

other class of man is represented by the settler working in the back blocks practically for nothing during the past four years, his wife and family and himself undergoing extreme privations. It is that man who is going to help the State out of its difficulties. My contention is that, so far as the individual is concerned and the country is concerned, the only good that is going to come to us will be from the efforts of those who consider that a time of emergency is a time for harder work, whatever the immediate reward may be.

On motion by Hon. J. F. Cullen debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: Agreement between the Minister for Lands and the Perth flour mills.

By the Minister of Water Supply and Sewerage: By-laws of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage.

By the Honorary Minister: 1, Balance sheet of South Perth Ferries, with Auditor General's reports for periods ended 30th June, 1913, and 30th June, 1914. 2, Balance sheet of Pure Milk Supply, Claremont, with Auditor General's reports for years ended 30th June, 1913, and 30th June, 1914.

By the Minister for Education: Report of the trustees under the Public Education Endowment Act, 1909, to 31st December, 1914.

By the Premier: Amendment of Regulation 36 under the Audit Act, 1904, and approval of Form 11a.

QUESTION—FREEZING WORKS, WYNDHAM.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Minister for Works: 1, Will he take the House into his confidence as to the exact position of the proposed Wyndham meat works? 2, Were tenders called publicly, or privately, or at all for the construction of the works? 3, What is the nature of the contract said to have been made between Nevanas & Co. and the Government—(a) and the amount? 4, Why was it cancelled? 5, What compensation, if any, is to be paid or has been paid for the cancellation thereof? 6, How do the Government propose to proceed with the work? 7, What is (a) the capacity of the works?; (b) the estimated total cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, No tenders were called, but on advice of a board appointed to consider plans, price, etc., submitted by Messrs. Nevanas & Co., it was agreed to give this firm the work on account of the low price submitted. 3, An interim agreement was entered into for the erection of buildings and plant and providing water supply, price £155,150. 4, Conditions of the interim agreement not being complied with. 5, None. For information of hon. members I might add that the

Chief Architect, after examining invoices and other documents regarding material and plant purchased by Nevanas & Co., was of opinion that if purchased on the 1st July, the price to be paid would be approximately £13,000 additional; this material and plant, on the recommendation of the Chief Architect, was taken over by the Government on a 5 per cent. basis, or a total payment of £3,194, all discounts, etc., being payable to the Government. 6, Departmentally. 7, (a) 300 head per day—150 chilling and freezing. 150 for tinning; (b) for the works mentioned in answer to question No. 3, £205,500.

QUESTION—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Minister for Works: 1, In view of the regrettable disclosures made by the late manager of the State Implement Works and the Minister for Public Works by their statements in the Press, is it the intention of the Government to take steps to put the implement works upon a proper business basis? 2, If so, will the Government cause a full inquiry by independent experts (acting as a Royal Commission) into the previous management and working of the establishment; also as to what steps are necessary to attain this end?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The necessary steps have been taken. 2, It is not considered necessary. A reliable officer has been placed in charge for the purpose of placing the works on a sound basis.

QUESTIONS (3)—STATE STEAMSHIP SERVICE.

s.s. "Western Australia."

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Premier: 1, Has the State steamship "Western Australia" been sold? 2, If so, to whom, at what price, and under what conditions? 3, If

not, why is she being sent to England? 4, What is the estimated profit or loss of the trip?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, On the strong representations of a leading firm of ship brokers, supported by the Agent General. 4, Though the ship left Fremantle with a full load of cargo, it is not anticipated there will be a profit on the voyage, but the actual figures will not be available until the vessel reaches London.

Proposed New Steamer.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Premier: 1, Is it true that Cabinet have decided to build a new steamer for the North-West trade? 2, If so, at what estimated cost? 3, Will the Government consult Parliament before entering into any contract or committing the country to any further expenditure?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No, but designs are being prepared by Sir John Biles for a new steamer to replace the "Western Australia," and to provide for the trade in chilled meat, etc., consequent upon the establishment of freezing, chilling, and canning works at Wyndham. 2, The cost cannot be estimated pending the completion of design. 3, If it is eventually decided to build such a ship provision will be made on the Loan Estimates in the usual way.

Chartered s.s. "N2."

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Premier: Upon what terms and conditions have the Government chartered the steamer "N2"?

The PREMIER replied: The terms and conditions of the charter were: The State Steamship Service to take the vessel over as she lay in the Brisbane River, effect all necessary docking and repairs, insure her for her full value, provide captain, officers, and crew, and return her on demand in good order and sea-going condition, ordinary wear and tear excepted, on the termination of the war or of the service for which she is at present required.

QUESTIONS (4)—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE.

Government Claims.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Premier: What amount of money has been advanced by the Industries Assistance Board to pay Government claims against the farmer for (a) rent, (b) water rates, and (c) machinery?

The PREMIER replied: (a) £96,214 7s. 2d. (b.) £7,937 11s. 9d. (c.) £1,551 15s. 8d. Of the above sums £84,745 1s. 2d. was brought to the credit of Consolidated Revenue by 30th June, 1915, being—£75,255 13s. 9d., land rents; £7,937 11s. 9d., water rates; £1,551 15s. 8d., machinery.

Revenue and Loan Fund Advances.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Premier: What amount of money has been advanced to farmers through the Industries Assistance Board (a) from revenue, (b) from loan funds?

The PREMIER replied: (a) *Nil*. (b) The amount actually paid away is £655,400 2s. 4d. Of this sum an amount of £542,854 2s. 4d. (approx.) has been advanced to settlers.

Assigned Farmers' Position.

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Will the Industries Assistance Board supply machinery and horses where required to farms assigned to the Board? 2, Have the farmers who to-day are working under the Industries Assistance Board, power to sell their own produce, subject to the authority of the board? 3, Will he issue instructions that all debtors under the Industries Assistance Board shall have a statement of their indebtedness sent them as soon as possible?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, (a) Machinery is supplied by merchants under arrangement by which the Board agree to pay first instalment. (b) Advances for the purchase of horses are made by the Agricultural Bank, and only in very exceptional cases will the

Board make advances for this purpose. 2, Farmers over whose land and crop the Board hold a mortgage will be allowed to arrange, subject to the Board's approval, for the sale of their products; the proceeds, however, must be paid by the purchaser to the Board. The Board will then distribute the proceeds as outlined in the Act. 3, Yes.

Advances to various Industries.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Premier: What amount of money has been advanced by the Industries Assistance Board (a) to farmers, (b) to other industries?

The PREMIER replied: (a) The total expenditure recorded by the Treasury amounts to £655,400 2s. 4d. approximately. Of this sum an amount of £542,854 2s. 4d. (approximately) has been advanced to settlers. The balance represents commodities on hand and not delivered, as well as cash sales. (b) Advanced in cash and by guarantee to mining industry £34,071. Timber industry guaranteed £50,000. An offer to guarantee the pearling industry was not availed of.

QUESTION—PIPE MANUFACTURE.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Minister for Water Supply and Sewerage: 1, What are the terms and conditions of the contract for cast-iron pipes made by his predecessor with Monteath Bros.? 2, Were other firms given an opportunity to tender?

The MINISTER OF WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE replied: 1, The Government to take the whole of pipes of 6in. diameter and upwards required by it, reserving the right, if thought fit, to procure pipes of 6in. diameter and under elsewhere, or to make them at the State Implement Works. The duration of contract to be five years from 1st July, 1914; the pipes to be in accordance with specification and as approved by the Engineer for the Metropolitan Area. The quantity to be not less than

2,000 tons for year ending 30th June, 1915, 1,000 tons per annum for four years ending 30th June, 1919. Inspection and passing and right to reject to be as decided by Engineer for Metropolitan Area. Times for delivery to be as set out in orders issued; place of delivery to be on trucks or carts at Monteath Bros.' Foundry, West Subiaco. Price to be £10 15s. ton, on the basis of £4 4s. 6d. ton for pig iron, f.o.b., Fremantle. On rise or fall in price of the latter, price per ton for pipes to be increased or reduced to extent of increase or reduction in price of iron. Disputes to be referred to the Engineer for the Metropolitan Area as sole arbitrator. 2, No. Messrs. Monteath Bros. have the only plant in the State for casting pipes vertically. For the quantity of pipes required under the contract it would have been useless to expect any other firm or firms to erect plants.

QUESTION — IMPORTED WHEAT, GRISTING.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Minister for Lands: What was the nature of the arrangement made between the Government and the Cottesloe Flour Milling Company and the Perth Milling Company for the gristing of wheat imported by the Government from the Argentine and India?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: As per agreement which has been laid upon the Table of the House.

QUESTION—TOWN PLANNING.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Premier: On account of the urgent necessity for placing town planning on a definite basis, and in pursuance of a promise made to a deputation to him on the 18th July, 1913, when he stated that in his (the Premier's) opinion the first step would be to introduce the necessary legislation and a Bill would be drafted for submission to Parliament at the earliest opportunity, will he introduce a Town Planning Bill this session?

The PREMIER replied: It is not intended to introduce such legislation this session.

QUESTION — COMMONWEALTH CONSTITUTION REFERENDUMS.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Premier: 1, In view of the fact that the Empire is at a critical stage of its history, and at present demands the undivided attention of every citizen of the Commonwealth to assist in the tremendous struggle for its existence, will he afford this House an early opportunity of protesting against the unwarranted action and expense of taking referendums for the alteration of the Constitution until such time as peace is established? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The Standing Orders of this House provide that any honourable member may initiate a subject for discussion by giving notice of his intention to do so, and I presume that this subject would come within the provisions of such Standing Orders. An early opportunity of discussing private members' business will be given under proposed Sessional Order, which sets apart every Wednesday for this purpose. The Standing Orders, however, provide that private members' or any other business cannot be dealt with until the Address-in-reply is disposed of.

QUESTION — RECRUITING, PARLIAMENTARY STIMULATION.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Premier: 1, Following on the action taken by members of the State Parliaments of the Eastern States to stimulate recruiting, and from which such splendid results have been obtained, will he convene a meeting of members of both Houses of Parliament in this State with a view of forming themselves into a similar recruiting committee for Western Australia? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, So far as Western Australia is concerned voluntary enlistment has up to the present met all demands, and it is confidently anticipated that this will continue.

QUESTION—GRAIN AND FOOD-STUFF BOARD, TO DISSOLVE.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS asked the Minister for Agriculture: In view of the statement made by the Chairman of the Control of Trade Commission and published in the *West Australian* of July 10th, which disclosed the fact that the Grain and Foodstuff Board had failed to realise their responsibilities as guardians of public interests, and had acted solely as emissaries of the flour millers, is it the intention of the Government to relieve that Board of any further duties under the Act?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: The Grain and Foodstuff Board claims that the report of its operations, which is now in course of preparation, will be a full reply to all Press statements that have been made. The acquisition of wheat for seed was completed on the 30th April, and the acquisition of flour at the end of June, 1915, but the disposal of wheat and flour as required by the Act is not yet finished. It is anticipated that there will not be more than half a dozen meetings of the Board, as the work of the office will now be more of a winding-up nature.

QUESTION—RAILWAY FREIGHT ON NEWSPAPERS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that settlers have to pay 3d. freight upon newspapers from York to stations on the Quairading-Bruce Rock line? 2, Will he remove this iniquitous tax upon knowledge?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The minimum freight for carriage of newspapers is 3d., but newspapers may be procured through the post at ½d. for 10 ounces at all places where the mail service is provided, and it is established on an extensive scale throughout Australia. 2, Evidently the charge indicated in reply to No. 1 is not considered by the postal authorities to be an iniquitous tax upon knowledge.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) ordered: "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."

