

will look after the interests of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: What about the farmers having a representative?

Mr. DAVIES: The farmers are prominent among the clients of the department. I do specially appeal to the Government to see to it that one of the commissioners is conversant with the needs of the workers. I wish to congratulate the Government, and particularly the Commissioner of Railways, on the spirit in which the members of the Railway Officers' Association have been met. Some people entertained the idea that there would be trouble on our railways, and in certain quarters this idea was fostered; but I can give an assurance that, providing a fair deal is handed out to the workers, the country need not fear that these men will do anything unreasonable.

Hon. P. Collier: You are very anxious about the workers; perhaps that is why you got in with the profiteers.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not in with the profiteers, although I can recollect when members of the House supported profiteers against the co-operative movement.

Hon. P. Collier: Who did?

Mr. DAVIES: If the cap fits you, put it on.

Hon. P. Collier: Does the hon. member say that I did?

Mr. DAVIES: No, you are saying it.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order, if the hon. member says that I supported the profiteers against the co-operative movement, I ask him to withdraw the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw, if he made the statement.

Mr. DAVIES: I never said it.

Hon. P. Collier: You were not game to say it.

Mr. DAVIES: I congratulate the Government also on their determination to extend education facilities, and the treatment and care of the sick. There is just now an opportunity for putting into practice a scheme which I have cherished for a long time, namely, that in every outback district there should be a medical man paid by the Government, and drawing no fees from his patients. If the opportunity does not present itself now, at all events it will at the close of the war, when many of our medical men now at the Front will be returning to the State. I trust that the Government will employ those medical men as Government officers to look after the sick in our outback districts. In regard to the visit of the French delegation, I do not think it is necessary to appeal to the Government to afford the visitors every opportunity of seeing what there is to be seen in Western Australia. As His Excellency has said, those visitors represent a very gallant nation, and the personnel of the delegation is a distinguished one. When those gentlemen come to Western Australia I know the Government will afford them every hospitality. I trust that throughout the session the best of feeling will prevail in the House. For myself I can give an assurance that I have no personal feeling against any member at all. If I express myself somewhat strongly at times, it

must be remembered that a man can be forceful without having any desire whatever to be quarrelsome.

Hon. T. Walker: You had better take up that glove you threw down.

Mr. DAVIES: If we are to indulge, I think the challenge was thrown out by the hon. member in the newspaper when he said he was entrenched and had his machine guns trained on us. It looks like it to-day. But, putting all that on one side, I thank members for the hearing they have accorded me.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.22 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 27th August, 1918.

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

[For "Papers Presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

BILLS ASSENTED TO.

Assent to the following Bills of last session reported:

- 1, Supply, £310,000.
- 2, Postponement of Debts Act Continuation.
- 3, Sale of Liquor Regulation Act Continuation.
- 4, Roads Act Continuation.
- 5, Land Tax and Income Tax.
- 6, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- 7, Local Option Continuance.
- 8, Industries Assistance Act Continuation.
- 9, Wheat Marketing, 1917.
- 10, Sewerage Works Validation.
- 11, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 12, Curator of Intestate Estates.
- 13, Totalisator Duty Act Amendment.
- 14, Land Act Amendment.
- 15, Appropriation.
- 16, Employment Brokers Act Amendment.
- 17, Apprentices.
- 18, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.
- 19, Reappropriation of Loan Moneys.
- 20, Fremantle Endowment Lands.
- 21, Wyndham Freezing, Canning, and Meat Export Works.
- 22, Special Lease (Gypsum).
- 23, Health Act Amendment.
- 24, Insurance Companies.

- 25, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.
- 26, Stamp Act Amendment.
- 27, Dividend Duties Act Amendment.
- 28, Land Tax Adjustment.
- 29, Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
- 30, Land Tax and Income Tax, 1918.
- 31, Wheat Marketing, 1918.

Reserved for His Majesty's pleasure:

- 1, Broome Local Court Admiralty Jurisdiction.
- 2, Treasury Bonds Deficiency.

STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENT— CONTROL OF PAPERS.

Committee's Report.

Hon. W. Kingsmill brought up the report of the Standing Orders Committee in accordance with the resolution of the House passed on the 23rd May, 1918.

Report received and read.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.45]: The situation at present is too serious for time to be wasted in needless words. I will be very brief this afternoon but, as an indication of my attitude towards the proposals of the Government, I wish to make a few observations. First of all, let me express my regret that some of the Ministers, as we have seen by the Press, have been indisposed. At a time like this, when there seems to be an epidemic of influenza, the sympathy of all will go out to those highly responsible persons; because we know that, difficult as it is at any time to handle affairs of State, it is particularly difficult when physically one is not up to concert pitch. But it is the financial position and that alone to which I propose to devote my remarks. I would like to put the matter in a proper perspective. I do not wish to indulge in any exaggerated language, nor to paint the picture too dark. We can fairly say that, looking at the position of affairs outside the borders of the State, it is seen that our difficulties, and they are considerable, are, after all, a comparative bagatelle. I think that point ought to be emphasised, because it can be clearly indicated by the figures we are dealing with over this Commonwealth loan. The whole of our financial liabilities, putting them roughly at 40 millions, is simply six months' war expenditure by Australia. Viewed in that light we can take, I will not say a hopeful, but at all events a reasonable, view of the position, and need not alarm either ourselves or those outside with the idea that we have anything impossible to undertake. My difficulty in commenting on the Government is that they do not seem to know their own mind. They appear to have no guiding principles on which to work. They seem to be a Cabinet at sixes and sevens. They were brought into existence in the most extraor-

inary way by a process partly of election, which broke down, in another place, and partly by selection, and the result has been unfortunate. Instead of our having a leader who, by his personal or his political qualifications, puts before the country the policy he is going to carry out, at the present time, with the most earnest desire to learn what the principles of the Government may be, I find myself completely at a loss. We all remember the very able review of the general situation which was given by the leader of the House a few months ago. I said, "At last we have got it; we have the position clearly before the country." But nothing has been done, no indication whatever given that he has converted any of his colleagues to his point of view. My own view of the situation is that of the leader of the House, as put forward in that speech, namely, that until we can grapple with this Federal factor, nothing else matters very much. And we cannot deal satisfactorily with Western Australia, financially speaking, until we have done that. I think the Treasurer and the Premier, politically speaking, are unprincipled persons. They have no principles on which they are working; at any rate, if they have any principles—and the Treasurer has given us an indication in two of his financial measures in the past—they are very bad principles. He set forward a principle of repudiation and was called to order by the Imperial Government. Then it was a principle of political blackmail, of taking money from the insurance companies. I took the opportunity, when in Melbourne, of finding out whether they there knew anything about the position; and I found what I thought I would find, namely, that it was regarded as being a not very creditable piece of work for Western Australia. That is to say, in London—and I am not going to repeat the comments and cables from the Agent General, because hon. members have heard them, and if they wish to refresh their minds they can look them up—but the net result was that in London, where it is most important that we should keep our credit and our good name at a high level, by the act of the present Treasurer we have, at any rate, injured the good name of Western Australia. And in the commercial world, in the financial world, and in the Eastern States, where it is also important that we should show ourselves strictly honest in our public finances, by our conduct in regard to the insurance companies we have shaken the confidence of the classes that we look to to help us through our difficulties. I regret that very much indeed. We shall have ample opportunities of dealing with the financial position as they come out step by step. The only advantage in this opportunity is that we can cover the whole ground and take a survey of the whole situation. Otherwise, I would be inclined to agree with the member for the Central Province in his suggestion that we should drop the discussion on the Address-in-reply. I think it is advisable, even by a time-honoured debate not altogether futile, that we should give an opportunity to ourselves and the country of taking a wide survey of the whole situation. Having exam-

ined the Speech and finding nothing whatever in that to assist me in my outlook on the country, I naturally turned to my hon. friend to see if he could throw any light on the subject; because the only light I have to throw on the subject is that which I have referred to almost ad nauseum, that is to say, the Federal factor. But my hon. friend, to my astonishment, seriously suggests—and this is the ludicrous, if not painful, part of public affairs—as a contribution to the question of considering the position of Western Australia, that a bonus of £1 per ounce should be paid on all gold won.

