

SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. J. STOREY):

That this House will, on its next sitting day, resolve itself into the Committee of Supply, and the Committee of Ways and Means.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion (by Mr. J. STOREY) agreed to:

That this House do now adjourn until Tuesday next at a quarter to 4 o'clock.

House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 7 September, 1920.

Answer to Address in Reply—Printed Questions and Answers—Questions without Notice—Personal Explanation—Sessional Orders—Sessional Committees—Chairman of Committees.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

ANSWER TO ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The House proceeded to Government House, there to present to the Governor their address in reply to the speech his Excellency had been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament on opening the session.

The House being returned,

Mr. SPEAKER reported that the address in reply to the Governor's opening speech had been presented, and that his Excellency had been pleased to give thereto the following answer:—

To the Honorable the Speaker and the Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales,—

I thank you for your address expressing your loyalty and unfeigned attachment to his most gracious Majesty's throne and person.

I am glad to receive your assurance that the measures to be submitted to you will receive your earnest consideration, and that the necessary provision for the public service will be made in due course.

I join with you in the hope that, under Divine Providence, your labours will conduce to the general welfare and happiness of all classes of the community.

W. E. DAVIDSON,
Governor.

7th September, 1920.

PRINTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

PURCHASE OF CORNSACKS.

Mr. ASHFORD asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—(1) How many bales of cornsacks were purchased by his department of the Government? (2) What firm or firms were the cornsacks purchased from? (3) On what dates and at what prices were the purchases made? (4) Has any offer been made to his department or to the Rural Industries Board at a lower price?

Answer.—Presumably these questions refer to purchases recently made by the Rural Industries Board, the replies being: (1) 10,000 bales. (2) Crespin & Sons, 6,000 bales; Matsui Bussan Kaisha, 4,000 bales. (3) 15th June and 5th July, 1920, at 13s. 3d. and 12s. 6d. per dozen respectively, f.o.r. Sydney. (4) No.

BOTANICAL GARDEN EMPLOYEES.

Mr. ASHFORD asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—(1) How many additional hands have been employed in the Botanical Gardens from the 15th April, 1920? (2) How many at Centennial Park? (3) How many were returned soldiers?

Answer.—(1) Nil. (2) Four. (3) Two.

STATE LOAN ADVERTISEMENTS.

Mr. ASHFORD asked the PREMIER,—(1) In what papers were advertisements inserted in regard to the recent State loan? (2) What were the amounts paid to each?

Answer.—This information will be laid upon the table if moved for in the usual way, in the form of a return.

BORING PLANT, MACQUARIE RIVER.

Mr. ASHFORD asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—In view of the delay in forwarding a boring plant to the Burrandong site on the Macquarie River, will steps be taken at once to secure another boring plant for this important work?

Answer.—Every effort has been made to obtain the use of a boring plant from the Department of Mines, and my colleague, the Minister for Mines, is taking all steps necessary to expedite the matter.

WENTWORTH FALLS-VALLEY HEIGHTS SCHEME.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—Is it his intention to refer to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, at its appointment in the near future, the question of inquiry and report upon the Wentworth Falls-Valley Heights scheme?

Answer.—The question referring the Wentworth Falls-Valley Heights water supply scheme to the Public Works Committee will be considered when the general public works policy is being determined.

MATERNITY WARDS IN HOSPITALS.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND MOTHERHOOD,—(1) Is it proposed to provide maternity wards in connection with all the State hospitals, the cost of same to be borne by the State? (2) When will this project be put into operation? (3) When will tenders be called for the construction of the maternity ward at Molong Hospital, promised on 7th August by the Chief Secretary Mr. Dooley?

Answer.—(1 and 2) It is the intention of the Government to improve and extend the accommodation available for maternity cases throughout the State—particularly in the country districts. (3) I am assured by the Chief Secretary that no promise was made by him. Mr. Dooley discussed the question with the hospital committee.

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPER-ANNUATION.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—(1) At what date did the Public Service Superannuation Act come into force; and between that date and 30th June, 1920, what were the respective contributions by the members of the service and the Treasury? (2) What payments have been made to beneficiaries; what has been the cost of administration; and what on the date specified was the position of the fund? (3) What is the total number of officers and other employees in the service of the State; and of this total what number have been brought under the operation of the Act?

(4) Has any objection been raised by any section of the service or of any Governmental employees in whose interest the Act was passed to register, and to what extent were they permitted to do so?