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) ordered: "That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day."

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) sessional committees were appointed as follow:—

House Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Mullany, Mr. Male, and Mr. Nairn, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the House Committee of the Legislative Council.

Library Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Green, and Mr. Gilchrist, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

Printing Committee.—Mr. Speaker, with Mr. O'Loughlen and Mr. Allen to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members, and all papers laid upon the table, whether in answer to addresses or otherwise, and with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Printing Committee of the Legislative Council.

Standing Orders Committee.—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees,

Mr. Hudson, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. James Gardiner, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 29th July.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [4.50]: In addressing myself to the subject before the House, I should like in the first place to express my sympathy with the Hon. Frank Wilson, who has just suffered a family bereavement in the death of his son-in-law. I am sure the House will agree with me in that expression of sympathy. Not only was the deceased gentleman the son-in-law of the leader of the Opposition, but he was a son of one who held a distinguished and honoured place in this Assembly. I feel certain that hon. members on both sides of the House will be with me in extending sympathy to Mr. Wilson, whose absence this afternoon is accordingly to be regretted. The occasion when the first Opposition member addresses the House has generally been used as a time for severe criticism of the Government of the day. That has been so from time immemorial. Not only has such an occasion as this been used as an opportunity for severe criticism, but also, and not infrequently, it has been used as an occasion for the moving of a vote of no-confidence in the Government—generally, however, I may say, without success. But we are meeting on this occasion at a juncture without parallel in the history of the British Empire; and I shall endeavour to deal with the question before the House to-day in a way which in my opinion the people of this country desire that it should be dealt with; in a way acceptable, I trust, to hon. members on this side of the House, whether they occupy the benches immediately around me or whether they occupy the cross Opposition benches; and at the same time, I

hope, acceptable also to hon. members on the opposite side of the House as, at any rate, not unworthy of one who speaks at this juncture for the majority of the Opposition here. When I look around me I cannot help but be reminded that my first introduction to the Legislative Assembly of this State dates back over a period of nearly 25 years, and that here to-day there is no one who was associated with me, whether on one side of the House or on the other, at that date in the history of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia. For that reason I appreciate the more the confidence which has been placed in me by hon. members on this side of the House—men perhaps much younger than myself, but certainly men who will know that my interests are the interests of Western Australia. Edmund Burke defined a party as a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interests upon some particular principle upon which they are all agreed. That is a definition which appeals to me. We are sitting as parties; whether it be from the natural combativeness of mankind it is not for me to say; but, at any rate, from childhood upwards human beings are divided into parties. We find that state of things in the nursery, we find it in the school, and we find it among adults outside as well as inside this House. The party system came into being some two centuries ago, and has existed ever since. It has been adopted by all offshoots of the old country, and it has been copied by other nations. Therefore, it is plain that there must be something in the party system. But what do we see now? In the face of the war, in the face of the greatest struggle the world has ever been engaged in, in the face of a struggle which shakes the very foundations of the world, we find that in the mother of Parliaments the party system has broken down—absolutely broken down. All parties in the British Parliament are now united together for the great national interests, because national interests are at stake and the nation is involved. Thus the party system has broken down in the

mother country. Now, it appears to me that if one looks around this country and if one puts his finger on the pulse of the people of Western Australia—and I myself live with the people and amongst the people—one finds this feeling general throughout the country, that, as far as parties are concerned, the party system should not now exist as it has existed in the past, but that we should all endeavour with one accord to advance the interests of the Empire through Western Australia. There is but one party in the Empire, intent upon one common object—the defeat of our enemies in the interests of justice and in the interests of freedom and of humanity. In that we are all joined, and consequently it seems to me that it would ill become me on an occasion such as this to engage to any considerable extent in criticism of the nature that we have been obliged to indulge in during the past. Underlying the Speech which was put into His Excellency's hands by the Government, an indication is handed out to this House to cease purely party warfare. There is something that overshadows everything else. Men and women, and I might say even children, can think of but one thing. People in the towns, people in the country, all classes, meet together on one common ground, not driven together by fear, but brought together by one common feeling of patriotism, a feeling which is the monopoly of no single class, and a grim determination to see the thing through, with a sure and certain trust that victory will be ours. I think that is the feeling of the people in this country, and I must express on this occasion my appreciation—and I am quite sure I voice the appreciation of hon. members of this House, who represent the people of this country—my appreciation of the single minded way in which the men of Western Australia are coming forward at the present juncture to join the forces of the Empire for the protection of our hearths and homes. I say this because I think they deserve some appreciation from members of this House. I say this because I feel that these men are not whipped together by

militarism, but are simply brought there by broad feelings of patriotism and nothing else. We find men leaving good employment; we find men leaving employment with absolute certain work and good wages; we find squatters leaving their homes; we find the sons of farmers also leaving their farms to go to the front; men who are not bound to go by any other feeling but that of patriotism. Men who have comfortable homes; men who have everything that this life perhaps can give to them, but, at the sound of the bugle they have gone forth, and I think it is my duty to express my appreciation, and I think I may express that appreciation on behalf of members of this House of the manner in which the men of the country have come forth on this momentous occasion. I feel, further, that this is only a beginning, that that feeling of patriotism will extend and that the rush to arms will continue until it is necessary to lay down those arms. In the consummation of those ideas to which I have referred, as far as possible we should cease from party warfare at the present time. The consummation of such, I may say, is in the hands of the Government. If we are to work in unison the Government should take the House into their complete confidence. They have the responsibility of office, we have not, and I think this is a time, at any rate, when the Government should give the House the fullest information on all affairs of State, and we should be placed in such a position that we may be able to gauge accurately the position of the ship of State and how it is sailing. We are faced with an enormous deficit. There are many reasons given for that deficit, but, at the same time, the people of this country look with much concern upon the enormous deficit that we have in Western Australia. No doubt the Premier when he rises to speak may be able to ease the minds of the people of Western Australia, but at the same time it is felt throughout the length and breadth of the land that we are building up a debt that it will be hard for such a small community to bear. Industries have been started which have not paid but which show a loss

on last year's working of nearly £200,000. Members on the other side and the Government know full well what the principles are by which we are governed on this side of the House, and they know full well that those principles will not permit us to agree to the undertaking of many of the enterprises that have been set in motion by the Government of the day. I ask is the game worth the candle? Although the Government may be pledged to make a trial, has the time not come when they, as business men, should consider the position, whether there should not be a curtailment made in the carrying out of some of the enterprises on which the State are not deriving that profit which the Government estimated would have been derived.

The Minister for Lands: It is only a matter of opinion, of course.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: These are matters of opinion. The question whether the enterprises are good or bad in theory are matters of opinion.

The Minister for Lands: In practice, too.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: When we find in practice that the country is losing by the enterprises—

The Minister for Lands: That is questionable.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: When we find by the published accounts, by which we can only go, that the country has lost on these enterprises, that certainly makes the country feel decidedly uneasy.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: But we are losing on education.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: We have had a long altercation between the Minister for Works and the manager of the State Implementation Works. I hope the honourable gentleman will be able to satisfy the House that at any rate he has taken the right course on this occasion.

The Minister for Works: I think I have satisfied the people already.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: If the hon. member is not able to do so I hope that he will give an opportunity of having full enquiry made into the allegations which have been made. Then again, we have the question of the Wyndham Freez-

ing Works. I have not been able to go into the questions which were replied to this afternoon, but I gather that some light has been shown on the subject by the answers given to Mr. Wilson's questions. But the public have been allowed to understand that this contract was cancelled by the Government because it was forced on the Government by the power behind the throne. The public have been allowed to believe that.

The Minister for Works: Have been told that, not believe that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I hope such is not the case, and I trust the Government will be able to give some solution of these mysterious matters which may be satisfactory to the people of the country. If such was the case and the Government were not permitted to do their plain duty by other control than the Parliament of the country, then I say God help Western Australia.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Do you think it is a bad thing for the people to control the Government then?

Mr. George: Not the people.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: No doubt the war has, as the Governor's speech intimates, combined with the drought, interfered with the finances, and I admit I know of no Government that has had to administer the affairs of Western Australia that has had to face more difficult times than the Government at the present time. Twelve months ago we were faced with one of the greatest upheavals the world has ever known. At the same time, to make matters worse, we had the greatest drought that Western Australia has ever suffered from.

The Minister for Lands: Australia.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The drought, I am glad to say, has gone.

The Premier: At the same time the drought in the other States affected us as well.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I admit the drought was not confined to Western Australia, but the drought extended throughout the length and breadth of Australia.

The Premier: And affected us.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Naturally Western Australia was affected in many ways

not only by the drought within its own borders but from the drought without. I appreciate the wholehearted manner in which the Government came forward to assist the farming industry of Western Australia and which had the full support of honourable members on this side of the House. Although some honourable gentlemen may have something to say perhaps as to the methods which were adopted in the administration of these affairs; at the same time, I do not think they would do it with any feeling of party or political antagonism, but I would like to draw attention to this fact. The Governor's Speech informs us—

The great areas of land settled by our farmers were likely to revert to their original waste through lack of nature's productivity, and the settlers' financial resources.

It is made to appear to the outside world that the whole of the people on all our agricultural lands are in a parlous condition. That is not a fact, but the Speech further goes on to say—

Through the agency of the Industries Assistance Board approximately £500,000 has been advanced to the settlers to tide them over their difficulties.

At the same time, the Speech informs us that it is estimated that there are $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres under crop this year.

The Minister for Lands: Considerably more than that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: That will make my argument more conclusive. The Speech informs us that $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres are under crop, and I base my statement on what I see in print. No doubt the Government are in a position to know better than I of the area under crop in Western Australia, but I should have thought that considerably more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres was the total.

The Minister for Lands: It is difficult to estimate at present, but it is thought that it is 1,800,000 acres.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: But taking it at $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions acres, the £500,000 has been advanced to put in that $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres. Well now, that £500,000—

The Premier: The Governor's Speech does not assert that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: That £500,000 would not put in more than 500,000 acres. In my opinion, the cost of putting in land this year was nearer 30s. per acre than £1. This points to the fact that there was a considerable number of farmers in this State who did not require any assistance from the Government. There were many in Western Australia who, although they were hit very hard, harder than ever before, still buckled to and asked for no assistance from the Government, but by pure determination and consummate pluck put in large areas of land.

Mr. George: Two-thirds of it was put in by private effort.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I should say more than two-thirds of the area under crop has been put in without any Government assistance, and I think some credit should be given to those people for their enterprise and for the manner in which they tackled a difficult position. Of course, they have been doing it for their own good, but at the same time they have been doing it for the benefit of the State. Every farmer I know, and I live amongst them, has had one determination before him, namely to put in the largest area of land he possibly could. In my immediate neighbourhood, throughout the Midland area, the district which I represent, very little Government assistance has been asked for, and consequently I do not think it is right that it should go out that in consequence of the drought Western Australia was in such a condition that not one farmer in the country was able to get his land in without the assistance of the Government.

The Premier: The Governor's Speech does not say that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Yet it would appear so from His Excellency's Speech.

The Minister for Mines: You want to spoil a nice phrase.

The Premier: The fact remains that our harvest last year was three million bushels or less, as against $13\frac{1}{2}$ million bushels in the previous year.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY : I am firmly convinced that upon the primary producer of Western Australia depends the future of the State, and when I speak of the primary producer I do not confine my thoughts to one class of producer. I think, not only of men like myself who grow wheat and stock, but I think also of all those other classes of industries in which men are engaged on the land in this State. In my opinion the burden of these men should be made as light as possible. Farmers have very often been held up in this House as being a spoon-fed section of the community. I do not know why this is, but ever since I first came into the House the farmer has always been looked upon as one spoon-fed.

