances. Take the trading concerns that have been discussed and condemned by members on the Ministerial side of the House; in fact the principal concerns that have received most of their severe condemnation and misrepresentation, such as meat stalls, brickworks, ferries, fish supply, hotels, implement works, dairy, quarries, shipping and sawmills. This month those enterprises have shown a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £33,448, which means that had we not had those enterprises the deficit on the month's operations, instead of being £75,000, would have been £108,000. The expenditure on the implement works last month was £5,414, while the revenue was £24,578. This institution is paying the money which the Minister is refunding under another Bill. At the start, of course, the trading concerns were all expenditure, but now the tide has turned.

Mr. Harrison: Is the position not accounted for by the new methods of the Industries Assistance Board, who are now making cash payments?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, because the payments have not to be met to the same amount. The cash payments for the wheat are no credit to the Government, because the British Government provide the money. Previously our Treasurer had to provide it and save the farmers the 4 per cent. they pay to-day. The farmer is paying even more to-day than he was before. Therefore, I am pointing this out and I think I am justified in doing so because I and my colleagues have been attacked repeatedly and severely. There has been a great deal of misrepresentation in regard to the trading concerns; misrepresentation and nothing but misrepresentation since the trading concerns were brought into existence. It has gone on day after day, week after week, and year after year until some people have begun to believe this criticism. There is no doubt that if I went out to-morrow and told my friends

on the Chamber of Commerce that there would have been a deficit this month of £103,000 but for the trading concerns they would not believe me; but, as a matter of fact, there has been a saving of £33,000 on the concerns which I have already mentioned. Take the shipping concern. On the scrap-iron things which have been talked about, and which have only been in existence for a few years, the expenditure for February was £25,528 and the revenue £41,802, and so members can go right through the trading concerns which to-day are showing their worth to the State and protecting the Government by assisting them in their finances. I want also to say that the trading concerns are beneficial to the Government in other ways as well as assisting directly in the finances. Take the brickworks. Immediately the Government came into office they raised the price of bricks 5s. per 1,000, and there was no necessity to do that.

The Minister for Works: Yes, there was.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We were manufacturing bricks and in the last month that we were in office 646,000 bricks were manufactured at £1 11s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per 1,000; that included interest, sinking fund, depreciation, and every charge imaginable. The actual cost of making the bricks was about £1 2s. 6d. per 1,000—I might be a penny or two out, I am not sure. But when we put on the other charges it amounts to £1 11s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. The Minister may say that has not been the average during the time the works have been in progress; that is true. I admit that they have averaged more. But why? In connection with a large number of business undertakings the war has affected them considerably. Many men had been trained into the work and after a while they enlisted and went away, and we then had to train other men. When a manufacturing concern gets men settled and properly going the profit is considerable, and I think it can be proved conclusively that bricks can be made at a profit and sold at £2 per 1,000. Prior to this the Government were paying £2 10s. per 1,000. They manufactured them at £1 11s. 10d., and as good a brick and larger in size. To-day the Government are paying £2 5s. per 1,000 for bricks.

The Minister for Works: Who is paying £2 5s.?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is the price the Government have been paying for bricks. The position is that the price to private people who desire to build would have to be at a higher rate. Then let us take into consideration other matters. Perhaps the hon. member would tell me what is the price of the work at the Mundaring Weir which is being carried on at the present time. I think it is several hundred pounds less than the contract price. The work has satisfied the Government and the job has been turned out satisfactorily. There is no doubt the meat stalls have saved the people in the metropolitan area a considerable amount of money, thousands of pounds, and they have not cost the State one penny.

The Minister for Works: Yes they have.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because they have made a profit ever since they have been in existence, and they have paid everything—management, interest, and sinking fund, and they have not cost the State one penny, besides they have saved the public a considerable amount of money. There is a small institution I always like to refer to, the dairy at Claremont. Members who visited the Children's hospital at the time the member for Boulder and myself went there must know the worth of this institution. The good cannot be measured in pounds, shillings and pence, and even taking the matter from a financial standpoint it has not cost the State anything. Where could there be a greater monument than the testimony of the medical men at the Children's hospital. They said that this supply of pure milk had been the means of saving the lives of hundreds of children; yet with such a Bill as the one under consideration the Government could not take the action which they did to prevent the loss of life amongst children.

Mr. Heitmann: Why did they not treat the milk which they said caused so many deaths—treat it for bacteria?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I may say in reply to the hon. member that they tried everything possible. We were accused of persecution, not prosecution, because we were bringing the dairymen to the courts. The doctors at the Children's hospital condemned all the milk sold. When the member

for Boulder and myself visited the institution tinned milk was being used there, but now they have a good and pure milk supply. I am pointing this out to show how far-reaching a Bill of this kind can be. If we pass the third reading such things as have occurred for the Children's hospital cannot take place and the children will die before anything can be done.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense.

Mr. Munsie: It is an actual fact.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It is in the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill says—

No trading concerns other than those to which this Act applies or shall apply 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.

Is that not plain enough?

Hon. J. Scaddan: Read the definition of trading concerns.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Under similar circumstances if a Bill of this character had been in existence at the time we were called on by the then President of the Children's hospital, Mr. Lovekin, who I suppose is also supporting the Bill but does not realise it, then we could have done nothing. The president begged of us to assist in every manner to give the Children's hospital a pure milk supply. On this visit we were accompanied by the vice-president, Mr. Batty, and one or two other gentlemen. Yet members by passing a Bill of this kind say that in future nothing shall be done. I would like to ask the Minister for Works to reconsider his decision. If the Bill would be of any benefit to him in carrying on the trading concerns and assisting him in any way, I would not take up the attitude which I am doing. Very rarely are matters discussed on the third reading but we must do this because I know the Government will gain nothing by this Bill. There is nothing in the Bill that will improve the position of any of the works or that will assist the Government financially, but there is sufficient in the Bill to do an injury to these institutions.

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

*[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No matter how necessary it was, in the interests of the health of the public, and of our children and our Children's Hospital, this would prohibit any Government taking the stand which the previous Government did when called on by the proprietors of the *Daily News* and the president of the Children's Hospital Committee to get them out of a difficulty and stop the large mortality which was taking place at that institution at that time. It was stated that the dairy was not mentioned in this Bill, but if we read the Bill closely we can come to no other conclusion than that all trading concerns which come into competition with any business already established are brought under the provisions of this measure. It is impossible to start any trading concern. No matter what the private business may be, or whether it is a legitimate business and not properly carried out the Government could not interfere without first getting the consent of Parliament, no matter how urgent the question or how great the necessity for bringing it into operation. The Minister points out the necessity for having a banking account established. I do not object to that so long as the trading concern involved is put on a similar basis to that of private people who are carrying on a similar business. I raised the objection once before in regard to dealing with the matter of interest. This is one of the reasons why I really desire that the Minister would withdraw the Bill at the present juncture.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): You are not serious?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am serious, and am going to vote against it. The Government, by a Bill of this kind, has an opportunity of dealing unfairly with trading concerns. They can make a profit out of the interest. The interest payable has to be fixed by the Treasurer, which shows clearly that if the members of the Government had not on a certain occasion in this Chamber sat back and folded their arms and said, "We do not intend to have anything more to do with it," an improvement might have been made in a Bill of this description. These trading concerns have at all times to pay interest, which is right that they should pay to the State.

The Minister for Railways: They ought to.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And they do so. I endeavoured on another Bill the other day to point out how one of our works would be affected by the passing of the Trading Concerns Act. We had at Fremantle the engineering works. These works used to carry out almost all the works necessary in connection with the Fremantle Harbour and other undertakings of a public nature in this State. No interest was charged on the working capital, nor upon the capital expended on the works themselves. The amount was only charged for the work actually done. If I am not mistaken, at that time the costs were not kept in the same manner as they were kept under the Trading Concerns Act during the past 18 months or so. I admit that, at the start, costs were not kept in connection with the North Fremantle works. The Minister is, however, in a position now to know the cost of work carried out so far as this trading concern goes. On the 30th June, 1916, when the balance sheet was prepared, there was owing to the State Implementation Works by the Government approximately £35,000, that is for works done for the Government in connection with the various loan works which were carried out at that time. Suppose the Minister, under a Bill of this description—and this is one of the directions in which a remedy should be effected—charged interest on this £35,000, it only meant taking the interest out of one pocket and putting it into the other.

The Minister for Works: It meant putting the account straight, and placing the burden where it should be carried.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It did not save a penny to the State.

The Minister for Works: That is misleading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not misleading. I thank the Minister for his interjection, because I would like to point out that immediately he took control of the trading concerns, though the Act did not provide for it, he burdened our State engineering and implement works with this interest, and they had no opportunity of transferring it to loan works carried out

for the Government. If there was a sum of £5,000 due for interest, and the Minister said it should be paid, the State would have been charged that £5,000. It is only a book entry, and the implement works would not be affected at all. The policy of the Government is, if possible, to condemn these trading concerns.

The Minister for Railways: Why do you support them?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because they have been beneficial to the State.

The Minister for Railways: They are not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They are. I have already proved that to the Minister and will give him the figures again.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): What about the fish shops?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have also been beneficial to the State.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Was there not a loss of £10,000 in two years?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not take much notice of some of the figures that are given. After reading some of the statements made by the member of the Government, who is represented in this House by the Honorary Minister, and comparing them with the actual facts, one sees that one must look carefully into that hon. gentleman's figures.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): You do not deny that the fish shops made an enormous loss?

Mr. CARPENTER: They are only a bagatelle.

The Minister for Works: Did they collect as much money as they paid away?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The fish shops had scarcely got established before the hon. member said that they showed a tremendous loss.

The Minister for Works: They were losing £90 a week.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The man who was running them for the Government is running them to-day and making a success of them.

The Minister for Works: You said that they did not make a profit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The shop did make a profit and the hon. member knows

it. The Minister of Agriculture also knows that the meat shops at Fremantle made a very substantial profit. The implement works were charged this year approximately £11,000 for interest, supposed to be on the working capital, from their very commencement. When a private company is floated, the shareholders put their money into shares. First, they pay their deposit, and then a certain amount of the capital is called up. That money is paid into the company and if there is any profit, interest or dividends are paid. If there is no profit there are no dividends and no interest. If there is a loss a further call is made in order to obtain the required capital. The Minister made the engineering works at North Fremantle pay interest on Government works which cost the Government not a penny.

The Minister for Railways: Surely someone must have suffered.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will show the difference between carrying out Government work and carrying out private work. I have not the exact figures, but, if I mistake not, during the first months of 1916 the implement works sold £40,000 or £50,000 worth of agricultural implements in Western Australia, a large proportion being sold on bills. In fact, the Industries Assistance Board in many instances paid the first instalment and the balance was on bills. The bills included a charge for interest made against the purchaser. I believe the rate of interest is eight per cent.—much less than private manufacturers charge, by the way. On Government work, however, no interest whatever was charged.

The Minister for Works: That is an incident of trade.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister, however, comes along and says, "Now we are going to make the works pay interest." That is how a loss comes to be shown. Approximately £35,000 was outstanding to the implement works from Government departments on the 30th June last. The Government have drawn this Bill in such a manner as to prevent the manager of the implement works from charging interest on Government work. On the second reading I raised a question in regard to any balance to the

credit of a trading concern. Two clauses of the Bill could, in this connection, have been considerably improved in Committee had the then Minister so desired. One clause provides that any balance standing to the credit of a State trading concern's banking account was to be applied as the Governor might direct. In the absence of any direction, the balance was to be transferred to next year's accounts. That sounds very feasible; but it shows clearly that we are justified in asking the Government, even at this juncture, for an opportunity to reconsider the Bill—asking them even to withdraw the Bill for the time being, and introduce another measure in its place later. A further clause provides that any profit—the only balance a State trading concern could have would be profit—shall be paid into Consolidated Revenue. The one clause affects the other. The Governor will never direct that money shall be retained to meet interest on the capital invested in a trading concern. "The Governor," in this connection, means the Governor in Council, and that means the Minister controlling the works. It comes to this, that the Treasurer will get hold of the money on the 30th June and use it for the purpose of carrying on the business of the State. I pointed out previously how unfair such a proceeding would be to the State trading concerns. They are called on to pay interest on capital; a private company pays no interest, that is to say, no dividend, unless sufficient profit is earned. That is the difference between a private company and a State trading concern. A private company, making a profit of £100,000 in a year, might apply £50,000 to the payment of a dividend, and put the other £50,000 to reserve. No private company would bank the reserve money to earn three per cent. interest, and then, for the purpose of carrying on business, borrow from the banker at seven or eight per cent. Yet that is what is here proposed for trading concerns. If a trading concern had £50,000 profit accrued on the 30th June then, under this Bill, on the 1st July there would be nothing left of that profit, and the concern would have to borrow, as the profit would have been transferred to the Consolidated Revenue. Is it possible to carry on a State trading concern successfully under

such a disability? If Ministers want to kill the State trading concerns, let them say so.