Answer.—(1) The Act came into operation on 1st July, 1919, and the contributions to 30th June, 1920, were employees, £163,383 12s. 11d.; employers, £237,841 3s. 8d. (2) During the year ended 30th June, 1920, payments to beneficiaries amounted to £6,016 17s. 3d.; and the cost of administration for the same period was £7,624. The Act requires a quinquennial investigation, and no statement can be made as to the position of the fund at present. (3) On 30th June, 1919, the latest date for which figures are available, the number of persons employed by the Government was 81,413. This number includes 44,953 permanent and temporary railway and tramway employees; 2,600 permanent and temporary police officers; 10,863 employees, permanent and temporary, on the wages staff; and 4,198 unclassified temporary employees. Contributions to the fund managed by the State Superannuation Board were received from approximately 17,885 employees during the year ended 30th June, 1920. (4) Representations urging exemptions from the provisions of the Act were made by several bodies, and consequent thereon the late Government decided that the Act should not apply to persons paid at hourly, weekly, or fortnightly rates. This decision was subsequently confirmed by legislation passed in last Parliament.

BROKEN HILL HOSPITAL.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND MOTHERHOOD,—(1) Is the Government paying the monthly accounts and otherwise financing Broken Hill General Hospital; if so, what is the cost per month to the general body of taxpayers? (2) Why is the Broken Hill Hospital singled out for this special treatment? (3) Is the Government meeting the cost of maintenance in connection with other country hospital or hospitals; if it is, will he be good enough to name same, and give particulars of the expenditure involved?

Answer,—(1 and 2) The Government is not paying the monthly accounts wholly. It is, however, providing a greater portion of the funds than is normally the case, owing to the direct effect upon the revenue of the hospital occasioned by the prolonged stoppage of work at the mines. The special assistance in this respect rendered during the last thirteen months is £8,270. (3) The Cobar Hospital, for a similar reason to Broken Hill, is receiving a larger measure of aid from the departmental votes. The special assistance granted this institution in the past twelve months amounted to £1,279. Many other country hospitals, owing principally to drought effects, are receiving special assistance from my department.

NECESSARY COMMODITIES PROSECUTIONS.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—(1) Has it been brought under his notice that much unnecessary trouble and expense are inflicted upon country business people by reason of the fact that prosecutions for infringement of the provisions of the Necessary Commodities Control Act must all be heard in Sydney by the Chairman of the Necessary Commodities Commission? (2) Does he intend to alter the law to admit the local police magistrates dealing with such cases, as suggested by Mr. Justice Rolin, Chairman of the Commission?

Answer,—(1) and (2) Yes. A bill has already been drafted dealing with the matter.

STATE LOAN ADVERTISEMENTS.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—What was the total amount expended respectively in printing and in newspaper advertising in connection with the Government's £2,000,000 local loan?

Answer,—I am informed:

Printing, £31 12s. 9d.; advertising, £6,982 18s.

COST OF INCOME-TAX COLLECTION.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) What is the percentage cost incurred in this

State of collection of income-tax? (2) Same with regard to other States? (3) Same with regard to Commonwealth?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) The percentage cost of collection for New South Wales is 1·2 per cent. (2) The percentage cost of collection—for Queensland, is 1·3 per cent.; for Tasmania, 1·5 per cent.; for South Australia, 2 per cent.; for Victoria, 1·7 per cent.; for Western Australia, not available. (3) The percentage cost of collection for the Commonwealth is, approximately, 2·75 per cent.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the PREMIER,—(1) Will he state the total number of employees in the service of the Government on the 30th June, 1920—including in the list all who are engaged in the several Government departments, such as the Railway, Water and Sewerage Board, Timber Yards, &c., and in all other such branches of activity associated with the State? (2) The total amount in salary, wages, &c., annually paid these employees?

Answer,—As the preparation of this return will involve a considerable sum, it is suggested that the hon. member move for the return in the ordinary way.

CONVICTION OF QUINLAN, WHITE, AND RYAN.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—Will he lay upon the table of this House all papers relating to the conviction, at Cootamundra, of John Quinlan, Thomas White, and Matthew Ryan, and the withdrawal subsequently of proceedings instituted against the same persons on a charge of perjury?

Answer,—I beg to invite the hon. member's attention to the fact that under the standing orders the production of papers having reference to the administration of justice may be asked for only by address to the Governor. If, however, the hon. member wishes to see the papers in the matter under notice, I will have them made available for his perusal privately.

PAYMENTS TO TRAMWAY EMPLOYEES AND POLICE.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) What amounts were involved in respect of special payments during the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to (a) railway and tramway employees, and (b) police officers? (2) Is it intended to pay the police officers concerned on the same basis as payment was made to railway and tramway employees; and, if so, when will such payment be made?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) (a) £12,185; (b) £4,200. (2) The payment to the police is on the same basis as the payment to the railway and tramway employees. Payment will be made on the next pay-day.