The Premier : Shovel-fed, I think.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY : The farmer has never had anything offered to him—

The Minister for Mines : That he has not taken.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY : At any rate the farmer is the one to whom the State has to look for future prosperity and greatness. For that reason it behoves every Government to endeavour to make the occupation of the land as attractive as possible. Not that they should give the people anything unnecessary, but that every encouragement should be given to the farmer to get his produce to market, by giving him all those facilities which will assist him in the prosecution of his industry. The Government of the day have not been backward in this direction, and I think have recognised, just as we do on this side, that the conserving of the interests of the people on the land should be the object of any Administration occupying the Treasury benches. To this end I hope the Government will be able to proceed with the works which have that object in view. There are certain railways which have been authorised. It is to be hoped the Government will have the means to proceed with those railways. Of course, if the Government have not the money they cannot do it. At the same time I hope every nerve will be strained to carry on those works which have as their

object the opening up of the country and the settlement of the land. The Bolgart northwards line has been authorised for some years past. This line will eventually tap some of the best agricultural land in Western Australia, land capable of growing prolific crops, and I hope that the time is not far distant when the Government will be able to push forward with that line. If the Government are not able to develop the land within the Midland area, land which is suited for settlement, and much of which is already settled, and if the Midland Railway Company will do it, they should be allowed to do it.

The Minister for Lands : That line is actually under construction to-day.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY : Very little work has been done.

The Minister for Mines : It is under construction, nevertheless.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY : But very little has been done, for a long time at any rate. I wish to impress on the Government and to point out to the House, that if the Government are not able to cope with the development of that great Midland area and if the company is prepared to do it, the company should be allowed to do it under proper conditions laid down by the State. We require that the land should be settled. How it is settled does not matter, so long as it is settled ; because once it is settled, communication is offered and development will soon take place. The outlook for the season could not well be better. The great pastoral industry, which has suffered severely from the drought, is again flourishing. Country, which was as bare twelve months ago as the proverbial turnpike road, is now waving with a verdant pasture, and the farmer is looking forward to a bumper harvest, which indeed may be considered assured. The mining industry is progressing. In a season like this, at any rate, it should be able to produce some new discoveries of great value to the State. The outlook may be dark and gloomy, but if full scope is given to individual effort the salvation of the country will be worked

out. The people require to be encouraged in every possible way. They require to be encouraged in their work, and they do not require any impediments to be cast in their way. The Government have said that they are not desirous of introducing controversial legislation. Of course, controversial legislation is, like many other things, a matter of opinion.

The Premier: It will be non-controversial from our point of view.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Government are fully aware of what is controversial and what is non-controversial from our point of view. Certainly they know my point of view. Although I am prepared to fight, even to the last breath, for the principles to which I am attached, at the same time I think this is not an occasion when we should be tempted to do such things, and I trust the Government will not tempt members of this side to enter upon criticism by the introduction of what may be considered by members on the Government side as non-controversial legislation, but which by members on this side would certainly be considered controversial legislation. If the Government are prepared to take the House into their confidence, I am quite sure hon. members will endeavour to see the session made as short as possible in order to release members to the harvest field and elsewhere to help keep the wheels of industry moving in Western Australia, and to promote at the same time the prosperity of the country, and encourage the people in the defence of the Empire. The Governor's Speech is of such a pacific character that I am sure no hon. member, who desires well of this country, would wish to make any capital out of it such as might create antagonism within these walls. The invitation has been extended to us by the Government—I might say a path has been made for us—to put aside all party controversy. As far as lies in my power I will endeavour to assist to this end. I am quite sure that hon. members on this side of the House will help in that direction. At the same time, I must ask the Government in view of this fact,

and in view of the feeling which exists amongst hon. members that the hatchet could be buried for the time being, to give us all the information we may desire, and that they will put a clear case before the House to the satisfaction of hon. members. If they do that I am quite sure that the welfare of this country will be more advanced, and that in this way we shall be not only assisting the State but helping the people in their endeavours to advance the interest of the Empire and encouraging them in its defence. At the same time, it is no good crying peace when there is no peace. I trust that this session may not only be useful to the country but may show that the Parliament of Western Australia has but one thought in its mind at the present time, that thought being to do what it can do best in the defence of the Empire and for the assistance of Western Australia. Our sons have gone forth to fight the battles of the Empire. There is many a home perhaps left sad in Western Australia at the present time; but the occupants of such homes must be proud to feel that one who is dear to them has died for the Empire. They can feel proud that they have given of their best and that their sons have died for the King and their country.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [5-35]: Let me first say that I very much appreciate the tone of the present debate. The deputy leader of the Opposition (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) has held out the olive branch. I hope it will be accepted. Let me say that I, as well as every assisted farmer, appreciate the assistance rendered by the Government. It must not be forgotten that "Production"—in capital letters—is our only hope of salvation. We have suffered severely from the effects of a disastrous drought. It must be borne in mind, however, that we have, in the South-West of this State a huge province which never suffers from drought, and which will produce so many of these commodities which are at the present time imported into the State at very huge expense to the people. The point which appealed to me most in the Governor's Speech was that the session would be a short one,

and that controversial Legislation would not be introduced. This is as it should be in the present crisis. No one knows from day to day what is going to happen. The position in Europe is critical. Australia has an Army at the front. That Army has to be clothed and fed, and to do that and to keep the Commonwealth going will be an enormous strain upon our financial resources. The Premier has asked the House to support him and help him, and I for one am prepared to do so. But the Premier must in his turn be prepared to give us his fullest confidence. He and his Ministers must be prepared to lay before us the exact financial position of the State, and more especially the financial position of the State Trading Concerns. We know that the main topic of conversation, not only in this House, but outside, has regard to State Trading Concerns. We hear that they are losing millions. In fact, we hear all sorts of extraordinary assertions made in connection with them.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Did you correct them?

Mr. WILLMOTT: It is not for me to correct them. It lies with the Premier and his Ministers to correct these impressions by giving to the House an absolutely candid statement on each and everyone of them.

The Minister for Lands: We gave you a balance sheet on one occasion, and you said you could not get it, although it was on the table of the House all the while.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I deny that. What I stated was that the balance sheet as given did not contain the information I require.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You could not understand it.

The Minister for Lands: It is a commercial balance sheet.

Mr. George: It is not intended to be understood.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Why not remove these fears and doubts by giving us the fullest and most frank information?

The Premier: You get too much, but you do not understand it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Certain statements, as I have said, have been made. A statement has been made in the public Press, for instance, by the late manager for the State Implement Works. I want to say first of all that I have not the pleasure of this gentleman's acquaintance, and I do not know what his business capabilities are.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We have.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I know nothing whatever about this. I do say this, however, that the serious statement has been made that the loss of these works alone has run into thousands and thousands of pounds.

The Minister for Works: He did not say that. It was I who said that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Then there is surely room for a statement.

The Minister for Works: He said he was making a profit and he gave me a statement.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We have a statement up to the end of the financial year, 1914.

The Minister for Works: There is no time for the other yet.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The last balance sheet is bygone history. I am certain that if the Minister chooses he can give us far fuller and newer information than that, and I trust he will do so. I am not saying this with a view to supporting the late Manager. I know, having been in the Civil Service for many years, that there are always some disgruntled individuals who will fly to the Press particularly in order to have ventilated their imaginary grievances, and have them brought forward in the House, and very often after examination these grievances are found to be full of nothing but sawdust. Let us hope that in this case we shall find something—

Mr. Foley: Do you want us to enquire into the cause of his dismissal?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I want the facts as relating to the State Implement Works.

The Minister for Works: You will get them.

Mr. WILLMOTT: When we get them we shall soon know whether his dismissal was justified or not.

The Premier: It was not a dismissal. He resigned.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not want to enquire into his resignation or dismissal. I put him on one side altogether and look on the matter from a broad point of view. I regard the Works from the point of view of a director of the shareholders of that institution. There is no personal element in the matter at all. There are all sorts of rumours going about in regard to the State Brick Works, and I hope something definite will be given to us concerning them.

Mr. Foley: I wish my house was built of bricks from the State Brick Works.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The hon. member's house may be built of straw for all I know. I have been told, and I hope it is not true, that out of several kilns of bricks turned out, 75 per cent. of the bricks are seconds and thirds, and that only one quarter represents first class bricks.

Mr. Bolton: That is a mere matter of classification.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not know. I am not a brick maker. I only hope the Minister will give us all necessary information.

The Minister for Works: That is the first I have heard of it.

The Premier: You do not expect the Minister to anticipate charges of this sort?

Mr. WILLMOTT: If the Minister did not anticipate a charge of this nature he should have told us exactly what was being done there, but nobody seems to know.

The Minister for Works: I have seen some thousands of bricks and they are very good.

Mr. George: You ought to have seen a million by this time.

The Premier: I am the only one who can see millions.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Let us hope that these million bricks are in a more concrete form than the millions of the Premier.

The Premier: They are not concrete bricks anyway.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I now wish to refer to the State Saw Mills. The statement which has been printed I consider to be of little value. There is a certain amount of value in the statement, but not enough. There is so much money sunk in the State Saw Mills that it makes one anxious to know what the profit or loss is going to be. I am not at one with the Auditor General when he states that hewn sleepers should not be credited to the State Saw Mills. They should be, but they should be credited in a separate account, in order that we may know the cost of the sawn timber, and the profit if any, and deal with that separately, and with these hewn sleepers in the same way.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What advantage would there be in that?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Every advantage. As one of the directors, I am here representing a certain number of the shareholders who have to find the money for these concerns.

The Premier: You are quite wrong. It is I who have to find the money.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We find the money in the long run. True, the Treasurer borrows the money, but we have to find it some time or other. I would like to point out that we must allow for this enormous number of sleepers which are stacked, and which, of course, are a large asset, but we are going to have a wastage there and I doubt whether that wastage has been adequately allowed for. More especially is this so in the forests where the timber is small. It will run from anything from one to five per cent.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You will be lucky if you get off with five per cent.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am pleased to hear such an authority as the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) backing me up. I am afraid also there is going to be serious trouble arising out of the powellising of timber. I mentioned this matter shortly after the powellising plant was erected. I inquired at the time if the arsenic in the mixture was getting away in such a quantity as to do harm

to stock, and I was told, "no." On further inquiry, however, I find that the reason that there was considered to be no danger was that owing to the heavy rainfall, the poison would be washed away. But we must remember that there are dry summer months, and it will be in those months that trouble will probably occur. That is a matter which I hope will occupy the attention of the Minister.

The Minister for Works: It has already done so.

Mr. WILLMOTT: And I hope that adequate measures will be taken, otherwise the Government will find themselves landed for heavy damages. If Big Brook once gets poison into it, it will mean that the whole of the Warren River will be poisoned, and serious loss to stock must follow. We have a large number of men employed at the State Sawmills and we all know that there is a certain amount of danger associated with the occupation of the timber worker. I hope, therefore, that the work of erecting the hospital at Jarnadup will be pushed on at the earliest possible date. The Premier has said that he is perfectly willing to help those who help themselves, and those people down there have helped themselves in every possible way. From the information that I have gathered it seems that the Minister is tired at the amount of correspondence which has passed between him and the various bodies. At the present time he does not even reply to letters which are sent him.