The Minister for Railways: The State trading concerns have not paid their way.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have paid their way, as I proved this afternoon. According to the Treasury figures published in this morning's *West Australian*, the Government have received £136,000 from the State trading concerns in eight months. That is to say, the State trading concerns, apart from the Railway Department and the Water Supply Department, had a surplus of £136,000 over expenditure. And yet Ministers tell us that these concerns are the ruin of the country. On the contrary, they keep down the deficit. I hope the House will give the matter close consideration, because in the interests of the people the State trading concerns should be made successful, and should be carried on in a proper manner. The hon. gentleman in charge of most of the State trading concerns will admit that the implement works are under the charge of as good a man as could be obtained. The Minister for Industries will admit that the manager of the implement works is doing his utmost to make the proposition payable. I regret, however, that owing to the falling off in work—not owing to any falling off in the management—only half the men are necessary to keep the works employed.

Mr. Harrison: The manager has no business to keep the men there, then.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That position is due to the war. Ever since the establishment of the State trading concerns, there has been an effort to condemn them, on the ground that they did not at once become payable propositions. The fact that they did not prove payable from the very outset is due to the war, which has affected the output and made materials exceptionally expensive.

The Minister for Works: You know differently from that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know that what I am speaking is the truth. The Minister for Works and the Premier have repeatedly asked me, "What did you do? What did you tell us?" When I had the honour of occupying a Ministerial chair in this House, I enlightened hon. members as to the exact position of every State trading concern.

Otherwise I should have failed in my duty. It is easy, when things are going on successfully, to say that one concern has made a large profit, and that another is flourishing, and that a third is doing well. But it takes some courage to state the opposite position. I told hon. members the truth. I told them that we intended to remedy matters; and let me point out that in our last year we effected a saving of £18,000 on the implement works alone. We turned a loss of £12,000 on the manufacturing account of the implement works for one year into a profit of £6,000 for the next year.

The Minister for Railways: Without interest?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Without interest, because the Government did not pay interest on work done for them.

The Minister for Works: The accounts do not show that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The accounts do show it. The gross profit on manufacturing account for 1915-16 was £6,400 12s. 7d. Those are the figures published by the Minister for Works. And yet that hon. gentleman says the figures do not show what I state. These are balance sheet figures. For the previous financial year there was a loss of £12,400 on manufacturing account.

The Minister for Works: Up to the end of last month the works had lost £80,000. What is the use of this silly talk about a profit?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. gentleman is trying to draw a red herring across the trail. I referred explicitly to the manufacturing account. Hon. members will bear me out in that. I said the manufacturing account for the last financial year showed a profit of £6,400. However, standing charges are very high; and hon. members know the chief reason for that. The Attorney General during his electioneering in the Canning district condemned the implement works, saying that the plant was old, and the patterns old, and much of the machinery practically useless. Of course, one can occasionally excuse statements made during election campaigns. The fact of the matter is that the old plant and old patterns were previously owned by the Government, and that they were transferred to the implement works from the Fremantle

Harbour engineering workshops. They were transferred at cost, although some of them had been in use as far back as 1901. No money was paid; the whole thing was merely a book entry. In that way capital charges have been piled up on the implement works.

The Minister for Works: There is no use whatever in discussing that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister will have an opportunity of discussing it later.

The Minister for Works: Unfortunately, I shall not. That is where the unfairness comes in. I cannot reply.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister knows that what I am saying is perfectly correct.

The Minister for Works: I believe you are saying what you believe to be correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The whole of the machinery and patterns held at North Fremantle were transferred to Rocky Bay, and charged up at cost to capital account. A large proportion of the machinery at the implement works to-day has been in use for 20 or 30 years. In regard to the State hotels there is no depreciation shown to the full value. And the same thing applies to the trading concerns. Take the sawmills. Everybody knows that the timber trade during the past two years has been in a very bad condition. Even Millar's, who were the largest employers of labour, and were responsible for the biggest output of timber, were unable to declare a dividend this year owing to the dislocation of trade brought about by the war. How do the Government expect the State sawmills to be in a different position from the private mills? Just after the war started Millar's dismissed a large number of men, and if employment had not been found for them by the State those men would have had to fall back on the Charities Department. They approached the Government and asked for work. The men were in earnest, and we put them on in connection with the sawmills, and arranged that the married men should be allowed to earn 50s. per week and the single men 30s. per week. They were to cut sleepers and about £90,000 was spent in that direction. In carrying out this arrangement the Government were only doing what the previous

Government had done in connection with the Denmark estate. The difference was, however, that the land at Denmark was cleared in such a way that the money was entirely wasted. The sleepers which were cut improved by being allowed to dry and as soon as the war is over there will be a market for them. When I took office the manager of the sawmills stated that it would be unfair to expect the mills to carry the burden of that expenditure. If he were expected to do it he said he would not be able to carry on. I told him that the works should not pay interest on the amount which was spent because the cutting of the sleepers was an arrangement merely to provide work for unemployed.

The Minister for Works: Did you leave a minute to that effect?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; I told the manager that. When the present Minister for Works took office he decided to charge the sawmills with interest amounting to £7,000 on the expenditure involved.

The Minister for Works: Those sleepers are included in the assets.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The value of the sleepers, but not the interest.

The Minister for Works: I said you did quite right in cutting those sleepers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I claim that it was not right to charge saw mills interest on the £90,000 spent on work which was not then required. The Minister who represents the Government in another place caused a cable to be sent to England and telegrams to the Eastern States, which set out that the sawmills showed a deficit of £103,000. The leader writer of the *Melbourne Age* naturally thought that the deficit was a loss, and he wrote, pointing out the danger of a Government embarking on trading concerns. What are the facts? I have here a balance sheet which was handed by the Minister for Works to the Press, and at the time the sawmills were supposed to have shown a loss of £103,000 they actually had £12,000 to their credit.

The Minister for Railways: That is not cash; that is assets.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister knows that the stocks were valued at a low price.

Mr. Wansbrough: The sleepers were included.

The Minister for Works: I do not want to say much, but I could say a lot.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It is a pity for you to have to hold your mouth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The interest on the £90,000 should have come from revenue. Was interest charged on the work done at Denmark? Hon. members know that it was not. The only difference between these two works was that that carried out at Denmark represented a waste of money, while the work of cutting the sleepers has given us a valuable asset. As hon. members know, the accounts of the trading concerns close on the 30th June, and the balance sheets must be audited and placed on the Table of the House by the 30th September.

The Minister for Works: If this Bill passes there will be no trouble about that.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You do not require a Bill to do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Before I left office I was in the position to know the financial state of the implement works and sawmills, and yet it was several months later before we got the balance sheets. They were given to the Press with a footnote which set out that they were liable to be altered in the audit. It is almost an impossibility, owing to the great amount of work the Auditor General's Department has to do, to get the balance sheets audited by the 30th September. Every endeavour has been made during the past two years to get the balance sheets here at the earliest possible moment. Before I left office I was in a position to tell hon. members the financial condition of the works, yet it was months later before we received the balance sheet. The truth is there are so many balance sheets to get out at the one time that the Auditor General's staff requires to be doubled to satisfactorily cope with the work. The Minister for Railways has stated that the trading concerns are detrimental to the State. I have proof that they have been beneficial to the State. During February the meat stalls, brickworks, ferries, fish supply, hotels, implement works, dairies, shipping, and sawmills—the most abused of our trading concerns—showed a surplus of rev-



enue over expenditure amounting to £33,448; the total surplus of revenue over expenditure from all the trading concerns outside of railways and water supplies amounted to £44,049 in February, while the surplus for the eight months represented £136,342. This serves to bear out the predictions of the Treasurer who, on introducing his Estimates, said that he anticipated receiving from the trading concerns a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £83,808. In last month alone he received £33,000 of this from the concerns I have named, or a total of £44,049. These are the figures of the Government. In the past members of the Government persistently endeavoured to show the people how dangerous were the trading concerns to the financial position of the State. To-day the Government have produced figures showing a surplus of £136,000 from trading concerns and business undertakings other than the railways and water supply. I want hon. members to realise the danger in the Bill. When the chairman of the Children's Hospital waited on myself and Mr. Collier and, pointing to the large number of infants dying for want of pure milk, suggested that to protect the lives of the children it was necessary that the Government should undertake the supply of pure milk, we agreed to do it. If the Bill we are now considering had been in existence then we could not have inaugurated the pure milk supply until such time as Parliament met. I ask members to pause before they pass the Bill. It is unusual to oppose a measure on the third reading. Only once before, in 14 years of Parliamentary life, have I taken this action. I would not have taken it to-day had I not believed that the Bill is a party measure, detrimental to the interests of the State, and that it will not assist the Minister to bring about any improvement in our trading concerns, but will merely give him power to take action inimical to those concerns. I ask the Government to lay the Bill aside and show some confidence in future Administrations.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [8.25]: My justification for speaking on the third reading is that I regard some of the provisions of the Bill as mischievous and dangerous to the public welfare. This after-

noon the Premier declared that the Government had no intention of pushing any party legislation through between this and the end of the session, that he was quite prepared to consult the views of members on this side as to what should or should not be passed.

The Minister for Works: He had to go on with the Orders of the Day.

Mr. CARPENTER: He had no hesitation in wiping out the majority of the Orders of the Day. It is remarkable that, while expressing his willingness to meet members on this side in respect of so many of the Bills which we have been discussing for months past, the Premier should have made an exception of this one, which of all is most contentious from a party point of view.

The Minister for Works: It is not party, it is only business.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do not know whether there is any harmony between the Minister for Works and the Premier in respect of the Bill. I have a shrewd suspicion that it is the stubbornness of the Minister for Works which is attempting to force the Bill through in spite of the fact that the Premier realises that it is no time for party fighting. The Premier has declared from the public platform that this is a time for the cessation of party strife and the promotion of a national spirit. I regard the Premier as having sufficient honesty to refrain from making such a declaration from the public platform if in his heart he intended to come to the House and force party measures through with a majority of one vote. I have a suspicion that it is the Minister for Works we are up against, and not his colleagues of the Ministry. I can understand that, because I believe that the chief reason for the introduction of this Bill is that when hon. members now on the Treasury benches sat on this side of the House, they raised a continuous cry against the Government's policy of trading concerns.

The Minister for Works: And they were perfectly justified, too.

Mr. CARPENTER: We will see as to that presently.

Mr. Heitmann: This is where party comes in.

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It is party, absolutely.

Mr. CARPENTER: The point I am endeavouring to stress is that the hon. gentlemen now occupying the Treasury bench were so loud in their condemnation of a policy of State trading, and the Minister for Works, who is in charge of this Bill, was particularly so, they are now endeavouring to justify that hostility by pushing through a Bill of some sort. They dare not go to the country again without having made some show of carrying out when in office the hostility they professed so loudly when in opposition.

Mr. Hudson: They have to obey the instructions of their masters, the monopolists.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am not going to say that.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Oh, say it.

Mr. CARPENTER: But perhaps I am putting the same idea in a somewhat modified form when I say that they must placate that section. It is my honest conviction that this is a Bill for party purposes, is an attempt to justify their hostility to what the previous Government did with such beneficial effects to the country at large.

The Minister for Works: I can assure you it is nothing of the kind.

Hon. J. Scaddan: We are not prepared to accept your assurance.

Mr. CARPENTER: A continuous cry was raised by the Ministers when in opposition that the trading concerns must be condemned because they were not paying, were costing the country thousands of pounds. Is that the basis of the hostility to the trading concerns now? We then said, when advocating this policy, that we wanted only the same chance which every private business man wanted of establishing going concerns.