Hon. J. Nicholson (in explanation): I never proposed that. If I may be permitted to explain, I said that the mining community themselves had made representations to the Imperial Conference for a bonus of £1 per ounce. It was not that I was asking the Government for £1 per ounce. The mining community made that representation, as appeared in the Press the other day, to the Imperial Conference. They asked that this bonus should be paid, and all that I said was that the Government should assist the mining community as far as possible in that request. I did not suggest that this Government should pay £1 per ounce; in fact this Government could not pay the pound.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The explanation entirely supports the view I have taken up. The hon. member admits that this Government could not pay a pound to anybody. I entirely agree with him. He suggests that this Government should support those alleged representations by the mining conference to the Imperial Government, that £1 per ounce should be paid as a bonus on the production of gold. I ask hon. members to consider that proposition as a serious contribution to the re-establishment of the welfare of Western Australia. It is almost incredible that the mining conference should have proposed such a thing; because, what does it mean? Assuming that the Western Australian gold-mining industry is asking for this bonus, does it mean that Western Australia, of all the British possessions, is to be specially picked out by the Imperial Government for this bonus of £1 per ounce?

Hon. J. Nicholson: They are considering it in regard to South Africa also.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Very well. Suppose it is given throughout the British Empire, what does it mean? Let us assume that the Imperial Government says, "Yes, we will grant this bonus." What does it mean in respect of Western Australia? It simply means, in common parlance, greasing the fat pig. That is to say, the rich mines and the fortunate gold miner who has actually produced the gold, is to get the pound, not the man who searched for the gold. I could understand trying to assist him in his search for gold; but it means that the fortunate shareholders in the Great Boulder are to get the £1 per ounce bonus. To come out of those pockets? It certainly cannot come out of ours, as the hon. member has pointed out, and certainly the Imperial Government would soon find out that we could not pay the pound. Who, then, is to find the money? Presumably the Imperial Government. That is a proposition that makes me almost de-

spair of the future of this State. It is very easy to find something analogous, because it seems to be going on all over the place—shipbuilding, the jam factory, and other methods of pulling us out of the mire. I find it difficult to believe that the mining conference of this State, if they fairly represented the mining industry, would propose such an unfair measure as to call on the Imperial Treasury at a time like this to find £1 per ounce bonus for all gold produced in Western Australia, to say nothing of the Rand, which belongs largely, as we know, to the Hebrews, and which used to belong to the Teutonic Hebrews. I admit that possibly I am so impressed with this Federal factor that I cannot see quite fairly other propositions put forward, such as the jam factory, the shipbuilding, or the bonus to mining. They may be all important contributions to the discussion, but they do not impress me much. I was enormously impressed by the statement of the leader of the House, and I think that after his speech we were all fully apprised of the vital necessity of handling the affairs of Western Australia on the lines he indicated. My only regret is that I see no indication that he has converted his colleagues, and very little indication that representations have been made in the Eastern States. There is one other matter I have a note of here, a matter not of vital importance, but a matter of importance, that is, we were told—I got an assurance twice—that we were to meet in July; I think early in July was the statement of the leader of this House, at any rate he said in July, "it may be towards the end," and the Estimates were to be down early. We are now on towards the end of August, and can anyone tell me when we shall have the Estimates through? I dare say there is good reason. I know there is great pressure on Ministers at the present time. I do not want to be severe on Ministers because I recognise the great difficulty of their position anyway you look at it. Some of the Ministers are unprincipled and other Ministers are incompetent, between the two the country is having a bad time, and we can put nothing right in this Chamber even if we were agreed on what should be done. We take this opportunity of putting forward our views and my views summed up are these: that the financial embarrassment of Western Australia, while it is serious, is a comparative bagatelle compared with the serious issues at stake. The best thing we can do for the Imperial Government, the Commonwealth, and our Allies, is to put our House in order so as to meet the terrific strain that is coming on us, and also that we can begin to deal with our difficulties apart from the extravagances of the past. We cannot begin to deal with them until we follow out the lines of dealing with the Federal factor indicated by the leader of the House himself to us a very few weeks ago. I do not wish to go into other matters which we can deal with as they come step by step. I can assure the Ministry, that is the Government, that while I have a very small opinion of their performance in the past—it is not a personal matter, it is not even a party matter, because the parties have been shattered; it is a question especially in this House, of each individual member reviewing