The Minister for Works: I never get any.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am referring to the Minister in the other Chamber.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): There are some letters that are so foolish that they are not worth replying to.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Perhaps in the opinion of the hon. member. The letters to which I have referred dealt with the erection of a hospital.

The Premier: They would go before the Minister for Works.

Mr. WILLMOTT: They were sent to the Colonial Secretary and I can assure

hon. members that this matter is a very serious one because it occasionally happens that a man who has been crushed or maimed has to be conveyed all the way to Bridgetown.

The Minister for Works: There is a place there where they can be attended to.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We who are at the present time collecting hundreds of thousands of pounds for the wounded soldiers must not at the same time forget that we have wounded at home.

The Minister for Works: There is a ward there.

Mr. WILLMOTT: But there are no appliances to deal with desperate cases such as those which occur from time to time.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Desperate cases occur in other parts of the State.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Where as a rule they have hospitals.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Where as a rule they have not.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Then let them make adequate provision for the treatment of those cases. I trust that the matter of the hospital accommodation will receive immediate attention.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It is justified.

The Premier: There are many things that are justified.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am not going to weary this House by dealing with the State enterprises and State trading concerns one by one, but I do say that it is due to the Government at the present time, when there is no wish on our part to cause them any trouble, to be frank and fearless. It is no good pointing to me and saying that I am opposed to State enterprises *in toto*, because I am not. I hope that as soon as money is available we shall have bulk handling of wheat carried out. It will cost money I know, but I think it will be money well spent. The price of sacks this year would have paid for the bulk handling.

Mr Foley: There is a lot to be done before that too.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The miner would starve if we grew no wheat.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The miner lived before you grew any wheat in this country.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Would it not be possible while the extensions to the jetty at Albany are proceeding to consult the engineers in charge and see if something could not be done at less cost now, which would ultimately come in useful in connection with bulk handling.

The Premier: Cannot you find some other term than "ultimately?"

Mr. WILLMOTT: We would all be glad to see it at once. There has been trouble in South Africa over the condemnation of sleepers there. Years ago the South African Government had their sleepers inspected in this country and that is what we should get them to do to-day if possible. Unfortunately the sleepers are now being inspected at the port of delivery and that means a very heavy loss.

Mr. Munsie: The influence of Millars Karri and Jarrah Company got to work at the other end.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The worst friends Millars have are in South Africa to-day. Was the best man picked to go to South Africa? In my opinion the best man was not picked. We ought to have got the services of an expert who could hold his own with those people over there. The Government had the man in the department, but they did not pick him.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Who was he?

The Minister for Works: The man who has gone has had experience with timber all his life.

Mr. WILLMOTT: In a store.

The Minister for Works: No, in a timber yard.

Mr. WILLMOTT: In my opinion and in the opinion of timber men generally that man was not the right person to be appointed to the position, but I hope the Government will not have cause to regret having made the appointment.

The Minister for Works: The appointment was acceptable to the association.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Whom would you suggest in the department?

Mr. WILLMOTT: There are many men in the department capable of carrying out those duties.

The Minister for Lands: Not as capable as Mr. Rowe.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That is a matter of opinion. The Government have appointed a man and let us hope they will not have cause to regret having made the appointment. A good deal of this trouble has arisen, as I have said before, by the State sawmills appointing their own inspectors. I was a great deal against that. The State sawmills timber should be inspected by officers of the Forestry Department. It is said that it is of no use finding fault unless one is prepared to follow that up by offering a solution out of the difficulty, but if the advice which is tendered is not accepted I cannot help it. I hope we shall do away with eternal bickering. There has been nothing but bickering about the State enterprises until I dread the name of them. Our State has been put to an outlay of hundreds of thousands of pounds, and it is our duty to see that this money is not thrown away. The best way is to allow each trading concern a stated amount of capital with which to work and the particular industry must then show sufficient profit to allow for working expenses, depreciation and sinking fund, and such capital should be sanctioned by this House. Then we should appoint a board.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Would you put agricultural railways under that system?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am not talking about them.

Mr. Munsie: They are State enterprises.

Mr. WILLMOTT: They are absolutely different. They are controlled by a Commissioner and a comparison with them cannot be made.

Mr. Munsie: Are they State enterprises, yes or no?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Of course they are. Mr. Munsie: So long as you admit it it is all right.

Mr SPEAKER : Order !

Mr. WILLMOTT : If a board was appointed from members of this House, not only from the Government side, but from both sides——

Mr. O'Loughlen : A Public Works Committee.

Member : But you have already turned down the Public Works Committee.

Mr. WILLMOTT : I am speaking for myself and my party. We are a party by ourselves, and let there be no mistake about that. If what I have suggested were done and balance sheets were produced every half-year things would be on a much more satisfactory footing.

The Premier : We have said that.

Mr. WILLMOTT : We would then know what these trading concerns were worth to the country.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Will your party support that Bill in the Upper House.

Mr. WILLMOTT : Take the party element out of it altogether and then we should not find mountains being made out of molehills. These trading concerns, I hope, will be made paying propositions. We are told that some of them are paying propositions. I hope this is true.

The Minister for Works : I believe in making them so or shutting them up.

Mr. WILLMOTT : The Country party will loyally support the present Government so long as the Government are frank and free with us. Let the Government do what we ask them, and they can command our support. Confidence will beget confidence.

The Premier : The power behind your throne will not permit you to support our party, or any other. Is not it part of your constitution not to ally yourselves with any other party ?

Mr. WILLMOTT : It would not be a matter of alliance. To form an alliance we would have to take office.

The Premier : No fear !

Mr. WILLMOTT : I can see what frightens the members of the Government. They are afraid of losing the pounds, shillings and pence.

The Premier : Are you prepared to show that you are genuine by giving us your support ?

Mr. WILLMOTT : What we want in return is frankness, a thing which has been lamentably lacking in the past.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [6.2] : May I, prior to making any reference to the matters mentioned by the previous speakers, join with the first speaker in expressing sympathy on behalf of members generally towards the leader of the Opposition in the bereavement he has suffered. I am sincere in giving utterance to the view that the sympathy extended by this side of the House is equally as warm as that extended by members opposite. Although we differ politically, sympathy can in matters of this nature be extended by us as well as by those who agree with him in politics. At the present juncture, perhaps more than any other, I feel extremely the bereavement which has befallen the hon. gentleman, because I know he has been through a very trying period during recent months. I hope this will prove the climax of it and that the private life of the hon. member will be much more bearable in future. May I compliment the hon. members who have addressed themselves to the House on the very fair manner in which they have approached the question of the Governor's Speech, particularly the deputy leader of the Opposition. I congratulate that hon. gentleman on having been appointed by his party to the position, recognising in it an evidence that the party he represents are desirous at present of removing any party feeling except in the direction of criticising the Government in such a way as will prove beneficial to the State generally. The hon. member's first utterance as deputy leader of the Opposition has given evidence of the fact that he is desirous of being fair and at the same time assisting wherever possible, not only the Government but the State, in the present trying period. The hon. member made some reference to State enterprises and the necessity for the Government taking the House into full confidence regarding them. I have heard that remark repeated so often during the last half-hour that I have been

wondering what hon. members really require. They say that we must take the House into our utmost confidence. The member for Nelson emphasised that point as well. I am not able to follow members in their remarks as to just how we have declined or refused it in the past. A good deal of the criticism hurled at the Government in the past has been due to the fact that we have given more detailed information to the House and the country than has been given by previous Governments, or than is given by any other Government in Australia to-day. Take the question of finance: Hon. members will persist in stating that they do not get sufficient information. I have taken from the Press a statement published at the close of the month showing the receipts and expenditure, the sources from which revenue was derived, a comparison with the amount derived from the respective sources in the same month the previous year, the expenditure in different directions giving it in detail item by item, and the total expenditure similarly compared with the same month of the previous year. Thus hon. members are able, immediately at the close of a month, to know exactly the position of the finances of the State.

Mr. James Gardiner: Western Australia has always given the fullest details of any State in Australia.

The PREMIER: Immediately at the close of the financial year—we close our books on the 10th July—a public statement was made showing to the pound the revenue from all sources, together with the expenditure in detail. One is astonished when turning up the Eastern papers to find that in some of the States, even after the close of the month, the information given to the public is merely the amount of total revenue—not a figure of expenditure—showing an increase or decrease on the same month of the previous year. At the end of the financial year, they make approximate statements of the receipts and expenditure, and even to this very day the Government in Victoria do not know the result of their financing for last year. They estimate, when the whole thing is finalised, that they will have a

deficit of a million and a half. It was criticised last year because the state to the finances was not made public before the 10th July. We do not close our books until the 10th July, and therefore the announcement could not be made until after that date. But here we have a statement from the Press to the effect that in Victoria they are unable yet to announce the shortage on revenue account. We are able to do this and we do it, not only at the end of the financial year but at the end of every month in the year. We publish details of the revenue and expenditure for each month and show the shortage or surplus as the case might be.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Has not that always been the case here?

The PREMIER: Yes, but I am trying to answer hon. members who insist on repeating that we do not take the House and country into our confidence in regard to the finances. What more detailed information would it be possible to give than that which is given? It is more than is given in any other State of the Commonwealth. I have been urged by the Under-Treasurer, not once but on many occasions, to alter this procedure and to issue merely quarterly statements. In some States this is the practice. One of numerous reasons given by the Under-Treasurer was that certain months of the year are better revenue-earning months than others. Some months are lean and in others we receive the land rents, particularly in September and March. To give a statement of our receipts and expenditure in July and to show a deficit of say £150,000 is misleading because in that month we make advances to departments which represent expenditure because the Treasury only takes into account the actual cash transactions. In the first month of the financial year we make tremendous advances and little revenue is received, but the public would imagine that during that first month we went to the bad to the amount of £150,000. In August notices are sent out to get in revenue in September. There is probably a

shortage during August and in September there is generally a surplus. Even if we took a three months period the statement would not be a fair one, though it would give a better idea than the monthly statement which is issued at present. In view of the attitude adopted by hon. members, I have told the Under-Treasurer that I will not for the present agree to any alteration in our methods, even if the public are misled, as I know they are, because the fact has been brought under my notice on numerous occasions. I prefer that they should continue to be misled because members will persist in asserting that we do not give them full and detailed information. So far as the finances are concerned, we give all the information which it is possible to give. I have instructed the Under-Treasurer to make our statement more detailed than previously, to cut it up in all directions and to give all the information which can be desired. Take State enterprises: we have in regard to the smallest of them, even the Boya quarries, given a statement at the end of each month of the receipts and expenditure. This particular enterprise is largely to supply the Government departments and some of the municipalities are also supplied, though only to a very small extent, but all the information is given in order to satisfy hon. members. I cannot imagine in what direction they require further information than that given in the public accounts. Statements are made requesting further details in connection with the operations of our trading concerns. Surely members will appreciate that it is not possible to produce balance sheets and profit and loss accounts until the close of some period, whether that period be quarterly, half-yearly or yearly. Rightly or wrongly, Parliament approved of the Trading Concerns Act which stipulates that the balance sheets shall be produced yearly, and it is not desirable to produce the balance-sheets to the public—they are produced to the public when laid on the Table of this House—until they have been properly audited by the Audit Department. In the past there has

been some delay in the preparation of the statements for auditing. Our methods are entirely different from others, and must be different from the very nature of our financial undertakings, and in consequence it is difficult to get officers of previous experience in the same operations who can immediately grasp what is required. These statements take some little time to prepare but most of those for the trading concerns for the past financial year will be ready shortly. These things must necessarily happen at the inauguration of big trading concerns such as sawmills, implement works and others which have not been operating for any long period.