The Minister for Works: Any private concern would have been bankrupt long before now.

Mr. CARPENTER: No private business man would have been bankrupt if he had the necessary capital and had counted the cost. He would be a fool who would enter on such undertakings without counting the cost. In any private venture of any magnitude it is expected that for a year or two, perhaps more, there would be a deficit. No private business of any magnitude can be expected to show a profit in its first years. I am endeavouring to show that the Labour Govern-

ment asked in this regard to be treated just as an ordinary private individual in business, that the works be given an opportunity of establishing themselves and of proving that they could be made profitable. And every month that goes by proves the correctness of our contention. We do not hear so much to-day about the losses on the trading concerns. If the loss is mentioned at all, it is a tiny cry from the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. D. Connolly) about the fish shops. It is fair to remind present Ministers, who opposed us so bitterly on this question, that when on this side their chief cry was against the State steamers.

Hon. J. Scaddan: They have dropped that now.

Mr. CARPENTER: If there was one thing we grew tired of, it was of hearing the then leader of the Opposition (Hon. Frank Wilson) rising day after day with questions calling the attention of the country to the awful losses and the awful bungling in connection with the State steamers. Yet to-day he finds himself in the position that one of the most profitable of those concerns is the State steamers.

Mr. Wansbrough: Is that not due to the fact that war is on?

Mr. CARPENTER: I submit the hon. member's contention is not quite fair. I would point out to the member for Beverley that the Labour Government had to take the risk, war or no war, and if it be a fact that the war has made the steamship venture a little more profitable, it is also a fact that the war has adversely affected nearly every other of the State trading concerns. If he claims that the war has rendered the steamships more profitable, then, to be quite fair, he must admit that the war has militated against the other concerns and made them less profitable. But, in spite of the war, and of the consequent dislocation of trade, the passing of every month makes these trading concerns more profitable; and as the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has pointed out, had it not been for the surplus from trading concerns during the past few months, the deficit which is to-day beginning to open the eyes of Ministers would have been even larger.

The Minister for Works: Do you call the collecting of old debts profits?

Mr. CARPENTER: We pointed out to the Minister when he was on this side of the House, and to his colleagues, that it was not fair to quote the month's incomings and the month's expenditure; but that did not affect their criticisms.

The Minister for Works: I should like to point out one speech of mine in which I did that.

Hon. J. Scaddan: We should have to adjourn for a month to look up all your speeches on the subject.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Minister will not deny that it was pointed out again and again by us that it was unfair, and was misrepresenting the position, to take the monthly returns only.

The Minister for Works: You cannot find a speech of mine in which I did that.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You never make a speech, you always ramble.

Mr. CARPENTER: If the Minister says he did not use that argument, I accept his denial; but he knows it was used by members of his party from this side time after time. A good deal of the hostility to trading concerns was created by that very misrepresentation to which I am now referring, and it is only because time is on our side, because the facts are proving the justice of our then contentions, that Ministers have to bring in a miserable Bill of this sort so as to be able to say to their constituents by-and-bye, "We were opposed to State trading concerns, and we brought in a Bill to dispose of them." I question very much whether the Minister honestly intends disposing of any of those concerns.

The Minister for Works: I will sell them all if I get the chance; that is straight enough, is it not?

Mr. CARPENTER: Fortunately, the Minister has to consult the wishes of someone other than himself. It would be a sorry day for the country had he the power of a dictator to dispose of trading concerns without having to consult somebody more wise than himself.

The Minister for Works: You need not worry on that score.

Mr. CARPENTER: The war came just as these concerns were established, just as

the money had been expended, and as revenue would have come in but for the war; yet, in spite of that disability, the State trading concerns are proving themselves. This is shown in the figures quoted by the member for North-East Fremantle. I hope those figures will be published and will be read by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), who does not appear to have seen or heard of them previously. If they are published and read by the people, it will prove to them that the tale of losses, printed under big headlines in the newspapers, and which misled the public so wickedly, were untrue. And when the true facts come to be known, the public will roundly condemn those hon. gentlemen who posed as saving the country from loss, which they made the people believe were due to the trading concerns, but which they knew quite well were not so in fact at all.

The Minister for Works: The facts do not support you, you know.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am convinced that the policy of State trading is still approved by the vast majority of the people of the State, and that, therefore, this Bill is against the convictions of the people. I would not mind so much if the Government had behind them the approval of a public vote, if there had been an appeal to the people and the Government had come back with a majority pledged to introduce a Bill of this character. What I complain about and protest against is that this Bill is being forced on the House with the assistance of members on the cross benches who were never authorised by the votes of their electors to support a Bill of this character. I make bold to say that if the members of the Country party, who must accept the responsibility for pushing this Bill through, were to go back to their constituents, their action would not be endorsed.

The Minister for Works: They look happy on it, anyhow.

Mr. CARPENTER: There is only one of them present, and he always looks happy.

The Minister for Works: That is right; he has a clear conscience.

Mr. CARPENTER: It was most amazing to hear an interjection just now from the cross benches that if the Government desire to start a trading concern, they could

do so, and obtain the authority of Parliament afterwards, or something to that effect. That interjection throws a flood of light upon what is in the minds of some members who are helping to put this Bill through. But if they believe the Government, after the passage of this Bill, would possess the power which that interjection implies, they are making a serious mistake. Further than that, if they think there is any loophole at all which gives the Government power to start a trading concern, in spite of this Bill, they are not treating this House, or the country, honestly. Either this Bill will, or will not, do what it purports. The Minister in charge says that if it is left to him he will dispose of the trading concerns. I am not complaining of that. What I am complaining about is that the Government are being supported by members of this House, some of whom have the notion that, in spite of this Bill, if they want some concern started, it can be done.

The Minister for Works: They have got confidence in the people they are supporting.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am not so sure about that. It is not in the Bill. If it were part of the Bill I should be delighted to discuss the question of the confidence imposed in the present Government by members of the cross benches. Unfortunately, I cannot because the Standing Orders will not permit it. The Minister is getting support from the cross benches for this Bill evidently under a false understanding.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. CARPENTER: One hon. member from that side of the House intimated by interjection that in spite of the Bill trading concerns could be started by the Government and that they could justify themselves to Parliament afterwards.

The Minister for Works: It shows the good faith they have in us.

Mr. CARPENTER: That is what comes of having a coalition of parties who have but little in common, and having one party which has sold itself into the hands of the Government, who are manipulating it and using it for their own party purposes against the interests of the people. Only last year the farmers were called upon to pay £21,000 to the insurance companies for

the insurance of their wheat stacks, and £18,000 odd of that amount was clear profit to those companies.

The Minister for Railways: That is your stupidity.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Minister cannot deny the figures. If members of the Country party do not want a repetition of this they should at least keep the road open for the establishment of branches of insurance in connection with the wheat scheme, under which the Government could do what they have done in regard to the workers' compensation of Government employees. If this Bill is passed this cannot be done. There is evidently some understanding between the Country party and the Government that, if they pass this Bill for political purposes in order to save the face of Ministers, and if the Country party want something done the Government will do it. Is that treating the House or the country honestly? This is a measure brought in for purely party purposes. I am not going to allow myself to believe that the Government are going to tie themselves up in the way this Bill purports to do. The policy of State trading has justified itself. It has the approval of the majority of the people of the State, and is in keeping with the policy adopted by every civilised country. Great Britain, most conservative in its methods, is going in for national trading in a way which was never contemplated years ago.

The Minister for Railways: The Government get authority first.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Government had no authority, it simply went to work as a Government and established huge trading concerns. I believe that they did not even put a Bill through for the purpose. Although these trading concerns have been established purely for war purposes, I am convinced that when the war is over the people of Great Britain will have realised the benefit of national organisation, and will never go back to the old competitive order of things which existed two and a half years ago.

The Minister for Works: You do not call these concerns of yours organised trading concerns, do you?

Mr. CARPENTER: I do, though the

Minister may not. To me they are the scientific organisation of industry and trade, a policy which every sound economist to-day has advocated, pointing out that the old order has broken down and must fail, that there is only one sound policy to pursue, namely, for the State to take charge of concerns in which monopolies exist and so protect the people from their depredations. This Bill is an attempt to go back, to check the growth of public opinion, and prevent the people from doing what they may want to do ten years hence but will be unable to do if this Bill goes on the statute-book.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [8.52]: I have listened with amusement to the remarks of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter). Why can we not consider this Bill fairly, calmly, and quietly and in the interests of the people? Why cannot we determine to do the best that is possible for the people? I ask hon. members opposite to think, have these trading concerns worked any good to any section of the community?

Hon. J. Scaddan: The whole community.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They have not.

Hon. J. Scaddan: And no less a person amongst the community than the Treasurer himself.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Outside the implement works they have not meant the employment of a single additional man.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What about the sawmills?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The timber trade was well catered for by private companies. All the export that could be met was met before this trading concern was established by these private companies. Not one individual more has had work because the State sawmills have been established.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What about the State steamers?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No one has benefited by the State trading concerns.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What about State hotels?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You did not sell good liquor.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: This vast expenditure of public funds has not meant the employment of a single additional individual in the State except at the implement works at North Fremantle.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You are quite wrong.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Not at all. All the work done by the Government to-day was done by someone else before the Government undertook it.

Mr. Munsie: Who did the sawmilling in the karri country before the establishment of the State sawmills?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Only reckless men would have undertaken the task of erecting sawmills in the karri country at such an enormous cost. The hon. member knows that powellised karri has been used to take the place of good jarrah.

Mr. Munsie: Rubbish!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It was merely the cutting of karri to replace jarrah, which would have been cut had not karri mills been established. It is quite problematical yet whether we were justified in establishing sawmills in the karri country. I admit that up to date the powellising of karri has succeeded, but it is all a question of time. Time alone will prove whether powellised karri is equal to jarrah. I doubt if it ever will be considered equal to jarrah. We have yet to learn whether powellising is a satisfactory process, and have yet to exploit the markets of the world with powellised karri. It is also doubtful whether we will get a big export trade in that commodity.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Why deery your own products?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not deerying any of our valuable industries. Hon. members opposite say that they should be untrammelled if they get back upon the Treasury benches, and should be allowed to do what they please in this matter without consulting Parliament.

Hon. J. Scaddan: If we get the will of the people, who not?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They should not expect to be placed in that position.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You did it the other day.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Constitutional measures must be followed. No one objects to any enterprise being shown by any Government in a legitimate direction, but no Government should be allowed to establish any industry at any time and in any place they please.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You are doing it now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, we are not. I have just been down to the karri country. I find that the mills there are fine mills and have been put up at enormous cost. They have absorbed hundreds of thousands of pounds but have not meant the employment of a single additional worker.

Mr. Munsie: Nonsense!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Did the late Government want State trading concerns to injure or to benefit someone? No one has been benefited, certainly not the worker. Why did we want these timber mills?

Hon. J. Scaddan: The question is, why do you want this Bill at this stage?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It would have been better if we had brought in the Bill when we had more time in which to discuss it. Why do hon. members oppose it?

Mr. Munsie: Because it is against our principles. We would be poor old things if we did not stick up for our principles.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member comes here to establish State trading concerns at any cost. It is not part of my creed to enter into competition with other people in any way. I confess I believe in private enterprise, but not private enterprise uncontrolled. As regards monopolists, sweaters, and exploiters of the people, I am prepared to join in dealing with them. Reference has been made to the attitude on this Bill of hon. members occupying the cross benches. Why should they not support the Bill? Their constituents have been denied railway facilities in order that these trading concerns might be established—established with the very moneys voted to supply their railway wants.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What railways are you building?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We are not building trading concerns. Members on the cross benches have a right

to say that their constituents were denied transport facilities by the previous Government so that trading concerns might be established. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) said the farmers had been called upon to pay fire insurance premiums totalling £22,000, whereas the insurance companies had paid only £2,000 for losses, and that thus the companies made a profit of £20,000.

Mr. Carpenter: No. I said £18,000.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Can members on the cross benches regard the hon. member's contention as serious? Would £2,000 pay the insurance companies' expenses? Let it be remembered that for five years the present Opposition sat on the Government benches without making so much as an attempt to establish State insurance.