the position as it comes to us day by day; not going back on the past, except in so far as it will indicate what to do at present and in the future—I can see no prospect whatever of this country being put on a sound foundation until, in the first place, we get rid of some of those Ministers and until the whole Cabinet, and not a member of it only, is thoroughly imbued with the principles enunciated so clearly and so ably by the leader of the House only a few weeks ago.

On motion by Hon. H. Millington, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SUPPLY BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.6]: I had expected that the Supply Bill would have been down from another place this evening, but our proceedings terminated more quickly than was expected. I do not know that there is any occasion to wait for that Bill. It was my intention only to move the first reading to-night, but I formally give notice now that to-morrow I shall move for the suspension of such Standing Orders as will preclude the dealing with the Supply Bill before we complete the debate on the Address-in-reply. I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.9 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 27th August, 1918.

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

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

BILLS ASSENTED TO.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to lay on the table a list of the Bills passed during last session and assented to by His Excellency the Governor during recess.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.51]: I move—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m., onwards.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.52]: Since I have been in the House from time to time I have had the privilege of advocating that Parliament should sit in the day time during at least portion of its sittings. It is well known to the Premier and members of the House that the Federal Parliament sits at eleven o'clock in the morning every day. I have here a Federal “Hansard” which shows that on the occasion of the opening of each of its sittings, the Speaker or President as the case may be, takes the Chair at eleven o'clock in the morning. That House transacts its very important business during the day time. In Victoria a somewhat different procedure has been, and I think is at present being, adopted, one which tries to meet the requirements of the Ministers and those whose business occupies their time during the day, but at the same time shows some measure of consideration to members who represent country constituencies. The procedure adopted in Victoria is that when the House is sitting three days a week, on the third day of the week it sits at eleven o'clock in the morning until about five or six in the afternoon. I have been present in the Parliament House of that State when that procedure has been adopted, and members have been able to get away at five o'clock in the evening for their week-ends at their homes. This question was brought up before the Government at the beginning of this Parliament. I think the leader of the House promised to give some consideration to the question of adopting this latter procedure. I suggest that the Government should adopt the resolution outlined by the Premier, so far as Tuesdays and Wednesdays sittings are concerned, but that on Thursdays we should meet at, say, eleven in the morning and adjourn at about five o'clock in the afternoon.

Mr. Harrison: Would there be an interval for luncheon?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Half an hour or so could be devoted to that. Whatever arguments might have been used in favour of sitting in the day time before the alteration in the train service took place, since that alteration those arguments have been intensified, and largely increased. We have no night train to the Great Southern district on Thursdays, and I understand that the Northern districts have no Friday train at all. To those parts of the State as well as to the goldfields the trains leave Perth on Thursday afternoon. I feel sure that the Government are at all times ready to consider country members in a claim for consideration of this sort, and so far as the Thursday sittings are concerned I ask the Premier to give consideration to this alteration.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [4.53]: I support the remarks of the member for Williams-Narrogin. Most of the trains leave for the country districts at between five and six o'clock on Thursday afternoons, and in these circumstances I think the Government can reasonably alter the sittings on Thursday to enable members to get that particular train. On the occasion of the opening of last session the member for Williams-Narrogin brought forward this matter, and the Premier gave an