Mr. George: Would that be accepted by a trading concern?

The PREMIER: The position is not understood by the hon. gentleman himself. When a company commence operations, they are not surrounded by thousands of regulations as we are. Would the hon. member ask, just for the purpose of allowing trading concerns to get their financial statements out early, that the whole of our regulations should be abolished and that the officers should be allowed to control the finances.

Mr. George: What does the Act say?

The PREMIER: We are carrying out exactly what is laid down in the Act. I issued instructions prior to the close of the financial year to all departments controlling trading concerns that they must take necessary measures to have the balance sheets and profit and loss accounts ready for audit immediately at the close of the financial year, and I believe some of those statements are already in the hands of the Auditor General.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: Before tea I had been endeavouring to acquaint hon. members that, while statements have repeatedly been made in this Chamber, and particularly to-night by both hon. members who addressed themselves to the House, that it was necessary for the Government to take the House into

their confidence, I am still in need of some evidence whether we have not done that in the past and of an intimation as to the direction in which it is desired that we should do it in the future. I have mentioned that merely as regards the finances of the State, in order to show, as I think I have succeeded in showing, that we give more detailed information at more regular periods than is the practice of any other State in the Commonwealth. I say further that the detail in the information given is really more than hon. members apparently can properly and thoroughly digest from month to month. As a matter of fact, so far as the finances are concerned, I have yet to learn that hon. members have in the past taken such a keen interest in the matter as to have been able at any time to get on to the platform and explain the position to the electors. I know that various hon. members—amongst them the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott)—have made reference on the platform to the condition of the finances and have always attempted to excuse themselves for offering no remedy in that connection by asserting that the necessary information in connection with the various trading concerns has not been obtainable. As I have previously stated, we give information on the cash basis every month. Hon. members can get that information by turning up the newspapers at any time. Further, we give information at the close of the financial year in greater detail, showing profit and loss on the operations. Beyond that I do not see what we can do. With regard to administrative matters, I wish to tell the House that, if information is required at any time by a member regarding a matter affecting his district, it is easy for that member to approach the Minister and obtain the fullest information. I am not aware that a Minister of the present Government has ever yet declined to give information to a member when that information affected such member's electorate. It cannot be expected that a Minister shall keep a record of every day's transactions in his office and immediately Parliament meets proceed to make statements from day to day

in regard to what is done. If a member is not sufficiently interested in the welfare of his district to seek the information, he cannot expect the Minister to volunteer it at all times, and even without being desired to do so.

Mr. George: But you do not always reply to questions when they are asked.

The PREMIER: There are occasions in every business, and in State business no less than in private business, when it is not desirable in the public interest to disclose what is happening, possibly because the matter has not been finalised. There are numbers of cases in which it is temporarily not desirable that information should be given. If the course that is suggested is to be adopted, the result would be immediately to break down the Cabinet system, so that everything might be publicly discussed in Parliament with members, and with the public through members. Under such circumstances, every transaction could be fully dealt with in public. But that is a course which could not possibly benefit the community. The smallest company that operates has a board of directors to deal with matters arising from time to time, and those directors do not consult the shareholders on every detail that crops up between the regular meetings of the shareholders. The Cabinet representing the State must do likewise in matters which have not been finalised. When, however, finality has been reached, the information is available to members, and through members to the country. I recognise that under existing conditions there is a general desire that, as far as practicable—and I want to emphasize that word "practicable"—the party system should be set aside and that we should deal with public affairs as openly as may be possible and practicable, and that we should take into our confidence members sitting on either side of the House, and through them the public as well. I say that, so far as we are concerned, that is our desire as a Ministry. While we may appear to hon. members opposite to refrain from giving them information on matters which they may have heard discussed in the public street, still, if that infor-

mation is requested at a suitable time, it is not refused. Under such conditions information never has been refused by any Minister at present sitting on the Treasury bench. At the same time it must be admitted that our system of Government, notwithstanding what has happened in the Mother of Parliaments, is based on principles which are held to be near and dear by every hon. member elected to represent a constituency in this State. While the deputy leader of the Opposition commenced by stating that it was his desire to drop party matters, yet he said that while he was a member of the House he was always going to maintain certain principles which he held near and dear—as a Liberal, I presume. The hon. member cannot possibly drop his party feeling in the matter, and he is going to stick to his principles.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Because he believes them to be right.

The PREMIER: Exactly. But when the hon. member asks the House, and through the House the country, to drop party feeling, is he to expect us to do any more than he would do himself? There are principles near and dear to us as a party.

Mr. Munsie: And we believe them to be right.

The PREMIER: Certainly. There always will be such differences between members of this Chamber, and we cannot help it. So far as practicable and possible, however, the Government propose to refrain from introducing contentious legislation, or legislation which may be termed strictly party measures, so that under existing conditions we can centre our thoughts and all our attention on the difficulties we are at present passing through as a State and as a part of the British Empire.

Mr. James Gardiner: Did you not say that you were calling on all of us to give you our best advice?

The PREMIER: That is so. I repeat that. But it is not a matter of a member merely saying that he is prepared to offer advice. I say we can demand advice from every hon. member.

Mr. James Gardiner: Can we get that advice from a man conscientiously keeping something back?

The PREMIER: That is the point I am trying to make. While a member urges that it is desirable we should drop our party feeling and that we should consider matters without any regard for the party standpoint, and yet in the next breath states that there are principles which he holds near and dear and by which he is going to stand, it is evident that such a member could not give the advice required. What I do assert is that the Government must, from very necessity, as far as practicable drop measures which would lead to contention and bring about bitter party feeling; and under existing conditions we are desirous of adopting that course. At the same time I do ask, and I think I may fairly claim, that if so much is expected of the Government, then the Government can fairly claim that those disagreeing with us should, if we do not put our principles in the foreground, equally place their principles in the background. It is a fair position to take up, and the Government propose to adhere to it. Let me say also, though perhaps I ought not to say it, that the severest criticism the Government have received during recent months has come from the rank and file of the Government's supporters outside. We are being pressed day after day to take certain action, and to introduce certain measures which are in the nature of party measures, amendments of laws already on the statute-book from the point of view which our supporters outside take of the position. Under normal conditions we would probably be prepared to do so. But, under existing conditions, we see that for the time being matters must remain as they are, because the Government must give first and primary attention to the successful issue of the State's difficulties, not merely as affecting Western Australia but as affecting the British Empire of which we form part. Having said so much may I again urge this House to take from me in all sincerity that it is the wish of every Minister and

of the Ministry as a whole to give the fullest information from time to time to hon. members on any subject in which they are interested, if there is a real and keen and earnest desire to obtain information and an absence of any desire to introduce party spirit? I say that under such circumstances we are prepared to furnish to any hon. member information concerning any matter affecting his district, and that if any hon. member approaches the Minister he can obtain such information. At the same time I consider that it is not right for an hon. member to rise in his place in the House and complain that he cannot obtain information which he has never sought. Such a course of action only affords evidence that he is still striving to take advantage of the Government for party purposes. Having said so much, I do not propose to pursue the subject any further; but if hon. members want the fullest confidence from the Government, then they should give the same confidence to the Government. Any information they may desire under the conditions which I have mentioned will be supplied as early as possible, if application is made to the Minister concerned. Now, the deputy leader of the Opposition made some references to our State enterprises, and said it was estimated that the loss on the operations for the last year would total approximately £200,000. For the life of me I cannot understand where the hon. member obtained that information.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: From the public accounts.

The PREMIER: The public accounts do not show anything of the kind. I want also to press this point, that hon. members opposite—and perhaps I may be justified in saying they take this attitude for party purposes—decline to look upon anything as a State enterprise unless it has been brought into operation since the present Government took office. Will hon. members deny the fact that our railways are as much a State enterprise as our sawmills or our State steamers?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: No, certainly not.

The PREMIER: Would hon. members opposite class a harbour as a State enterprise?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It is free from competition.

The PREMIER: I am getting light at last. Now I can see what is at the back of the minds of hon. members opposite generally. If an enterprise is free from competition, that does not remove it from the category of State enterprises. There are harbours in many parts of the world that are controlled by private enterprise in the form of steamship services, and have nothing whatever to do with the State.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Not harbours.

The PREMIER: There are harbours not controlled by the State at all. Any number of them are privately owned harbours, and there are railway systems also owned and controlled by private companies.

Mr. James Gardiner: In other places do not private people own the wharves?

The PREMIER: Yes, in some parts of Australia. The fact remains that hon. members, holding that the State owns the harbours and the railways, have lost sight of the fact that they are State enterprises when they urge that if the State enterprises are showing a loss they should be closed down. The Agricultural Bank is a State enterprise in competition with private banks. Our Savings Bank and our Post Office are both State enterprises; yet they are never referred to. All we hear about are those enterprises initiated by the present Government, and the attack is made on them to defeat the Government. That is the position. I would like hon. members, if they desire to be logical, to assert that any enterprise that does not pay, notwithstanding the conditions surrounding its operations, should be dispensed with and closed down. This, of course, would include the Railways, which last year made an enormous loss.

Mr. Thomson: What was the cause of the railways showing a loss last year?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows many reasons. I will give one for the purpose of illustrating the diffi-

culty. He knows that last year, our harvest failed us, and that the great bulk of the wheat produced was not shifted any great distance owing to the Bill we passed which provided for the establishment of a Grain and Foodstuffs Board to secure necessities and to supply farmers in need of them, and also for the establishment of the Industries Assistance Board. The wheat was claimed from the farmer on his holding, and in many cases handed by him to his next door neighbour. We dealt with it on behalf of the board as economically as possible, doing what we could to prevent carriage on our railway system, notwithstanding that this meant a loss to the railways. Again, in past years we have always had a certain amount of wheat sent to the seaboard, a natural back-loading. This year we have been carrying into the interior trade necessary for the mining industry, and running the trains back without a single ton of freight.

Mr. George : That obtained years ago, and still the railways paid.

The PREMIER : Let me say further we have added considerably to our railway system in recent years and all hon. members recognise that the construction of agricultural railways means immediate loss. Moreover, in districts where we have justifiably looked for revenue we have had losses in running out produce to the farmers, and carrying water free of charge. That is why the railways lost last year. Our earnings per mile under those conditions naturally decreased, but notwithstanding this, hon. members would not urge that we should dispense with the railway system. The deputy leader of the Opposition said that if money could be found at all it should be found for increasing the production in agricultural areas. Yet he knows that the construction of additional agricultural railways means additional loss. We recognise that although it means loss these railways must be built to serve the agricultural areas. Again, let me point out that the figures of the Treasury do not show anything like £200,000 loss on the State enterprises. Here are the

approximate results of those enterprises for the year ended 30th June, 1915. These figures do not take into account several items to be found in a properly drawn profit and loss account. This return is not in the nature of a profit and loss account, but is on the basis of actual cash received and expended. It shows a year's operations, not including depreciation, interest and sinking fund charges. Our State enterprises referred to by the leader of the Opposition do not include railways, tramways, nor water supply. It would not suit the hon. member's arguments, and therefore, I am leaving them out.

Mr. Willmott : Will your statement include bills held ?

The PREMIER : Yes, the cash basis, not including depreciation, interest and sinking fund charges. The deputy leader of the Opposition stated that approximately, the loss was £200,000. I am going to give you the only possible figures available at this juncture, and they do not show anything in the nature of such a loss. I am now only taking State steamers, saw mills, implement works, brick works, the Boya quarries, hotels, and ferries. On certain of these the profit has been £35,958 while the loss on some of them amounts to £15,759 or an actual net profit, not taking into account depreciation and interest and sinking fund charges, of £20,199. That is the approximate statement made by the Under Treasurer without request from me.