Hon. J. Scaddan: We were busy establishing farmers.

Mr. Carpenter: Yes; and in undoing the mischief of the Minister's land boom.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The member for Fremantle blames all the troubles of the late Government on what he calls my land boom. No one will ever be able to accuse the hon. member of booming anything but himself. Had it not been for my so-called land boom, there would have been no work to-day.

Mr. Carpenter: And no deficit.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: At all events, the work then done is the only work producing employment to-day. The State trading concerns, which have absorbed an enormous sum of money—

Hon. J. Scaddan: Nonsense!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Are doing no good to anybody. I admit that the implement works have given a certain amount of employment which would not have been given but for their establishment. But they have not turned out good machinery. Some of their machinery has proved useless. The previous Government, unrestrained by any sense of responsibility, rushed in, bought up an old rattle-trap concern in South Australia, brought it over here, and set to work making ploughs, harvesters, drills, and all sorts of machinery. Thus it was utterly impossible for them to succeed in making any good implements. They should have set to work to manufacture one good and serviceable imple-

ment for a start. The failure was due to no fault of management.

Mr. Carpenter: I have heard the State-made ploughs praised by everybody who used them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I say no to that. There have been serious complaints. However, it is no use arguing about the quality of the machinery produced, because that is beside the question. The question is, what good have the State trading concerns done for Western Australia?

Mr. Munsie: They have done harm to some particular friends of yours, and they have done a considerable amount of good to the country.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What has all this to do with the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The leader of the Opposition is becoming a little annoyed. Of course, he believes in State trading concerns, and I do not; and that is the difference between us. I believe, too, that the majority of the House are against State trading concerns.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You started a potato-peeling industry.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: A very useful industry, too. The hon. member is pleased to be flippant. I rose really to protest against the opposition to the passing of this measure. If State trading concerns are to be established, Parliament should first be consulted. The present leader of the Opposition, some sessions ago, asked for a cessation of party politics. We on the other side sat in the House day after day and inquired after his intentions. We never learnt what he was going to do. But we woke up one morning to find that a steamer, the "Kangaroo," had been bought for £160,000.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Once more you do not know what you are talking about.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman failed to consult Parliament.

The Minister for Works: He made an absolute denial of the purchase.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Enterprises which require considerable amounts of capital to establish, and also considerable amounts of capital for carrying on, should be approved by Parliament before being entered upon. Only after all the legitimate

functions of Government are provided for, would Parliament be justified in establishing trading concerns; and, so far, this country has never been in that position. Over a million sterling has been spent on trading concerns.

Mr. Munsie: Where do you get that million of money from?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not see any reason for the manifestation of feeling in connection with this Bill. The measure is one which might well be considered calmly and dispassionately. Let hon. members opposite furnish some reasons for the rejection of the measure. The only reason I have heard so far is that the late Government were returned to establish State trading concerns. If that be so, we ought to know from the leader of the Opposition, of all members, why it is in the best interests of the workers that State trading concerns shall be established.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [9.11]: I move an amendment—

*That the word "now" be struck out, and "this day six months" be added to the motion.*

I should like to offer a few comments on the calm and collected thoughts so freely distributed around the Chamber by the Minister for Railways. That hon. gentleman, however, did not in the slightest degree touch the question before the House. On this Bill we are not discussing whether it is desirable to establish, or dispose of, trading concerns. The Opposition consider that there is no warrant for pressing a Bill of this nature through Parliament, because it will not assist in winning the war, or in squaring the finances, or in enabling the people to be better fed and clothed. The only thing it is likely to do is to provide a cheap form of amusement, because the chief director happens to be the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: That comes well from you.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Let me point out to hon. members opposite that, when previously protesting against the pushing through of this Bill, we were distinctly told that the Government intended to go on with it because it formed part of their policy. Will the Minister deny that?

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. J. SCADDAN : Because it was part of their policy to prevent the establishment of State trading concerns.

The Minister for Works : To prevent their establishment without Parliamentary authority.

Hon. J. SCADDAN : Further, because they desired power to dispose of the existing concerns. Let us see how much there is in that. In the first place, this Bill is not required so long as the present Government remain in office. It is not part of their policy to establish trading concerns, and they do not require this Bill to prevent them from doing something they have no intention of doing. Viewed from that aspect, therefore, the measure is of no value. Again, the Bill is not needed to enable the Government to dispose of State trading concerns now operating in this State. On Ministers' own showing the Bill is not urgent, and not even required at this stage. Thus there can be only one reason for the Bill being pushed through at present. That reason is that it is part of the policy of the Government of the day to prevent any future Government, notwithstanding any mandate of the people, from establishing trading concerns. That is a clear statement of the facts.

The Minister for Works : Oh, no.

Hon. J. SCADDAN : The Minister for Railways has just said that. He said that the object of the Bill was to prevent any future Government formed by members on this side from establishing a trading concern without the authority of Parliament.

The Minister for Railways : Yes ; without Parliamentary authority. We do not want the Constitution flouted again as you flouted it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN : This Bill can only apply to a future Government. There is no reason why the Bill should become law until after the general election, and then only if the people endorse the attitude of the Government on the subject of the trading concerns. Then we shall not be able to complain. But while the Government are only here temporarily they have no right to make use of the limited power they possess to prevent this House from giving free expression to the will of the people. The Minister for Works knows well that underlying the Bill there is one prin-

ciple and that is to use the power possessed by his party in another Chamber to baulk the will of the people as expressed at the last elections. The Minister for Industries talked a great deal about our having purchased the steamer "Kangaroo" without Parliamentary authority. We would do the same thing to-morrow under similar circumstances. That steamer is actually helping to save the financial position of the State to some extent at the present time. Are we always to be in the position that we dare not do anything unless we come to Parliament and pass a measure through the privileged Chamber which represents the very interests that are likely to be affected ? How do we expect to get anything like that through the Legislative Council if we pass the present Bill ? Did Disraeli seek Parliamentary authority when he purchased four million pounds worth of shares in the Suez Canal ? The example set by that grand old man Sir John Forrest, who purchased the Great Southern Railway by executive act should have been followed by the Daglish Government in connection with the Midland Railway. The Minister for Works knows that if we bring about publicity in connection with matters where the State is going to step in, monopolists will get to work as has been done in America. We had to purchase meat and sell it in the market because, on the admission of our friends opposite, there was a meat ring in existence. They followed our example. They purchased but they handed back the control to the people who actually constituted the ring. The Government purchased cattle to the value of £118,000 and they have entered into a contract for the purchase of £140,000 worth more.

The Minister for Works : We completed the contract you left on the stocks.

Hon. J. SCADDAN : Without reference to Parliament after having conceded a higher price. And this too when the owners could not dispose of their stock which was dying on their properties. They pledged the State to the expenditure of £140,000 and before they had actually made provision for shipping space.

The Minister for Works : That has all been refuted ; why repeat it ?

Hon. J. SCADDAN : It has not been refuted. The statement was made by the



Minister for Lands the other night that the cattle were to be delivered at Derby last August and at that time they had not the slightest idea that they would be able to get the "Moirs" to lift them.

The Minister for Works: Why all this repetition?

Mr. Munsie: Because it is true.

The Minister for Works: We know it is untrue.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: We have heard the bitterest complaints against the operations of the trading concerns largely from the point of view of the financial position. We have heard our breezy optimist the Minister for Industries talking about the expenditure of millions of money on trading concerns while everybody else was starving for railway facilities. Let us make a comparison between the railway construction during our term of office and the railway construction during the term of the Government the hon. gentleman was a member of. We constructed railways at a more rapid rate than ever they attempted to do.

The Minister for Works: You had the money and squandered it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: That is why our friends on the cross Ministerial benches are supporting the Government now. The trading concerns, according to our friends opposite, are supposed to be responsible for the present financial position of the State. In eight months we have gone to the bad to the extent of £690,000.

Hon. P. Collier: Shocking, just a million a year, a world's record.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It cannot be held that the trading concerns are responsible for that result. It would have been a million now but for the trading concerns. I find in the official returns issued by the Treasury and published in this morning's paper that our trading concerns for the eight months of last year returned £2,063,111. That includes railways and water supplies. For the eight months of the current financial year the figures total £2,126,435 or an increase of £63,324. I also find that the expenditure on our trading concerns for the eight months of last year was £1,558,000, and for the current year £1,636,000, or an increase of £77,273. So that including railways and water supply the trading concerns have shown a difference of something like £6,000 to the bad in comparison

with the eight months of last year. But if we take the railways and water supplies out, we find the position is different. The railway revenue has decreased £150,523, while the expenditure has only decreased £49,751, or the railways alone have shown a difference to the bad for the eight months of £100,772. Water supplies show a difference of £27,358. If we take those two together—railways and water supplies—from our trading concerns receipts and expenditure, we find the Government are in a better position than their predecessors for the eight months to the tune of no less than £314,170. And yet they abuse the trading concerns. Add that to the £690,000 and we find that their total debit balance would have been a million. The present Government have been urging that the trading concerns and interest have been mainly responsible for their difficulties. The increased interest bill for the eight months only amounted to £86,338, and the trading concerns have made a difference of £314,000, so that after all the proof is definite that they are going to the bad because of the want of business acumen being applied to the departments they are controlling. The trading concerns have saved the position to a considerable extent.

The Minister for Works: I wish I could believe it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Taking the reduction in the expenditure from the reduction in the earning capacity of the railways, we find they have gone to the bad to the tune of £100,772. The same thing applies to water supply and sewerage, there being a decrease in revenue of £6,837 and an increase in expenditure of £18,521. Thus it will be found that in those two items the trading concerns have gone to the bad to the extent of £128,000. If we add that to the plus difference on the trading concerns for the eight months of this year, as compared with the eight months of last year, we find the Government are in a better position than were the late Government, to the extent of £314,178, while the increased interest bill amounts to only £80,000. Consideration of these figures alone should be enough to induce the Government to stay their hand at present. But I am afraid that they will not do so, because their existence as a Government

depends on their opposition to the trading concerns. Where is the necessity for pushing the Bill through when all the other Bills, designed to improve the financial position, are to be thrown overboard in order to allow the Government to get into recess? Nothing matters so long as their policy in respect of trading concerns can be given effect to. They talk about dropping controversial questions, and yet they persist in sticking to this Bill of one clause.

The Minister for Works: Will you tell us exactly what you are doing?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am trying to defeat the Bill.

The Minister for Works: I thought you were wasting time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

The Minister for Works: I withdraw.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Members on the Government cross benches have intimated to Ministers that they must rush into recess to avoid criticism and possibly an appeal to the country, and get two or three months in their offices, after which they are to come back and tell us what they have done by way of introducing economy. It is well known that they have now been eight months introducing economy, and that the expenditure is increasing in every direction.

The Minister for Works: You sowed the seed, and we are reaping the harvest.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Talk about seed! The present Government allowed poultry farmers to starve, because it was not convenient to make provision for the required bran and pollard. And this is the Government of business acumen, who are prepared to let the ship of State drift, if only they can get into recess. Then, on second consideration, they make the stipulation "We must get this Bill through, in case our friends opposite come back to power, and endeavour to establish further trading concerns." The squaring of our finances is not a party question, but that can go overboard, while the Bill, which is not required, except for party purposes, must be put through. These are the Ministers who prate on public platforms of the necessity for dropping party strife and promoting national aspirations. A little while ago the Minister for Works was candid enough to admit that they had brought

the Bill down because it was part of their party policy.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Minister distinctly said so in answer to a question as to why he persisted with the Bill. He said, "Because it is part of the policy of the Government."

The Minister for Works: That may be so, but I did not say party policy.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The present Government are essentially a party Government. They are controlled by the Employers' Federation.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Who was it that denied the Government the power to control prices?

The Minister for Works: You can't control your rank and file. Your supporters would let a ship burn rather than infringe rules. Look at the "Bambra," at Geraldton! It is a disgrace to any union that a ship should be allowed to burn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Bill is not required by the Government for any purpose at present. There are only two points in it, the main one being contained in Clause 4, which provides that no future Government shall establish a trading concern. There is no hurry for it. If the credit of the State can wait three months, the Bill also can wait. The Government have dropped all non-party Bills, making financial provision to help the State, but this Bill remains.

Hon. P. Collier: St. George's terrace has ordered them to go on with it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It can be nothing else. Many of the decisions arrived at in Cabinet by the present Government first find birth in the Palace Hotel.

The Minister for Works: How do you know that?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The dogs are barking it in the street. Does the Minister require the powers, or the restriction, rather, which this Bill places on a future Government to come to Parliament for approval before establishing a new trading concern? The Minister knows well he does not require it. Yet we are asked not to prolong the session, to let things slide, not to discuss matters.

The Minister for Works: You are not asked not to discuss anything, you are asked to discuss the Bill, and you will not do it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I am discussing the Bill and giving reasons why it should be read this day six months. There is no necessity for it to be read now. If we can throw out Bills dealing with so important a matter as the finances, if those matters can stand over for three months, then this Bill, too, might be allowed to stand over. The Bill will not help the Government or the country. My objection is that the clause in the Bill to which I have taken the strongest exception is a party action pure and simple, inserted with the object of preventing the establishment of trading concerns by any future Government that may hold views different from those of members now on the Treasury benches, notwithstanding that that future Government might have a majority of the people behind them. Is it the policy of the Liberals to take every opportunity which presents itself of putting measures on the statute-book which will prevent the will of the people being given effect to? Do they want to leg-ropé the people of Western Australia in the future? It is useless asking members in this Chamber to drop party actions, and not to take the opportunity of discussing matters introduced by the Government, because we have here evidence of the Government's desire to bring in part of their policy so as to prevent any future Government doing something they may desire to do. The present Government may occupy their present positions for a few months, but this Bill, if passed, will have application in the future. It will mean that any future Government, no matter how large its majority, must, before establishing a trading concern, approach Parliament. And I would not so much object to the provision that we approach Parliament if Parliament represented the people. But there are two Houses of Parliament, one of which comprises representative, of the exploiters of the country, and we have to run the gauntlet of that Chamber. By this Bill the Government proposes giving power to one House of Parliament to prevent the will of the people being given effect to in the matter of the establishment of trading concerns. That

is nothing but party legislation, and yet we on this side are asked to drop party politics. Can we, as an Opposition, tamely sit without protesting against this attempt to defeat the will of the people? If the Government are prepared to accept the will of the people on the point they can obtain an expression of that will to-morrow. I doubt whether there has ever been such an opportunity as has presented itself during the past few weeks of appealing to the people.

The Minister for Works: You do not want an appeal to the people.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It is not a matter which interests me as an individual, but it does interest me as a democrat that there shall be nothing done to prevent the will of the people being given expression to in the statute-book.

Mr. Heitmann: What will be their cry next time? It was the finances and trading concerns formerly.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Yes. What will be the next? Business acumen—that is gone. So long as the people have confidence in me, I shall come here and express my views to the best of my ability, in exposing the Minister's want of business acumen.

The Minister for Works: You are entitled to do that.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Of course, and it is so easy too. Can the Government point to any one department in the administration of which business acumen has been displayed? Twenty-five thousand men have gone out of the State, which means a great loss to the community. I ask the Minister in all seriousness whether he realises what the loss to the State actually is by the withdrawal of those 25,000 men?

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

Hon. J. SCADDAN: It has much to do with it. The Government should recognise the position and should make provision to meet it. In every department the administrative expenditure has been increased. The *West Australian* this morning published official figures.

The Minister for Works:—It is not a fact all the same.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I find there has been an increase under Special Acts, and that, of course, is largely made up by the interest bill. His Excellency the Governor, the

Houses of Parliament and Treasury show an increase of £5,700; education an increase of £8,900; Lands and Agriculture, increase £19,339; Public Works, a decrease of £193—but not in administration, in expenditure on works. And so on in every department the administrative expenses have increased. Does that show the application of business acumen? Surely the Government must appreciate the fact that our revenue is affected in every direction by the withdrawal of population. We are told that the only remedy for the present financial position is increased production; but we cannot have increased production when our population in able-bodied workers is decreasing. We must face the position as we find it, and the position to-day is that 25,000 men have gone away. According to Knibbs, the average wealth-producing value of the population of Australia, man, woman, and child, is £48; in round figures, say £50. The average value of an able-bodied wealth-producer would be represented by five times the average for the whole population, that is to say, £250 each individual; multiply that sum by 25,000, and it will be seen what the State has lost by the withdrawal of those men to fight at the Front. In these circumstances are our departments to be kept up at the huge expenditure of the past? Can we afford to increase the cost of departments and close down Parliament, throwing overboard all our financial proposals, but putting through this purely party measure? We are told this is not a time for party bickering. The newspapers published in St. George's Terrace tell us that. But why do not the *West Australian* and the *Daily News* expose the true attitude being adopted by the Government in this Bill?

Mr. Thomas: They got into trouble when they did.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: They did not get into much trouble; they knew the Government did not mean it. Whatever may be individual opinions as to the desirability of carrying on trading concerns, there can be no difference of opinion as to the lack of urgency for this Bill at the present time. The Government will not act under it; it will not apply to them, because they would not establish trading concerns in the first place, and in the second place the Bill is not required if the Government

desire to sell. Ministers should at least show sincerity in their utterances. It is useless the Attorney General claiming to be a member of a Government which desires to see party legislation dropped. The Government tell us they desire to get into recess only in order that they may more closely watch the administration of the departments. They say they do not want party bickering, but what does the Attorney General mean by this Bill?

The Attorney General: Now start all over again.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: I want to ask the Attorney General whether he does not see in this Bill a distinctly party action on the part of the Government.

The Attorney General: I cannot see it.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: We had an admission to-day that someone was deaf; if the Attorney General cannot see that then he must be blind. Can the Attorney General show me any part of the Bill which will help the Government in something they want to do which they cannot do now; can he tell me there is anything they want to do in the direction of disposing of trading concerns that cannot be done if this Bill is not passed? Those are the only two questions concerned; and the Attorney General cannot answer them. If the Bill is not required for one or other of those reasons it is not essential, and anything which is not essential may very well be added to the slaughtered innocents. The Attorney General cannot deny, seeing that he has assisted his colleagues in going back financially nearly half a million, despite the fact that they had £314,000 more, that if it is not now urgent to deal with the finances there is no present urgency for dealing with a Bill of this sort. My amendment is that the Bill be read three months hence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—on amendment) [10.0]: I do not propose to follow the leader of the Opposition in all his ramifications, but many of his statements were not exactly in accordance with the Bill. When introducing the measure I stated that the great bulk of it consisted of clauses which were necessary in order to put the State trading concerns on a proper business footing. I said that the Bill which had been brought in by the previous Govern-

ment—I believe in all good faith—was thought to be going to carry out that proposition. It has been found, however, by the professional accountants and the Auditor General that the Bill did not give that freedom which was necessary, not only to keep the accounts correctly, but to keep them economically and assist the concerns.

Hon. P. Collier: We are not contesting that part of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From that point of view it, therefore, became necessary for a Bill to be framed which would put these concerns upon a proper footing, and this Bill does it. Of the other portions of the Bill there were two propositions. One was that no further trading concerns could be established unless the conditions of the Constitution were carried out. The Constitution provides that matters of this sort shall be dealt with by Parliament. Parliament means both Houses of Parliament, and until the Constitution has been amended it is impossible for any Government constitutionally to alter the provisions that are there laid down. The other clause gave the Government power to dispose of trading concerns if it was thought necessary and proper to do so. When I introduced the Bill I could easily have glossed over these facts, but came straight out into the open.

Hon. P. Collier: We would have discovered it had you done so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member will admit that if a man is a sinner he will go a long way towards forgiveness if he admits his sins.

Hon. P. Collier: Especially if he knows that everybody will find them out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This Bill is before the House for its consideration, and an unwarranted action has been taken this evening on the third reading for the purpose of discussing it when hon. members knew full well that, unless an amendment was moved, as has now been done by the leader of the Opposition, the Minister in charge would be unable to reply to any of the arguments that have been used. That was the reason why I interjected so much during the debate.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I suppose you did not interject while I was moving the amend-

ment which gave you the opportunity of speaking.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I only gave the hon. gentleman what he asked for. With his usual flim-flam flag-waving business, which he uses to great advantage, no doubt, amongst his constituents, the hon. gentleman wanted to know if this Bill would win the war. No one pretended that it was designed for that purpose.

Hon. P. Collier: Why are we bothering about it then?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason is that through the foolishness and recklessness of the previous Government we are hampered by a number of trading concerns—

Hon. P. Collier: Your figures do not show that you are hampered.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have to deal with them as trustees of the State, and we must have the Bill to enable us to give the trading concerns a fair chance. Then the hon. member asked if this would square the finances.

Mr. Munsie: Is this a party measure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When this Bill is put into operation, if we are unable to dispose of these works and have to run them, we will be better able to stop the drift, even if we do not make a profit, than under the present conditions. Then the hon. member asks if this Bill will feed the people. It is not intended that it should feed the people.

Mr. Munsie: The Bill is intended to gag the Labour party.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has a plain object. The leader of the Opposition asserted that it did not require an Act of Parliament to stop the Government from starting any other trading concern because their policy was against it. He said that we could sell these concerns without the Bill. If so, why is he kicking up a bother about it? If he could defeat this Bill and we could sell without the Bill, we would have a very good chance of putting that into operation, and he could not say a word in regard to it.

Mr. Carpenter: You would not have had the courage.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a stronger position from his side of the question with an alteration to Clause 25

than there would be if he knocked it out and we proceeded to sell without reference to Parliament. The very alterations of the clause gave them more protection against the sale of these concerns than there would be if the Bill was knocked out altogether.

Mr. Munsie: It gives your friends of the Upper House more protection against the establishment of other concerns.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the hon. member and myself both have friends in another place.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The clause was forced upon you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) expressed the hope that the Ministry would withdraw the Bill. He had better give up the hope because, if I have anything to do with it, the Bill will not be withdrawn. We shall carry it and carry it to-night. I could say a lot with regard to the finances of these different trading concerns, but will not do so. I give the hon. member this credit, that he would not like me to take up an hour or so in dealing with the various circumstances that led up to the establishment of these trading concerns. The balance sheets show clearly what has happened in regard to them, and we as a Government have to do what we consider ought to be done and take the responsibility for so doing. This Bill will enable us to do this. What is the use of talking about State sawmills? They have put through £650,000 worth of trade and the profit on this has been £1,824. Is there a business man in the gallery or elsewhere who would be satisfied with that? Even a fried fish shop would do better than this with its capital. The hon. member talks about the implement works which lost £60,000 in the course of their trading up to the 30th June last. Must we not try to stop that drift?

Mr. Foley: Are you trying to talk to the gallery now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am trying to talk to intelligent men, but do not expect to find them on that side of the floor of the House. The hon. member referred to the operations at the engineering works in connection with the Mundaring Weir. I admit that we are doing a good job in that connection, and a job which is a credit to

the works. But one swallow does not make a summer. The hon. member drew a horrible picture about the children dying for want of good milk. The inference to be drawn from his remarks was that this Government would not endeavour to prevent such a thing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say anything of the kind. I said if this Bill had been passed at that time this is what would have been done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know that. If the steps then taken saved the life of only one child, even if the State dairy cost a large sum of money—

Hon. P. Collier: Which it did not do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should be well content. Anything that we can do to save our infant life we ought to do. I am quite sure that every hon. member of this House would condone the action of the Government in an emergency of that sort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is a different matter altogether. It was not a legal action under this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Would not the hon. member agree to committing an illegal action if it meant the saving of the lives of the children?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would not take any notice of it, but perhaps someone else would.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member talked about sleepers and the State sawmills. There were £90,000 worth of sleepers cut by the late Government in order to provide men with employment who wanted it. I do not grumble at giving men employment, and if I had the money and the work to do I would give the employment and take the risk. I did not grumble about the interest, but simply said that the interest should be brought to account. I did bring it to account on the balance sheet, and in order to do justice to the manager and to carry out the promise given by the hon. member himself, I then put my footnote on the bottom of the balance sheet, and it will be found there to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Quite correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When this Bill is passed it will enable all this kind of thing to be done lawfully. I did it unlawfully, but hon. members did not send me

to gaol, although they blackguarded me enough. At all events I tried to square up the balance sheets, and did so. This Bill, when passed, will assist the Government to keep the accounts of the trading concerns in the same way as the accounts of private businesses are kept. The House perhaps will hardly credit that under the Audit Act the original vouchers of the trading concerns, even vouchers for only a few pence, have to be sent away from where they originated to the Treasury, and have to be kept there, and that in order to enable the business of the trading concerns to be carried on clerks have to be employed to make copies of the vouchers. This measure stops all that.