Mr. Nairn : And depreciation ?

The PREMIER : That is a matter to be carefully drawn by the clerk of the trading concerns after consultation with the Under Treasurer.

Mr. James Gardiner : You are taking in stocks you hold, and outstanding debits.

The PREMIER : Yes. Let us take the State steamers, which have been regularly referred to by our friends opposite. At the outset of the service they were always complaining of the loss and contending that the service ought to be abolished.

Mr. Foley : If you showed a profit there they would not believe you.

The PREMIER: I am not showing one. The approximate expenditure has been £109,116, and the actual receipts £101,919, leaving an approximate loss of £7,197. Take the saw mills at the first July of last year. We had £20,076 of stock on hand at that date, and at the first July of this year we had £129,000 worth of stock on hand. We were owed on the saw mills at the close of the year £3,652. The actual expenditure for the year was £411,920, and we received during the year £303,117 and we have stock estimated at the 1st July at £129,000.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which you can dispose of when you get freight.

The PREMIER: Yes. Then we have money due to us to the amount of £31,185, leaving an actual surplus profit to the saw mills, without taking into account depreciation, interest and sinking fund charges, of £27,654.

Mr. James Gardiner: What is the amount of capital involved?

The PREMIER: I cannot say off hand. I do not know what the final profit and loss account will show. These are the only figures available at present, and therefore I say the deputy leader of the Opposition was very much out in his calculations. When he stated that the estimated loss for the year was £200,000. It was nothing like it, unless he intended to include the railways, the loss on which was about £189,000, that is, including interest and sinking fund charges on the actual outlay. I mention this to show that the position is not so bad as hon. members, for party purposes, would make it appear. I have repeatedly in this Chamber, on the public platform, and through the Press, tried to explain that to take the Treasury figures as a criterion as to whether the trading concerns were showing a profit or a loss is dangerous and misleading. This criterion cannot be accepted, because the Treasury figures only deal with actual cash.

Mr. James Gardiner: You say you have to pay out all your cash, but only take credit for receipts as money comes in; consequently if you have £100,000

worth of stock it does not show on your Treasury returns.

The PREMIER: That is so. To accept the Treasury figures published from month to month would mislead the public, because in the case of the State Implement Works the material used in the making of an implement must be paid for by the Government, the wages of the men engaged must also be paid, and the cost of putting the implement on the market must be met. All that expenditure is charged at the time, but the receipts when the machine is sent to the country may be perhaps only one-third of the value; the other two-thirds may be credited against the works, but that can only be done by the provision of a profit and loss account. I again urge hon. members to be patient enough to await the profit and loss account of our present trading concerns. This account will be submitted to the Auditor General, who is not controlled by Ministers, and who is able to make any investigation he desires, even to the extent of suggesting what a bullock ought to fetch on the market—which he did on one occasion. He can do all this and, as there is nothing to hide, the position will be made clear to hon. members when the profit and loss account is submitted to the Auditor General for audit. I ask hon. members not to accept the Treasury figures as a guide to the profit or the loss of the trading concerns. The member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) expressed a desire for the appointment of what he terms a public works committee. I do not really think he means a public works committee. A public works committee would be merely a committee to report on any proposed work and therefore would not meet the hon. member's desire. What he means is a public accounts committee. The experience of public accounts committees up to date has been that they are worthless, because they cannot do any more than is being done to-day.

Mr. Willmott: Would they not hold fortnightly meetings?

The PREMIER: No. Although they have a public accounts committee in

the Federal Parliament, the Federal Parliament demands, when Parliament meets, a financial statement from the Treasurer. He is the only person who can make a financial statement at any time.

Mr. James Gardiner: Are they members of the House?

The PREMIER: Yes. They are there to inquire into the expenditure of public funds, the question of expenditure, and the method of controlling it, and the receipts of public funds.

Mr. James Gardiner: Do they present a report?

The PREMIER: Yes, they present a report. The public accounts committee does not give any earlier information or any more detailed information, or any more correct information than members obtain already per medium of the Colonial Treasurer. I would also urge that, after all, the Government, through the Treasurer, must be held responsible for the control of the finances of the State. No one else can take that responsibility upon himself. We could appoint a committee from both Houses of Parliament, but if there is a deficit that responsibility will not be removed from the shoulders of the Treasurer. It cannot be done. It may be considered by many that a committee of that kind would be able to get information from time to time which would be useful to members, but they can just as readily get that information now by request at any time from the Treasury or from the Treasury officials.

Mr. Willmott: It would take a big load off the Treasurer's shoulders.

The PREMIER: No load would be taken off the Federal Treasurer's shoulders. No committee can relieve the Treasurer of his responsibility so far as the finances are concerned. The hon. member for Nelson made some mention of the establishment of freezing works at Wyndham. He mentioned having heard that the reason why the interim arrangement, or contract, or agreement, whatever it may be called, with Nevanas & Co. was cancelled was because of pressure which had emanated,

I believe, from the Trades Hall. I wish to give that an absolute and emphatic denial. I am not aware of any protest ever having been lodged from such a quarter. I do not know of the existence of any such protest. It certainly did not come through me. The contract, or agreement, was not completed, as a matter of fact, because the firm was unable to comply with the conditions laid down. That is emphatically the correct version.

Mr. George: They had £200,000 worth of material.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: No, £13,000 worth.

Mr. O'Loughlin: The contract was for £150,000.

The PREMIER: The contract for the equipment and building of the freezing, chilling and canning works at Wyndham, together with the necessary water supply, amounted to £155,000 approximately.

Mr. George: And it will cost £200,000 now.

The PREMIER: No. In order to be quite candid on the matter, because I believe hon. members want information, I might explain that negotiations in connection with the works were commenced about 18 months ago. On that occasion inquiries were being made in regard to the intentions of the Government so far as the erection of freezing works at Wyndham was concerned. It will be remembered that the previous Government had proposed to assist certain persons—just who they were we did not know—to establish freezing works at Wyndham, and this would, of course, have given those individuals, firms or companies absolute control over the freezing works.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: That is not so.

The PREMIER: I say it is so.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The small growers were amply protected.

The PREMIER: Amply protected, I suppose, just in the same way as the small growers are protected everywhere else by placing them at the mercy of someone who is to control the works. This cannot be avoided. The small man must be in the grasp of the big

holder, and he is the man who would control the works. We, therefore, laid down the policy that if we were going to expend money in any way, either by way of subsidy or bonus, upon the establishment of freezing works at Wyndham for the purpose of assisting the pastoral industry, and developing that portion of the State, the State must, out of consideration to the small grower, or in the interests of the consumer—who, after all, must be considered with everybody else—control these works, and until we could get some proposition by which we could control these works we declined to make any move in the direction of establishing them at Wyndham. We had proposals submitted by more than one firm, but these proposals would have meant that they would have had control in much the same way as Vestey Brothers control the freezing works in the Northern Territory, and we were absolutely opposed to any such conditions prevailing. Eventually a proposition came along from the firm of Nevanas & Co. Upon receipt of this we made thorough inquiries from the Agent General in regard to their standing, both financial and otherwise. This firm was prepared to report on the question of the establishment of works at Wyndham, and, if necessary, to manage the works merely on a commission basis. One of the difficulties concerning the establishment of works at Wyndham is the distance from the centre of control. It is almost like the Federal authorities controlling some works in Perth from Melbourne, but in the case of controlling works at Wyndham from Perth the means of communication are very much worse than they are between Perth and Melbourne, and the difficulties of exercising control would, therefore, be very great. Another difficulty would be in operating works of which we had no previous experience. There was to our knowledge no officer in the State who had had any previous experience of the operations of freezing, chilling and canning works.

Mr. George: These people were going to erect them.

The PREMIER: That firm already had its own works in operation in other parts of Australia. We have not, I say, to our knowledge a single officer in the State who has any knowledge of how to operate these works. We have no officer, that I know of, who has had any experience in the erection of such works. The first essential to the erection of suitable works, which could be economically operated, is to have them erected on such a basis that we know they will eventually be operated by someone who will understand how to manage them so that they may return a profit to the State. We could get someone to tell us what to do, as was the case at Homebush in New South Wales, but in that instance the authorities spent millions of money on the advice of someone who knew nothing whatever about these things, and subsequently spent thousands of pounds in discarding some of the old works and in making them an economical proposition. It will be seen, therefore, that we could not, with safety, rush on with the establishment of these works without proper advice. We were satisfied that the firm of Nevanas & Co. knew their business, and we engaged them to report on the proposition in regard to the establishment of works at Wyndham. They did so report. At no time up to that stage was there any intention to consider that firm from the point of view of erecting contracts. It was never suggested. We were satisfied that they knew their business from the point of view of the provision of such freezing works as would be necessary at Wyndham, and their control, and we asked them to draw up the necessary plans and provide specifications for such works. When they submitted their estimate of the cost the officers of the Government asserted, without the slightest hesitation, that the estimates they gave were ridiculously low, that it was absolutely impossible to erect the works at the price quoted.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That would indicate then that Nevanas & Co. did not know everything about it.

The PREMIER: The officers of the department asserted that it was a ridiculous price. To back up their opinion the firm submitted a definite tender to erect these works. We viewed it from more than one point of view. We knew, as all of us must have known, that there was going to be a very serious shortage of meat in Australia, even in Queensland. In South Australia there is practically a meat famine, in Victoria there is something very similar, and in New South Wales, on the border, it is the same. We knew, therefore, many months ago that there was to be this difficulty in regard to a meat supply. We, therefore, appointed a board of the best men we knew of in the departments, and submitted the proposition to them, and we said to them "What would you suggest?" They did not take long to make up their minds. They said "Accept the offer; they cannot do it in the time or at the price they quote." We then made an interim agreement that, subject to their complying with certain conditions, we were to allow them to erect the works at the price and in the time mentioned by them.

Mr. George: Was there a bond; did they enter into a bond?

The PREMIER: Yes, there was a bond. When it came to closing the contract, there were certain things which happened which made it impossible for them to comply with the conditions laid down. We treated them in the same way as we would treat anybody else. If a firm cannot comply with the conditions set up as being essential to the contract, that contract, of course, cannot be proceeded with. No contract was in fact ever signed between this firm and the Government. Eventually, in view of the interim arrangement made, they procured the necessary plant and material for the erection of the works within the time they had specified in their contract. They failed, as I have said, to carry out their contract; they did not proceed with the work, and the material was, accordingly, offered to us. We invited the Chief Architect to go into the question and say whether it would pay the Government, if we were

going on with the works, to obtain this material, and to say further whether it was suitable for the requirements of the works, and if so whether the price asked was a fair one. He went into the question. The Chief Architect, I may say, recommended something more than the Government were prepared to pay for the material. Eventually, however, we arranged to take over the material, recognising it as suitable, on the word of the Chief Architect, at a price which would have meant a tremendous saving to the country on the price that it would have cost if we had found it necessary to bring this material from other sources. That is the whole of the transaction. I admit now that I do not believe we can erect the works in time to catch the 1916 season. We will probably find that they will not be operated until the 1917 season, which is, in my opinion, regrettable because, not only does Australia want meat but if the war is to continue, and it appears that it will, this Government and every other Government must of very necessity do their utmost, even to the extent of suffering some criticism, to obtain a meat supply for the Imperial authorities for the feeding of their soldiers. The Government had to take into consideration the possibility of help in that direction being delayed. The plans and specifications would have to be drawn, the contracts be advertised in various parts of the Commonwealth, and time given before tenders could be accepted, because a tenderer could not be expected to go into a matter of that kind without first possibly viewing the whole locality and taking all the circumstances into consideration. These things were taken into account by the Government. We concluded that if this was the position, and this firm could do the work at the price and in the time specified, the Government would be foolish to neglect the opportunity, not only in the interests of the State but owing to the conditions prevailing at the time, and as an earnest and keen desire on their part to help the Imperial authorities.