Hon. P. Collier: No one objects to that feature of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I must explain what the Bill proposes. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) devoted the main part of his speech to asserting that this is a party measure. If hon. members opposite think that, I shall not try to argue them out of their fixed opinion. However, I told the Opposition plainly that the policy of the Labour party was to establish trading concerns, while the policy of the Liberal party was against the establishment of trading concerns. All the flip-flap and talk in the world against that will make no difference.

Mr. Carpenter: Is that not saying this is a party measure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as the Government are concerned, the Bill is there and we intend to carry it. Unfortunately I am suffering from a bad cold; but if hon. members wish to discuss the measure further they can do so as far as you, Sir, will permit. With that I commend the measure to the House, and I think that when it gets into operation it will be a good thing both for the State trading concerns and for Western Australia.

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

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [10.18]: I support the amendment. When the people of Western Australia were last appealed to, the majority expressed themselves in favour

of the establishment of State trading concerns. That being so, and seeing that at the very longest only eight months can elapse before the people will be appealed to again, I fail to see why the Government want to press this Bill now. Probably the Government will deny, though there should be no denying, that the Bill has been introduced for only one purpose—that of preventing the Labour party, if they get a majority in the Assembly, from establishing State trading concerns. At all events, that is the main object of the measure. It is for that reason every member on this side of the House has opposed the Bill at every stage, although we are quite prepared to assist the Government in putting the trading concerns on absolutely sound business lines. Personally, I am prepared to render assistance towards that end to-night. I would have been quite prepared to support the measure had the Government agreed to the deletion of the clauses which were deleted in this House, retaining only the machinery clauses for the better administration of the trading concerns.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would not assist them then. It would not be in order then.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am prepared to assist the present or any future Government to put the trading concerns on sound business lines. But how can the present Government claim that that is the object of the Bill when, under this measure, the Upper House will be able to prevent any future Government from establishing any trading concern whatsoever? Let me refer to the remarks of the Minister for Railways. He asked what good the trading concerns had done to anybody in this State. Outside the implement works, he said, the trading concerns had not given employment to one individual. By interjection I inquired of the Minister how many men had been employed in the karri mills; but he made no reply. I wish to contradict flatly one statement made by the Minister, and to say that the late Government, in establishing State saw-mills in the karri country, were not entering into competition with any private timber company in this State. It is many years ago since Millars' timber company operated in karri. The whole of their mills are now operating in jarrah. The State sawmills,

with the exception of the Railway Department's mill—which cuts exclusively for local consumption—are not cutting a stick of jarrah. I was greatly surprised by the remarks of the Minister for Railways, who, more than any other member of this House, is looked upon as a breezy optimist. The hon. gentleman practically decried everything with the exception of settling people on the land. I ask, is it a fair thing to condemn, in particular, the State sawmills, seeing that we have the statement of our experts that the karri forests of Western Australia are worth 15 millions of money. The Minister casts that statement to the winds. Why? Because private enterprise has a monopoly of jarrah, and he therefore wants jarrah alone to supply the markets of the world. It is a shame that any member of this House should decry such an industry as the karri industry. The late Government deserve every credit for entering into the powellising agreement and for establishing karri mills, thereby turning one of our unutilised natural resources into a marketable commodity. Moreover, the late Government were endeavouring to do what the present Minister for Railways has for many years been trying to do—make the karri country available for dairying. It is recognised that the karri lands are the most suitable in this State for the dairying industry. Thus the establishment of State sawmills served the double purpose of converting the karri into marketable timber and rendering it possible, by clearing the land, for this State to supply its own requirements in the way of dairy products. being a trades hall party. I personally am I realise the uselessness of urging these considerations on the Minister for Works, who has definitely told us that he intends to carry the Bill in spite of all opposition. However, I will not let the Bill pass without recording my personal protest, at all events. A good deal has been said by the Minister as to the late Government being a trades hall Government, as to the party on this side being a trades hall party. I personally am proud to be a member of the trades hall of this or any other country, and I am proud to be a unionist and a representative of the Labour party. When asked whether this measure was introduced for the purpose of

winning the war, or for the purpose of squaring the finances, or for the purpose of helping our people to feed and clothe themselves, the Minister for Works replied that the measure was not introduced for any of those purposes. I contend its purpose is to gag the Labour party in case they should get into power. The Minister cannot deny that. It is absolutely surprising to hear the Minister refuse to accept the figures quoted by the leader of the Opposition and by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) from the Government's own Treasury figures. The Minister will insist that the State trading concerns are the cause of the deficit. I contend that had it not been for these trading concerns the present Government would have reached the two-million limit inside five months instead of in eight months. The Treasurer himself estimates that during this financial year he will receive £106,000 from the trading concerns. If they maintain their present average, he will receive from them over £140,000 in these 12 months. And still we find Ministers absolutely decrying the trading concerns. In spite of the cry of the present Government that party politics should be dropped and party measures withheld, never in the five years I have been a member of Parliament have I known a measure of a more strongly party nature than this to be introduced. We have been asked why we oppose the Bill. I interjected, "Because it is opposed to our principles." I wish to emphasise that statement now. I support the amendment because the Bill is opposed to the principles of the party of which I am a member, and because I believe it is opposed to the wishes of the majority of the people of Western Australia. We would be poor old representatives of the people if we did not take every opportunity of voicing what we believe to be the opinion of the majority of the people, and thereby doing our utmost to prevent the present Government from gagging future Administrations. I hope the amendment will be carried, because the measure can be of no advantage whatever to the present Government. There is not much fear of their attempting to establish State trading concerns. They admit their policy is against State trading concerns. Further, in existing conditions there is nothing to pre-



vent the Government from selling the State trading concerns if they are game to do it. Ministers have gained the Treasury bench by absolute misrepresentation of the position as regards the trading concerns under our administration. They dare not face the people if they get rid of those concerns. I challenge them to sell any one of the concerns. If they did, the people would rise in their wrath against the Government, and send back the Labour party not only with a majority, but with 34 against 16, as in 1911, so making a clean sweep of the Government attempting to interfere with established industries which to-day are conclusively proving themselves to be in the best interests of the people of Western Australia.

Question (that the word "now" proposed to be struck out stand part of the question) put and passed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question now is that the words, "This day six months" be added.

Question put and negatived.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [10.35]: I move—

*That the words "on Tuesday next" be inserted.*

*[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	13

Majority for .. 3

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Gilchrist	Mr. Varyard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munste
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Foley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Lambert	

(Teller.)

Pair: For—Mr. E. B. Johnston; Against—Hon. W. D. Johnson.

Question thus passed.

Question as amended put and passed.

### DISCHARGE OF ORDERS.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [10.40]: I move—

*That the following Orders of the Day be discharged:—*

*Enemy Subjects Disability Bill.—To be read a second time.*

*Betting Suppression Bill.—To be read a second time.*

*Entertainments and Retail Sales Taxation Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate (Mr. Scaddan).*

*Totalisator Duty Act Amendment Bill.—To be considered in Committee.*

*Permanent Reserves Act Amendment Bill.—To be read a second time.*

*Permanent Reserves Bill (No. 3).—To be read a second time.*

*Permanent Reserves Bill (No. 2).—Committee Progress, Clause 2.*

*Special Lease Enabling Bill.—Second reading. Adjourned debate (Mr. Hudson).*

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [10.41]: Does the Premier intend to go on?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): This is not going on. There is nothing debatable in this.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is only about a week's debate.

The Attorney General: Are you going to obstruct the business of the House?

Hon. P. COLLIER: You may call it obstruction.

The Attorney General: It is a threat.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are entitled to some explanation, some reasons why this whole batch of most important Bills should be discharged from the Notice Paper. Let us consider some of these Bills. There is the Enemy Subjects Disability Bill. I do not know that that will be much loss.

The Attorney General: You promised to support it, any way.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then we have the Betting Suppression Bill. Why is it not proposed to go on with that? It is a Bill upon which the Government almost staked their existence, a measure which was considered important enough for the Government to invoke the aid of the united churches of the State, and to call a public meeting in the Perth town hall, with a view to securing endorsement for the measure. The Colonial Secretary invoked for the Bill the aid of practically all the people in this State. I do not know whether it was because he failed to secure a full measure of support at the public meeting that the Government have got cold feet in respect of the Bill. Members are entitled to protest against the reasons given to the public for the dropping of the Bill. In justification of the Government's change of front, the Colonial Secretary has said that after a careful counting of heads in the Assembly the Government had come to the conclusion that they could not reinstate the Bill as first introduced in the Council. The Colonial Secretary had no justification for such a statement. By that statement he and the Government have attempted to place upon this House the responsibility for the dropping of the Bill, whereas it should be allowed to rest on their own want of courage. Shall we ever forget the eloquence with which the Colonial Secretary declared that at a time like this it was criminal that the people should be patronising horse-racing to the extent they were doing. Notwithstanding all the protestations on the part of the Government for reform in this direction, we now have a proposal to discharge the Bill from the Notice Paper. Is the Bill being dropped because of the hostility of the Attorney General?

Hon. J. Seaddan: You bet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Attorney General became visibly annoyed when I rose to oppose this motion. Is his annoyance due to the fact that he does not see eye-to-eye with his colleagues on this question. Is it a fact that the Bill is being dropped because the Attorney General threatened to resign if the Government persevered with it? All the arguments advanced by Ministers during

recent months in support of the Bill apply to-day with even greater force than they did yesterday. Yet forsooth it is proposed to drop the measure without a word of explanation. And in this connection, too, it is somewhat remarkable that the members of the various churches, with the exception of the one gentleman who deserted at the last moment, although so emphatic in their claims that this Bill was necessary and essential at the present time, not one, so far as I have been able to observe or read, has offered any protest against the action of the Government in dropping the Bill. Why is this? Are they satisfied with the lame, halting and inaccurate explanation given by the Colonial Secretary? I say the Colonial Secretary had no right, no foundation in fact and no justification whatever for placing the blame for the dropping of this Bill on the members of this House. How does the Colonial Secretary, or any other member of the Government, know in what direction members of this House intended voting, or would have voted had the Bill been gone on with? No one knows how I, at any rate, would vote, and I believe no one knows how any other member of this House would vote. How can members of the Government justify the statement for placing the blame on this House for the dropping of this Bill? The real reason the Bill is dropped is because the Government have not the courage to go on with it in the face of the hostility shown, particularly the hostility of a large number of residents in the Canning electorate. That is the reason it is being dropped; there is no use in beating about the bush. It is because of the fact that a large number of the electors of Canning, who were responsible for the return of the Attorney General to this House, made it quite plain to the Government that if this Bill were persevered with, there would perhaps be a different state of affairs existing after the next elections. And because of that attitude, the Government proposes throwing overboard the Bill they themselves have told the country is essential for the welfare of the State at this particular time. Whilst we have spent the whole of this sitting considering a Bill which is of absolutely no im-

portance, and which can have no possible effect upon the position of the country, either now or in the months ahead, yet we have not five minutes to spare in this House for the consideration of a measure of this nature. Is that the way the Government propose to justify themselves—taking up the time of the House considering a Trading Concerns Bill, and yet on an important matter of this kind, important not on my assertion, but on their own, they are not prepared to go on? I say that a Bill which has been regarded as sufficiently important to call a public meeting in the capital city of this State, and which was considered important enough to invoke the aid of practically all the churches to assist its passage, is important enough for this House to devote a few hours of its time in discussion, rather than the Bill we have been discussing this afternoon. And yet, I repeat, without a word of explanation it is proposed to throw the Bill over. No matter what our desire may be for getting into recess, if the country requires legislation of this character, and the Government has said the country does require it, it is our duty to stay here and go on with that work; and we shall be neglecting the work we are expected to perform if we do not do so. There never was greater need in the history of this State for this House to consider important measures of this kind than there is at present. We shall be doing more good, and be doing the work we have been sent here to do, if we give our attention to these matters rather than by going into recess. Then we have the next Bill, No. 4, which is also proposed to be abandoned, the Entertainments and Retail Sales Taxation Bill. What has become of that Bill?

The Minister for Works: Were you going to support it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: There may be some things in it I would support, and I presume the hon. member considers it worth supporting seeing that his Government introduced it. That Bill was brought in for the purpose of meeting, or helping to meet, the deficit on the year. When the Treasurer introduced his financial statement he estimated that he would have a deficit on the year of something like £480,000; and he pro-

posed to meet at least half of that by the introduction of certain taxation proposals, chief of which was this Entertainments and Retail Sales Taxation Bill. The Treasurer estimated that from this source and from the amusement tax he would receive no less a sum than £150,000 during the present financial year. Seeing that when the Treasurer announced his intention of introducing this Bill he estimated a deficit of £480,000 for the whole year; and seeing also that in the eight months of the year which have elapsed we have a deficit of £690,000, as against an estimated deficit for the 12 months of £480,000, surely if this Bill was necessary in order to help reduce the deficit, when introduced, I say that the three months which have since elapsed have rendered this or some other taxation proposal doubly necessary. If taxation were necessary when the estimated deficit was under half a million, surely now that we are going on at the rate of a million deficit at the end of the financial year—we shall have just reached a deficit of a million pounds on the average deficit for the past eight months by the end of June next—if we are faced with a shortage on revenue account for the year of a million pounds, are we doing our duty in lightly proposing to throw on one side taxation proposals of this nature? Will the Treasurer tell the House that the £150,000 he estimated to receive from this Bill is not needed now even more than when he made his financial statement in November? Or is it proposed to abandon this Bill because its introduction aroused such a hue and cry from the general public of the State? We were to have a tax of 15 per cent. upon cordials, aerated waters, tobacco, cigarettes, smokers' requisites, jewellery, musical instruments, and other articles classed as luxuries. I think the House is entitled to know why the Treasurer has altered his mind.

The Premier: The House has had that statement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When?

The Premier: In the House about three weeks ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The statement that you proposed to drop these Bills?

The Premier: No, the reasons for it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not recollect that. The reasons given by the Treasurer were that he considered it was too late in the financial year, that it would be now advisable to drop these Bills so that the Government might get into recess and thus have time to effect economy wherever possible, and be in a position to meet the House early in the new financial year with new taxation proposals. Are these reasons adequate? How has the financial position of the State been altered since the Treasurer brought down his Budget in a way that would justify the throwing over of these Bills now? The only manner in which it has been altered has been for the worse. It is altered in the way of justifying them, and additional taxation as well, if we are to keep the revenue and expenditure anywhere within bounds. The Treasurer, in introducing his financial statement last November, said that there were only two courses open to the Government, namely retrenchment or taxation, that the Government preferred the latter, and that they considered they would be neglecting their duty if they did not insist upon additional taxation. This was at a time when he estimated a deficit of £480,000 on the year's transactions. Since November we have a deficit for the first eight months of the year of £690,000. In the face of these figures will not the Government be neglecting their duty ten times more at the present time in removing these Bills from the Notice Paper than when the Premier uttered those words in November last? He said—

I am not asking the people to bear any undue burden.

If he is not asking them to do this why is he not going on with the burden, and why is he not asking the people to take up this burden, which he in November last declared was not an undue one. Is there any justification or reasonable ground which would bear one moment's investigation? I say there is absolutely none. The financial position is more desperate to-day than it ever was in the history of the State. The ship of State is sinking financially at a greater rate than it has ever been sinking before. This Government have absolutely subordinated

the State, and it is rapidly going out of sight. He said further—

To-day we are the lowest taxed people in the Commonwealth.

Incidentally I am pleased to have that admission from the Treasurer. After five years of Labour rule in this State we have it, on the testimony of the Treasurer, that the people of Western Australia are the lowest taxed people in the Commonwealth. He said—

I am satisfied that the people of Western Australia are not going to prove themselves slackers in connection with the adjustment of the State's finances.

No! I quite agree with the Premier that the people of Western Australia will not prove themselves slackers so far as carrying a fair share of the burden of taxation which will stop the drift in the finances. Who has been proved to be the slackers in connection with taxation? Are not the Government themselves the slackers where taxation is concerned? The people have not indicated that they are not prepared to undertake their fair share of taxation, but the Government have proved themselves slackers upon a matter which they themselves declared it was their duty to go on with. He said further—

This position must be met by the introduction of fresh taxation and by the exercise of most rigid economy throughout the Service.

Are we getting that rigid economy which we have so often heard about?

The Premier: You afford us a lovely chance of giving it to you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not see that we are stopping it.

The Premier: You are.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The monthly returns, month by month, show that this country is not getting any of that rigid economy of which the Premier has spoken.

The Premier: They show that your interest and sinking fund bill is killing this State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The interest and sinking fund bill for the last eight months has amounted to £80,000.

The Premier: And yours to £750,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This does not account for the deficit increasing to such an extent. As a matter of fact the surplus from our trading concerns comes to three times the amount of the interest and sinking fund of this year. I am not one of those who say that the Government should wipe out the deficit in one year, or even in two years.

Mr. Taylor: They want to fund it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the course of his Budget statement the Premier estimated a deficit of £480,000 for the year, and proposed to meet £270,000 of that by way of taxation, leaving somewhere about £250,000 as a debit balance on the year's operation. By the abandonment of his taxation proposals, however, instead of ending up the year as estimated with a deficit of £250,000 he will end it up with a deficit of a million pounds, only three-quarters of a million pounds out. On the Premier's own figures and judging from present indications this is what will happen. Notwithstanding the fact that the deficit shows evidence of being three-quarters of a million in excess of what the Premier estimated we are making no provision whatever to meet it. There is not the slightest attempt to stop the drift or meet the position as we find it to-day.

The Minister for Works: How do you know what we are doing?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We know what the hon. member is doing in regard to legislation. It is only by means of taxation that the deficit can be seriously tackled, because I am convinced that the Government cannot reduce the monthly balance on the wrong side to any considerable extent by way of economies. That statement is borne out by the evidence of the last eight months and by the figures which have been published month by month. The Government are indeed going in quite the opposite direction. Taking the eight months of last year of the Labour Government in conjunction with the corresponding period of the present Government we find that there is only a difference in the revenue of £908. The present Government, therefore, have obtained practically the same revenue as the Scaddan Government obtained for that period. Although the revenue kept up we find that the expenditure of the pre-

sent Government, again taking these corresponding periods, was in excess by an amount of no less than £187,042. I asked the Minister for Works if he can show any indication of rigid economy in the figures I have just quoted. Have we any evidence of economy there? None whatever. I admit that if the Government took steps suddenly to reduce the deficit by way of retrenchment or rigid economies or otherwise, the result would be seriously to dislocate trade and commerce in this State. But I contend that, if the Government can make out a good case for not reducing the monthly deficit, they can make out absolutely no case for permitting the deficit to increase—absolutely none whatever. What explanation do the Government offer for the increase of the monthly deficit? Whilst the Scaddan Government's deficit, spread over their whole term of office, averaged £23,000 per month, the present Government's deficit for eight months averages £80,000 monthly. Absolutely no explanation is offered by present Ministers. We are told merely that the financial position is due to our blundering incapacity, to our extravagance on all hands, to our squandering of public money. Those are the expressions which were given out to the public every morning at breakfast. Notwithstanding that squandering during our term of office, squandering due to our blundering incapacity, we find that now—if the monthly returns count for anything—the squandering is more than trebled. In the face of these figures, which are left entirely without explanation or justification, the Premier proposes to throw his taxation proposals overboard. Is the State to be allowed to drift to leeward at the rate of one million pounds per annum? That is the question the public are asking, and the question the Government have to answer. Their advent to office was justified by their newspapers, by their supporters, and by themselves on the public platform—

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): And justified by the actions of the last Government.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that is so, what is the position to-day? The alliance or combination or fusion, whatever it may be, which resulted in placing present Ministers on the Treasury bench was brought

about, we are told, because of the extreme and urgent need for some drastic steps to stop the financial drift. What steps have been taken? What results have been obtained? Instead of a deficit of £460,000 as last year, the Government are going to have a deficit this year of a million. The position would not be so bad if the Government proposed to make some effort to relieve it. But that can be done only by the introduction of fresh taxation. And yet Ministers at the dictation of the Country party have decided to abandon the whole of their taxation proposals. The combination which brought the Government into office for the purpose of squaring the finances has proved a total failure. To-day the country has received the information that it has crossed the two-million mark in the way of a deficit.

Mr. Thomson: You helped towards that, you know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; but not to the same extent as it is being helped now. The Premier stated that he expected to get £150,000 from the Entertainments and Retail Sales Taxation Bill.

The Minister for Works: Well, he is not going to get it. Are you not satisfied, with all your friends?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister need not trouble about my friends. This House will not be doing its duty if it goes into recess without making some provision for the financial situation as we find it at the present time. Ministers have abandoned their taxation proposals at the behest or dictation of seven members of this House. That is what it amounts to. Even seven members should not have the right to dictate a financial policy either to this House or to the Government, who outnumber them two to one. No argument that could be advanced would be so eloquent as the figures published in this morning's newspaper. The two millions deficit will provide an excellent theme for the "Chance the ducks club" in the next issue of the *Sunday Times*. This House will not be doing its duty to the country if it adjourns before an attempt has been made to provide for the deficit. The Government can introduce some other measures of taxation which will meet with the endorsement of the majority of the members of the House. The Totalisator Duty Act Amendment Bill

was another measure which was going to bring in considerable revenue and it was going to assist in some measure of reform as far as horse racing was concerned. This, however, along with many others is to go overboard. Then we have the Income Tax Bill and the Dividend Duty tax. With regard to the former it was proposed to provide for an increased income tax of 2d. in the £ and the Treasurer himself declared over and over again that this would be an equitable form of taxation. Why then was not the Premier going on with it?

The Premier: I have never discussed it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. gentleman has intimated his intention of dropping one of the income tax bills.

The Premier: My motion refers to Nos. 2 to 9 inclusive on the Notice Paper.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the Premier intend to go on with the Income Tax Bill?

The Premier: The list you mentioned does not even include the Dividend Duties Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Premier will indicate that he intends to go on with this, I will not take so much exception to his motion.

The Premier: I am going to withdraw these and introduce others.

Hon. P. COLLIER: By so doing the Premier is not making provision for additional revenue from income tax this year. The only taxation measure which the Government have gone on with has been that relating to stamp duties. He estimated receiving £237,000 from increased taxation and he is only going to obtain £15,000 from stamp duties. That means that he is throwing overboard £222,000.

The Premier: How much of that would you get in the next three months?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier knows it is a common practice to make these measures retrospective from the beginning of January in which case the Premier would have six months in which to collect the additional revenue.

The Premier: The money could not be collected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course it could. It has been frequently done in connection with taxation. It is the duty of every member to enter a protest against the action of the Government and if the Premier likes we can make the question of taxation a

national one. Something should be done to stem the deplorable drift which has been going on during the past eight months. A deficit of a million pounds this year is an Australian record. Again I enter my protest against discharging the taxation measures from the Notice Paper.

Question put and passed; Orders discharged.

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

*Order discharged.*

On motion by Premier Order of the Day discharged from the Notice Paper.

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX

(No. 2).

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

*Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [11.30] in moving the second reading said: The Bill I am now submitting to the House is a repetition of the measure which was passed last year. As hon. members know, it has to be re-enacted each year. I propose that we should re-enact exactly the same rate as last year; then, after the close of the financial year, when the House meets again, we shall be prepared to make further proposals in regard to increased levies from income tax. Even if we were to pass the Bill now, we could not secure from its operations anything like the amount originally estimated. To collect a half year's rate we must impose the tax for the whole year, and, therefore, the original plan would be unworkable. In the circumstances the Government think the course I propose the better one to pursue.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etcetera.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and a report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to a Council.

## BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

*Discharge of Order.*

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [11.33]: I move—

*That the Order of the Day be discharged.*

The reason for this is that the Dividend Duties Act is a continuous Act, and, therefore, it is unnecessary to introduce a new Bill.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.34]: I desire to enter an emphatic protest against the dropping of all taxation Bills. So critical is the position of the finances that in my view the House ought not to prorogue until the Government shall have announced how they propose to meet the position. We are not the only State or country in which increased expenditure on a falling revenue has had to be faced. Other places have been courageous enough to meet the position, but our Government seem desirous of avoiding all responsibility until such time as, perhaps by an appeal to the country, they shall have strengthened their forces. The position here, representing as it does merely domestic legislation, can be much more easily met than that in Great Britain, where they have had to face war conditions. According to British Treasury experts Great Britain has provided for the interest and sinking fund of its colossal war debt twice over by the imposition of new taxes. The Eastern States of Australia have followed similar lines.

The Premier: When?

Hon. J. SCADDAN: Ever since war broke out. From the very first session after the outbreak of war they have increased their taxation proposals according to demands. If the Government of this State have not the courage to do the same, Parliament will have to do it. The total debt of Great Britain on 29th July, 1916, was in round figures three thousand millions. If the war continues to the end of the present month it is estimated that the debt will be three and a-half thousand millions. The present debt averages  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest; add one per cent. sinking fund, and the total annual charge on the debt now is 150 million. Prior to the war the expenses, including interest charges, were 200 million

per annum. The revenue for the current year, due to the imposition of extraordinary income and excise taxes, will be 500 million. Deducting 200 million as the normal rate of expenditure there still remains 300 million for new interest and sinking fund, which is twice the amount now required. Even if the national debt reaches four thousand millions, with interest at 5 per cent. and one per cent. sinking fund, the present revenue will meet all current expenditure, as well as the colossal war drain, and will still leave a comfortable surplus. There they have faced the position, and we also have to face it. We control only domestic affairs. The cost of the conduct of the war falls on the entire population of the Commonwealth, but even here within a State we are subject to abnormal conditions, and we must meet them. We cannot go on borrowing from the Old Land, because they can no longer help us in that regard. It is essential that we should put our house in order. Yet we are doing nothing. The Government say, "Give us recess, and we will afterwards come back and tell you what we intend to do." The position must be faced, and Parliament must share with the Government the responsibility of facing it, which we cannot do if we throw all these Bills overboard.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex—in reply) [11.40]: It is all very well for the leader of the Opposition to talk about facing the position. He was invited to take part in the solving of the financial problem and in connection with the taxation proposals. He knows that although he himself was willing to do this, the hon. members supporting his party refused to permit him to do so.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You got advice but would not accept it.

The PREMIER: We wanted to make it a non-party matter. We shall square the finances in due time, however, without the help of hon. members opposite, but under the circumstances I will not attempt to do so within a period of only seven or eight months. I have to plumb the depths to which the maladministration of my friends opposite has brought the State.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You will not plumb them in London.

The PREMIER: The member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) has detained

the House for the last hour or so repeating a lot of fulsome figures from which he cannot prove anything. He charged me with the responsibility of a deficit of a million. During the first month of the financial year during which the hon. gentlemen opposite were in possession of the Treasury Benches, they accumulated a deficit of £130,000, but in spite of this the hon. member calmly tacks it on to me. If I worked on the calculation which my hon. friends opposite are so much in the habit of making and multiplied that by 12 we would be justified in having a deficit of £1,560,000 for the full 12 months. Hon. members opposite are constantly making calculations concerning the small deficit which accumulated during the first two months of the financial year when I went out of office. The leader of the Opposition, when Premier, accumulated a deficit of £130,000 in one month. I am writing off £93,000, and indeed have written it all off. Moneys have been expended and not charged up, and to use his own figures there has been an increase in the interest and sinking fund Bill of over £200,000 in one fell swoop.

Hon. J. Scaddan: What about the £314,000 on the trading concerns?

The PREMIER: There is the accumulated deficit during the past eight months which they must be responsible for, although they twitted me with having created the position. We have been sitting on and off with brief adjournments, for special purposes, for over eight months. Do members opposite want to sit on for 12 months? If they want to they can have the whole summer in the Chamber so far as I am concerned. Do they consider, however, that Ministers, whilst listening to these tirades against them late at night, can do effective work in their departments and face problems of this description? If so, they are asking us to do something they were never capable of doing themselves.

Hon. J. Scaddan: You expected us to do it. You got there because you believed you could do it.

The PREMIER: I have explained the reasons why the Government proposed to adopt this course.

Hon. J. Scaddan: No, you have not.



The PREMIER: The statement was made to the House.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Did you tell us you have to do it by instruction?

The PREMIER: I explained the reasons which actuated us in this decision.

Hon. J. Scaddan: This direction.

The PREMIER: I do not know if the House wishes me to go through the whole of the details again. At any rate I do not propose to do so. I think they fully understand the position. Our policy is now to get through the business and release hon. members and ourselves, so that they may take a well earned rest, and so that we may take up the harder work in our departments.

Hon. J. Scaddan: I like that.

The PREMIER: I ask the House to agree to the motion I have just moved.

Question put and passed; Order discharged.

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

*Order discharged.*

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate on the second reading of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [11.45]: I move—

*That the Order of the Day be discharged.*

If this motion is carried, I intend to substitute another Bill for this one.

Question put and passed; Order discharged.

#### BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

*All Stages.*

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

*Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [11.46] in moving the second reading said: I do not intend to detain hon. members more than a minute or two.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Why can you not move the second reading at the next sitting? This is not the same as the other Bill.

The PREMIER: It is exactly the same as the other Bill.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Surely there is no urgency about it.

The PREMIER: There is. If the hon. member wishes, however, I will postpone the matter until Tuesday.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It is really amending legislation. It is not re-enacting existing legislation.

The PREMIER: It is just a machinery Bill. It is to provide first of all that the financial year, the year ending the 30th June, shall be the year preceding the year of assessment. In other words, instead of ending up our year on, and making the returns date as up to the 31st December, as previously, they will date them up to the 30th June, and the returns will be made on profits earned during the financial year. This is intended to bring the matter into conformity with the Commonwealth procedure, so that the returns provided for Commonwealth taxation purposes may also be utilised for State taxation purposes. This has been demanded and asked for by the whole community, and will prevent a lot of trouble. The object is to bring our taxation into conformity with those of the Federal Taxation Department. We propose that we shall endeavour not only to do this so far as the year is concerned, but that we shall later on be able to utilise exactly the same return forms. The Commissioners of Taxation are to meet and devise some system whereby the same returns shall be utilised for both State and Federal taxation purposes, and later on it is proposed to make an arrangement whereby all the work is done at one central office. This will bring everything into conformity with the resolutions passed at various Premiers' conferences, with which resolutions the leader of the Opposition is familiar. One clause of the Bill provides that the incomes from personal exertion of soldiers and sailors absent from the State shall be exempt from taxation; but that does not apply to any income they may receive by way of rent from property or of interest. Then there is the clause which, as I have explained, was found necessary, giving the right of mutual exchange of information between our Commissioner of Taxation on the one hand and the Federal Commissioner of Taxation and other States' commissioners of taxation on

the other hand. The last clause will enable our Commissioner of Taxation to use information obtained by him by virtue of the existing land and income tax legislation, in legal proceedings brought under any other Act, such as the Stamp Act, for instance. Now he has to keep such information secret. That is the sum total of the Bill. It comprises the clauses of the measure which has been withdrawn, except those clauses dealing with the exemptions under our existing taxation law. I move—

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

Mr. BUTCHER (Roebourn) [11.52]: I hope that when the measure is in Committee the Premier will be prepared to accept an amendment in regard to returns due from pastoralists. Up to the present that phase of the question has been entirely overlooked. No reference has ever been made to any of those who represent the pastoral industry, to ascertain whether the date fixed for making returns was suitable for that industry. Thus the pastoralists are entirely at the mercy of the Commissioner of Taxation, whoever he may be.

Hon. J. Scaddan: Is not that absurd? The pastoralists are in the same position as other taxpayers. All taxpayers must comply with a definite date.

Mr. BUTCHER: I am perfectly well aware of that, and I want an alteration made so that taxpayers will not be entirely beholden to the Commissioner of Taxation as regards the date on which they must make up returns, or send them in. If the leader of the Opposition knew anything about the pastoral industry he would know how utterly impossible it is to make returns at the end of June. There is absolute need for an amendment enabling pastoralists to send in their returns from December to December.

The Premier: Will you see the Commissioner of Taxation on the matter? You can have an amendment drafted for another place.

Mr. BUTCHER: Will the Premier be prepared to accept an amendment in that direction?

The Premier: I shall be prepared to consider it.

Mr. BUTCHER: Then I shall be perfectly satisfied. It is quite out of the question for pastoralists to make up their

returns from June to June in anything like accurate form, and at present they are entirely dependent on the goodwill of the Commissioner as to whether their returns are accepted or not. There is no satisfaction in such a position. However, with that assurance of the Premier I am satisfied.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.54]: I hope the Premier is not giving any final decision.

The Premier: I say I will consider the matter.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The hon. member (Mr. Butcher) is apparently of the opinion that he has a definite assurance. I trust the Premier will not decide the matter without giving it consideration. The suggestion seems to me objectionable. Surely it would be wrong to permit any particular section of taxpayers to make returns on another date than that specified by the Act.

Mr. Butcher: The pastoralists have to do it now.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The hon. member will admit that there are other taxpayers, besides pastoralists, who experience the same difficulty. These others may not be so large a body, and may not contribute so much to the revenue, as the pastoralists. For that matter, everybody has difficulty, one way or another, in making up returns as on the date specified by the Act. But I have never yet heard of an Income Tax Act which left it to the taxpayer to fix the date for making up his return.

Mr. Butcher: I mean, a definite date.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: One definite date must be fixed for all taxpayers. If the date under this Bill is not convenient to the pastoralists, then, if the hon. member will suggest a date which would be convenient to them, and not inconvenient to other taxpayers, that date could be accepted. The hon. member has not supported his request with any reasons, though of course he may do so in Committee. I hope the Premier, before giving any assurance, will recognise that the suggestion represents a departure from the recognised principle that all returns shall be made on one specified date. On consultation with the Commissioner of Taxation the Premier will, I think, find that any provision of the kind suggested by the member for Roe-

bourne would establish a dangerous precedent.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etcetera.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

#### AS TO DISCHARGE OF ORDERS.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.59]: Before the Premier moves the adjournment of the House, I wish to ask him whether he proposes to discharge Orders of the Day No. 16 and No. 17, the Workers' Homes Act Amendment Bill and the Special Lease (Stirling Estate) Bill?

The Premier: The latter, decidedly not.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: If the Premier does not propose to do that, he will be taking a very unfair advantage of the House. He has had the Special Lease Enabling Bill, Order of the Day No. 9, discharged; and that was a measure about which the Minister for Works made a good deal of noise, saying that it was urgently needed to give an opportunity for opening up the Lake Clifton lime deposits.

The Premier: This refers to Nelson Location. The Lake Clifton Bill became law before Christmas.

Hon. J. SCADDAN: The Workers' Homes Act Amendment Bill, I think, might be discharged.

The Premier: I will consider that.

#### MOTIONS WITHDRAWN.

Hon. J. SCADDAN (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.58]: I desire permission to withdraw the motions standing in my name and appearing on the Notice Paper as Nos. 16 and 17 (files and papers in connection with the probate of the will of Miss Catherine Hayes; papers and files in connection with the retirement of Mr. E. B. Johnston from the public service); and on behalf of the hon. member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) the motion standing in his name and appearing as No. 18, (that Mr. Speaker, Mr. E. B. Johnston, does not

possess the confidence of the House); and also on behalf of the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) the motion standing in his name and appearing on the Notice Paper as No. 20 (to rescind resolution of the House contained in paragraph 3 of *Votes and Proceedings* of 13th February.). I should also like permission to withdraw the motion standing in my name on the Notice Paper and which was set down for Tuesday next (that Mr. E. B. Johnston be removed from the position of Speaker).

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will instruct the Clerk to remove these motions from the Notice Paper.

*House adjourned at 12 Midnight.*

### Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 6th March, 1917.*

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

#### PETITION—EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Hon. J. DUFFELL presented a petition from 58 master hairdressers asking that the Early Closing Act Amendment Bill be not passed.

Petition received and read, and ordered to be taken into consideration during the Committee stage of the Bill.