Hon. J. D. Connolly : What was the condition which caused you to cancel the contract ?

The PREMIER : Because they were not able to comply with certain conditions laid down. Does the hon. member desire that information in earnest, to help the public, or is it a matter of mere inquisitiveness on his part ?

Hon. J. D. Connolly : It is information for the country to know that you are paying £45,000 more than you agreed to pay.

The PREMIER : We were not doing anything of the kind. On the departmental estimate, the cost of the erection of these works—

Hon. J. D. Connolly : Was two hundred and five thousand pounds.

The PREMIER : And the provision of a water supply on the basis of the contract entered into with Nevanas & Co. will be £205,000. The tender was £155,125.

Mr. George : That difference should have allowed you to swallow a few objections.

The PREMIER : One of the conditions we laid down was that the Nevanas Company had to satisfy the Crown Law Department that their articles of association permitted them to enter into the contract. That was an essential for the safeguarding of the Government. At the finish, a disagreement existed between the Crown Law Department and this Company on the score of these articles of association, not allowing them to enter into the contract. The firm's solicitors in the Eastern States, however, informed the company that they could, under their articles, enter into the contract, but the Crown Law Department held that they would not permit them to do so and that if they entered into such a contract, on their articles of association, the Government would have no safeguard and the contract would not be worth the paper it was written on. That is why we did not proceed with it. We have obtained a price which is satisfactory according to the Chief Architect ; indeed some of the articles could not be procured to-day at any price.

I am merely mentioning those matters to show that the conditions which were prevailing when we were considering them were entirely different from the conditions prevailing in normal times. We had to safeguard our interests, and not the interests of any particular company. I mention that in order to dispel the idea that hon. members have, that some power behind the throne was responsible for the cancellation of the contract. They did not influence the Government in the slightest degree. I do not know that there is anything else that requires a reply from me. Hon. members were candid enough to admit that so far the Government had rendered all the assistance possible to those who had suffered from drought and other causes. I recognise that no Government could take any special credit for that, because it was essential to follow the course that we adopted in the interests, not only of those people, but in the interests of the State as a whole. I have told goldfields audiences and the people of the metropolitan area that the assistance which has been given to the farmers meant something to them, and that it was worth doing in their interests, as well as in the interests of the State. All that has been done at a time when it was difficult to do such things, and I want members to appreciate that fact, because when criticising the Government in regard to the condition of the finances, it has to be remembered that when money is free and cheap, and things are booming, it is not so difficult to obtain funds with which to carry on, and keep things in a generally healthy condition. Everyone must recognise the fact that when loan moneys were being poured into the agricultural areas and advances were being made, the money that was held by private persons must have been withdrawn for other investments, and so our revenue became effected. Our revenue has fallen in many directions. Take a revenue earning department such as the Taxation Department. There has been a falling off there, due to less trade. There has also been a falling off in stamp duty and in income tax

and notwithstanding the fact that this was graduated, the falling off of last year has been due to the general conditions which have prevailed throughout the State. Then to expect us to keep the finances in a healthy condition is to ask something that is absolutely absurd. In Victoria, which is known as the garden State of Australia, where the population is thick and very much more centralised than in Western Australia, where the means of communication are almost perfect in comparison to what they are here, where railways have been established for years and are on a paying basis, because they strike one year of drought just as we struck it, and at the same time the war as we struck it, they find themselves landed with a deficit of one and a-half millions. In comparison, on the basis of population, our deficit would amount to £300,000. We make provision for a sinking fund, and £250,000 has to be found from revenue, while the other States do not provide it. South Australia last year used as current revenue the amount that should have been utilised at the close of the previous financial year to redeem bonds, and notwithstanding that, they had a deficit of £424,000. If we deduct that, the State went to the bad to the extent of nearly £700,000 in one year, and did not render the same assistance as we did to those who were suffering. I want members and people to realise that the conditions have been abnormal, and to expect the finances to be normal in abnormal times is to expect something which is absolutely impossible. If we are patient and if we believe that the State can recover its position when we return to normal seasons, if we obtain a good harvest and our other industries are thriving, though perhaps not booming in the same way as they were prior to the declaration of war, we shall again enjoy prosperous times. If we do not believe that those times will come about, then it will be better for us to leave the State. What I do urge is that we must be prepared to face the inevitable, and render that financial assistance which

will permit carrying on industries during trying periods. We have done everything we possibly can, fully believing in the great possibilities of the agricultural industry. While money has been pouring into those districts it has been in circulation, and where there would have been stagnation to-day there is prosperity. The business people admit that last Christmas was the best they ever experienced. Our timber industry to-day is engaging a great number of men, and it would have closed down if we had not rendered it assistance. To-day we are operating the railway saw-mills at Dwellingup, and I could close them down to-morrow with advantage to the State. But there are employed there a number of men who have with them their wives and families, and if the mills were closed down those people would not be able to find employment elsewhere. We are pouring money into many districts, and it has brought wealth to the community as a whole. Would hon. members say that because the finances are not in the same buoyant condition as in normal times that we will not hearken to the requests of those people? To follow that course would not be doing anything which would be in the interests of the State. This Government will not exist on such lines. We are rendering assistance to the people who need it, and if this is to be stopped someone else will have to stop it; we will not. Is it extravagant to render assistance by establishing and properly equipping hospitals throughout the State? Is it extravagant to provide money so that a mother might maintain her children under her own protection? Is it extravagant to provide educational facilities without fees? If all this is extravagance, then someone else must come along and check it. These are principles which are near and dear to the Government, just as other principles are near and dear to members opposite. If members are desirous of dropping party bickering and upholding and maintaining the prestige of the State, then it is due to them, as it is due to the Government and the country, that they should take an optimistic view of the present posi-

tion, although they may not be satisfied with the condition of things at the moment. Instead of pouring out to the people outside, opinions which are to the detriment of Western Australia, we should always hold up the bright side and particularly at the present juncture. In the Eastern States the newspapers, the *Age* and the *Argus*, are never anxious to do credit to Western Australia, and in big headlines they always draw attention to the condition of the finances of this State. We never find any explanation of the fact that we are paying something towards a sinking fund, and if we told them so they would not publish it. There is no reference to the State of Victoria going to the bad, but at the end of every month we find the *West Australian* ready to publish in a prominent part of the paper the fact that the deficit now amounts to so much, and the *West Australian*, as far as I am able to learn, is the chief correspondent of the Eastern newspapers, and they are the people who are talking about being patriotic towards Western Australia. The newspaper which talks in that way should set an example. They say they lead public opinion. Why do they not do so in a way which would be of advantage to the State? If they can find anything that will suit the party they will publish it, but they will cover up anything that might be of advantage to the Government whose opinions they differ from. That is not fair. But I care not for their criticism. I am here to do my duty, and I will do it. I will stand just as faithfully to those principles which are dear to my heart as the deputy leader of the Opposition will stand to those he believes in. But I am still prepared under the existing condition of things to drop some of the principles for the time being, in order that we may centre out attention on those matters which are more vital to us. First of all, we must come successfully out of our present issues as an Empire. Then we can turn to those matters which affect individual citizens. Under those conditions I ask assistance and welcome assistance, but if those people who talk about a political truce and at the same

time take the opportunity to attempt to undermine the Government by always placing the darkest picture before the people, nothing else can be expected but that we shall continue our policy. If we are prepared to drop something our friends opposite should do likewise. I hope hon. members will appreciate our difficulties. They are not easy, and the present position of holding office is not simple. Conditions are changing from day to day. More and more responsibilities are being centred on Ministers, new problems are arising each day, problems which are not being accepted by departmental officials as was done previously, because in them questions of policy arise. That being the case, it is due to Ministers to receive the sympathy and support of hon. members who might not have agreed with the policy which was enunciated at the general elections.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [8-28]: I have listened with great pleasure and great interest to the speech of the Premier, and I do not think there will be any members, or at least very few, who will disagree with him. Where I think the Premier rather shone has been in giving the House some details in connection with State enterprises, details which may be of service in making the people's minds a little more satisfied than they have been during the time those enterprises have been in existence. The Premier asked the House whether the railways were considered a State enterprise. There has not been any question in regard to that, but State railways stand on an altogether different platform from the State enterprises to which we refer, the implement works, the saw-mills, the steamers, and the like. Those are purely and simply ordinary industries in which the people of the State engage. It has been decided by the people of Australia that railways shall be governed as a State enterprise. There are a number of Acts of Parliament which distinctly define the position of the Railways, how their accounts shall be dealt with and everything in connection with them. If it were necessary to do that with the Railways it was seen and acknowledged by this Government when they started the State

enterprises that there were certain regulations in connection with them marking the difference between them and the Railways. Else why did they bring in the Trading Concerns Act?

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

They brought in that Act to authorise the raising and expenditure of moneys for, and to regulate the keeping of accounts relating to, the Government trading concerns. Members in the House at the time the Bill was discussed will remember that on all sides it was laid down as a commonsense proposition that if the State was going to enter into manufacturing enterprises previously regarded as properly carried on by the taxpayers in their private capacity, these concerns should be placed in a business-like basis. In the Trading Concerns Act this is fully provided for, in addition to an implied promise to give to the House and the country the information we expected to have, and which indeed we had a right to expect. The Premier has practically acknowledged that this evening. The Act provides that an account shall be kept of all moneys appropriated by Parliament for the capital expenditure on trading concerns. I want to show that the leader of the Country party and the deputy leader of the Opposition were justified in their demands. Section 3 provides that the funds shall be moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose. Section 5 distinctly provides that the accounts shall be kept in the Treasury. That shows that the intention was that the trading concerns should be started in the same way as ordinary business concerns, with capital and a capital account. Section 11 provides that the Minister shall cause books to be provided and kept, and regular accounts to be entered therein of all moneys owing to and by the Minister, and of the several purposes for which such moneys are raised and, further, of all the assets and liabilities. Therefore, we were going to carry on these enterprises on the only system upon which business can be suc-

cessfully carried on. Section 19 provides that the Minister shall every year cause a full balance sheet of assets and liabilities of each of the trading concerns, together with a profit and loss account, and the value of all assets fairly stated, to be submitted to the Auditor General, who has to give his certificate of the accuracy of the same.

Mr. James Gardiner: Does the Act give power to this House to fix the capitalisation of each scheme?

Mr. GEORGE: It says the schemes are to be started from money appropriated by Parliament to that purpose. That is what the House and the country believed they were going to have. Had we these accounts placed on the Table of the House—

The Minister for Works: Balance sheets you mean.

Mr. GEORGE: Balance sheets and profit and loss accounts, as provided in the Act. If these accounts had been forthcoming we could have criticised and dealt with them, not for party purposes, but from a commercial standpoint.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Has the Auditor General done his work?

Mr. GEORGE: Let the hon. member keep quiet and remember that being Honorary Minister does not give him special license. We have had laid on the Table a balance sheet of the State Implement Works to the 30th June of last year.

The Minister for Works: You got it within 10 minutes of the time the Auditor General put it in my hands.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not for one moment believe the Minister would hide or keep back anything.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Do you think we squared the Auditor General?

Mr. GEORGE: The Act provides that we shall have these accounts promptly. It has taken 14 months to get that balance sheet on the Table. I am not going to say whose fault it is. When the Premier gives us information such as he has this evening it should be followed up by the adoption of a course which will enable

the balance sheets to be laid on the Table in decent time in future.

The Minister for Works: Someone will have to answer for it this year if they are late.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier referred to various criticisms made on these trading concerns. He cannot blame either the Press or members of the House. Even members of his own party have indulged in criticism on the same subject. The State was entering on an entirely new course in manufacturing implements. It was natural, therefore, that the taxpayer should be desirous of knowing how these concerns were going on, because we know full well that no amount of argument will take us away from the point of view that if there be a loss on these trading concerns it will have to be made up by the general taxpayer. None of us wishes to shirk his proper burden, but we are not desirous of shouldering any further burden.

Mr. James Gardiner: You purpose making your criticism commercial, and not political.

Mr. GEORGE: Exactly. We have the Act of Parliament, the charter upon which these concerns have been fixed, exactly in the same way as articles in regard to a limited company. The hon. gentleman knows that if he was a managing director of any concern and he could not produce his balance sheet satisfactorily in explanation to his co-directors or the shareholders, he would soon hear of it. I know from experience that in starting a manufacturing concern it is useless to expect that concern to pay in the first year. The preliminary expenses alone in almost every case are sufficient to swamp any profits, the only exception being, perhaps, in the manufacturing of a proprietary article which, calling for very little machinery, enjoys a great demand. I do not think there is a single machinery concern in Australia which during its first year has produced a profit. There are so many dead expenses to provide against. Just the same, whether a profit or a loss was made, the accounts should have been in such a form as to enable us to criticise them. Take

the implement works, of which, as a matter of fact, I know very little. The very fact of preparing the site, getting the foundations, erecting the building, and bringing machinery over, and then getting ready to start—and you cannot start at once manufacturing at a profit—these expenses were quite enough to put a profit out of the question for the first year. There is so much suspended money at the back of it all. But, after making all allowances, we should have had before us data which would enable us to indulge in commercial criticism. The Premier also drew attention to the fact that the statements issued by the Treasury are not reliable as a guide in respect to the profit and loss. The Treasury is merely the equivalent of a bank. One may have an account with that bank and it may include a big overdraft, but that does not show that one is insolvent. The Treasury simply deals with cash received and cash paid out, and the difference between those sums has no relation whatever to the commercial aspect of the running concern. Take the Treasury returns of the Railways, and we find that the profit is very little; but when we take the commercial balance sheet prepared by the Railways, and which has to be reconciled to the banking account kept by the Treasurer, then we get true accounts. Therefore, members may easily be misled if they take the Treasury figures as an indication of the profit and loss. With regard to getting out the balance sheet for these works, if proper books of accounts such as contemplated by the Act have been kept there should be no difficulty whatever in preparing a statement of accounts within two months of the closing of the financial year. The stock has to be taken; that is easily done. The cash can be taken, the debtors and creditors can be taken and when the trading account is made out it can be handed in.

Mr. James Gardiner: How long did it take you to get that system going?

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. gentleman was a tower of strength to me when I was Commissioner of Railways.

The Premier: You required a tower of strength.

Mr. GEORGE: Perhaps so, but I do not think the hon. gentleman found me quite a weakling. However, we need not go into that. I am prepared to assist the Government as far as I can and to keep party considerations out of it. If I do not succeed it will be because the Premier's friends will not allow me. The Premier referred to the other States. It does not make Western Australia's position any better to know that the other States are not prospering as well as we should like them to be. I would always prefer to hear that other people were prosperous, but whatever other States may be doing or whatever their financial position, it has no effect on Western Australia's position. The Premier said the Under Treasurer had urged him to give us a quarterly instead of a monthly statement of receipts and expenditure. I do not know that this would result in any particular harm, because when once the people understood distinctly what the monthly statements are they would not attach very much importance to them. The Minister for Works told us that we shall have a balance sheet as quickly as it can be presented. It is possible there may be hindering regulations; in fact I believe the Premier referred to thousands of regulations. There ought not to be any hindering regulations in connection with the State trading concerns because the power is in the Act and enables the Minister to be the absolute author of the regulations.

The Premier: You must have regulations guarding the officers.

Mr. GEORGE: Exactly, but I should have thought that when making a fresh start with an Act having ample powers within its four corners, the Minister would see that red tape did not smother up necessary things.

The Premier: It is not red tape. The Constitution Act provides that all moneys received as well as all moneys paid shall go through the public accounts. We must have regulations controlling trading concerns to keep them in conformity with that.

Mr. GEORGE: If the trading concerns had been established with a capital

of money appropriated by Parliament and kept to such, the actual working of the concern, which is the thing we are most interested in, would not have required regulations and there should be no red tape to interfere with their working.

The Premier: I did not say there was red tape.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier spoke of being surrounded by thousands of regulations. If there are thousands of regulations, let the Premier prove himself the strong man and cut the gordian knot and break away from the red tape. The Premier also told us that information affecting a member's district could be obtained at any time from the Minister in charge of the department. I am not going to say that is not a fact. Personally I have nothing to complain of because I have had little information to seek from any of the Ministers.

The Premier: You look after your district very well.

Mr. GEORGE: The scope of a member of this House is not confined entirely to his district. He is not only a member for his own district but he is one of 50 chosen counsellors and trustees of this State, and if he does his duty properly he requires information on other subjects than those which concern his district, and the House is the proper place where that information should be obtained. If I had desired to obtain information with regard to the State Implement Works, I might have been met under the Premier's view with the answer—"These works are not in your district; therefore ask for the information in the House"; and then we should have had the spectacle of last year of questions being asked and for politic reasons probably refused. The Premier must widen his view and be prepared to allow members to carry on in the time-honoured way by asking questions in this House irrespective of whether they are party questions or not.

The Minister for Works: If I had stuck to that rule as far as the implement works are concerned, I would have had to keep all the information to myself.

The Premier: Yes, because he is the member for the district.

Mr. GEORGE: Perhaps so. I am sorry to hear from the Premier that the railway loss this year is in the neighbourhood of £200,000.

The Premier: I am including sinking fund.

Mr. GEORGE: I will watch with interest the advent of the report.

The Premier: The report will not show interest and sinking fund. It does not take those amounts into account.

Mr. GEORGE: Perhaps with my experience I shall be able to supplement that information for myself. It is not a nice prospect that the railways in this State, which have continuously year after year been able to assist our revenue, should be on the down grade. In regard to the Wyndham freezing works I have very little to say because the matter may come up again, but if my information is correct, and the source of it is the *Pastoralists' Review*, the firm of Nevanas & Co, Ltd., are importers of frozen and canned meats. They are not refrigerator builders or contractors in the true sense of the word and I doubt very much whether their experience extends beyond the importation of frozen and canned meats. Their head office is in London, and they have an office in Melbourne, another in Sydney, and another in Wellington, New Zealand. They do not control the freezing works in Wellington and I do not think they have any freezing works at all in Australasia. These gentlemen apparently were applied to by the Government or came into contact with the Government in connection with the proposed Wyndham freezing works and were prepared to make a contract with the Government to build them. If I am correctly informed, their plans were very crude and I believe had to be lodged with and supplemented by the assistance of officers of the Public Works Department. Be that as it may, there are established freezing works in Australia and New Zealand, large concerns which have been carried on for many years, and surely it would have been possible for the Government to have obtained necessary information from those in charge of

such works and thus have steered a course which would have landed them in a different position.

The Premier: We would have been landed nicely if we had got our competitors to advise us.

Mr. GEORGE: Our competitors would not be in New Zealand, and I should think those in charge of such works were larger-minded than the Premier would have us believe. Instead of going to the people with experience, to practical contractors, the Government went to a firm of importers, really middlemen, and consequently have got into something like a mess. Dealing with the Speech, whoever produced the first portion of it must have been in wireless communication with the Kaiser, because I recently read a speech attributed to him and almost phrase by phrase there can be traced the master hand of the murderer of Europe to-day. I hope the gentleman who produced the Speech is entirely on the side of peace and not on the side of the German battalions. The Governor referred to the mining and timber industries having been assisted by the Government, but I want to enter a protest against what has taken place in the South-Western district during the last 12 months. There were certain areas, one at Dandalup and one at Cookernup, granted to the farmers for the purpose of giving them reserves from which they could obtain posts and other necessary timber for building. The timber land was being taken up so largely by the timber companies that it was felt that unless some reserves were made, as years went on there would be no place to which farmers could go for necessary posts and timber. Although these areas were reserved and gazetted, the Government, for reasons which I do not think at all adequate, have chosen to break them and hand them over to timber cutters.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member knows I have been advised by the responsible officers and ought to know that the interests of the farmers are being conserved in that only timber unsuitable for farmers' purposes is being cut.

Mr. GEORGE: The reason why so much harm has not been done as

would otherwise have been the case has been owing to the bankruptcy of the man to whom the reserve was granted for saw-milling purposes. Owing to his not having the money, he could not go on cutting the timber.

The Minister for Mines: He was restricted.

Mr. GEORGE: He cut the timber long before it was measured.

The Minister for Mines: He had no right to do that.

Mr. GEORGE: There is a reference to the water supplies for Geraldton and other places, and although Geraldton is not in my district, there is one point in connection with its water supply which this House has a right to consider. I am not referring to any particular Government, but a case was tried at Geraldton a while ago and people were mulcted in damages because they refused to pay for water which was unfit to use. The Minister pleaded in Court that the Act did not compel him to supply good water. If the Act did not compel him to supply good potable water it should have done so. The Perth Water Supply Act provides that the Government should supply good, potable water, but that supplied at Geraldton would have been more suitable for brine than anything else. If the Government undertake to supply water in any part of the State, they have no right to penalise the people if it should turn out to be unsuitable.

The Minister for Mines: If the hon. member were in possession of all the facts he would have a different opinion.

Mr. GEORGE: I notice with considerable pleasure that "the Government have not been inattentive to other needs of a great and growing State. More particularly is this evident in the domain of charity." As far as charity is concerned, I do not suppose any one wants to prevent the Government in its work in this direction, but I say—and most members will agree with me—that although the unemployed, or those who are called the unemployed, were kept and perhaps are still being kept with two meals a day, that is not the way to build up a proper spirit in this State. It would have been better

to let the men find the means to earn their meals, if only by chopping firewood, than to provide money for free meals for men, a lot of whom were nothing else than loafers. I noticed in the daily paper that a number of farms are being offered for sale by the Agricultural Bank. There are others, I believe, forfeited through the *Gazette*. While the department is no doubt acting within its rights, the misfortune which causes a man to be unable to carry on his farm or to pay his debts to the Agricultural Bank does not settle the situation entirely for the State. Whatever man goes on the land and puts his labour and what money he has into it, adds to the wealth of the State, and if misfortune drives him from his holding, he has a right to expect that the State will give him some reimbursement. While I think that land settlement has gone quite far enough under present circumstances, I would like to see the efforts of the Minister and the State directed towards ensuring that those settlers already on the land are put on the right track to produce that which we all require. I do not know that it is necessary for me to say more. The Premier has asked for assistance. He has been told by both leaders of the House, on this side, that they are desirous of carrying on the work without party feeling, if that can be avoided. If the Premier, together with his party and his colleagues, will not regard as a party matter that which is directed by a desire to assist in putting matters which may be on the wrong track, upon the right track, he will get, I think, a Parliament that is one in unity of ideas and bent on getting the State out of its present difficult position.

On motion by Mr. Nairn, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.2 p.m.