ADVANCES FOR HOMES.

Mr. OAKES asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) What amounts were advanced by the Government Savings Bank to assist in the building of homes in each of the following towns during the last five years, namely:—Wagga Wagga, Albury, Temora, Forbes, Parkes, Dubbo, Wellington, and Orange? (2) How many applications for such purpose, were received from each of the centres mentioned during that period?

Answer,—I am informed:

The following statement shows the number of building loan applications received during the last five years under the provisions of the Homes Act from the towns referred to, also the result of such applications, and the total amount advanced in respect thereof:—

Town.	No. of Applications Received.	Result of Applications.	Total Amount Advanced.
			£
Albury	7	6 approved ; 1 withdrawn.	3,140
Dubbo.....	11	8 approved ; 3 withdrawn.	3,765
Forbes	7	7 approved....	2,015
Orange	12	12 approved...	4,270
Parkes	50	48 approved ; 2 withdrawn.	21,935
Temora	1	1 withdrawn..
Wagga Wagga.	2	2 approved. ...	1,150
Wellington..	6	6 approved. ...	2,715

MR. GEORGE BRODIE, LANDS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. OAKES asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—(1) Is it a fact that Mr. George Brodie, acting accountant of the Department of Lands, retired from his office after an inquiry held by the Public Service Board? (2) Will he place the papers relating to such inquiry, including the report of the Board, on the table of this House? (3) Is it a fact that the same Mr. Brodie has been appointed to investigate and assist the Lands Department in the preparation of the case to be submitted to Mr. Justice Street in connection with the soldiers' settlements? (4) Is it a fact that Mr. Brodie was administering the accounts of the soldiers' settlements; and, if so, under what circumstances were such accounts removed from his control? (5) What fee or salary is being paid to Mr. Brodie for the investigation referred to above? (6) Is it a fact that the Auditor-General protested against Mr. Brodie's services being utilised? (7) Will he place on the table the recommendation of Mr. Mack, barrister-at-law, suggesting Mr. Brodie's appointment? (8) Was Mr. Mack aware of the objection raised by the Auditor-General to Mr. Brodie's appointment? (9) Will he place on the table the report of Mr. Pooley, inspector of the Audit Department, in regard to recent irregularities in the Accounts Branch of his department?

Answer,—(1) Yes, on leave prior to retirement. Mr. Brodie was acting-accountant. The Public Service Board decided to make a permanent appointment at a reduced salary. (2) This question should be addressed to my colleague the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice. (3) Mr. Brodie is assisting Crown counsel in the commission. (4) Yes. On the recommendation of Mr. Royal Commissioner Allard that a special accounts section be created to deal with soldier settlement work. This view was endorsed by the Minister (Mr. Ashford) and approved by the Public Service Board. (5) Mr. Brodie is being paid at the rate of his present salary for the time occupied on work of the royal commission. (6) Not that I am aware. (7) I have no objection to placing the papers on the table of the House. (8) See

reply to question No. 6. (9) A report was received from the Auditor-General the day prior to this question, and has been referred to the Public Service Board.

CLYDE RECREATION OVAL.

Mr. BRUNTNEILL asked the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS,—Will he lay upon the table of this House all letters and papers in connection with the sale of the Clyde Recreation Oval?

Answer,—Yes, if moved for in the ordinary way.

PERJURY BY SCULLY BEFORE I.W.W. COMMISSION.

Mr. LEY asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—(1) Is he satisfied that in giving evidence before the I.W.W. Commission Scully committed perjury? (2) If so, what steps do the Government propose to take?

Answer,—If the hon. member will particularise the Commission to which he refers, I shall consider the matter further.

ROCKY POINT ROAD.

Mr. BAGNALL asked the MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT,—Is he prepared to undertake the repair of Rocky Point road from Cook's River to Sans Souci, in view of its present dangerous condition, and the fact that it is a national highway, being the main southern road out of Sydney?

Answer,—The Government proposes to introduce a Main Roads Bill which will provide a method whereby the Rocky Point road, in common with the other main roads of the metropolitan area, may be reconstructed and maintained. Pending the passing of such a measure this road will receive consideration on its merits in respect of the distribution of any moneys which Parliament may be able to provide for subsidies to main roads.

CANTERBURY SEWERAGE SCHEME.

Mr. BAGNALL asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Is it a fact that there is urgent necessity for proceeding with the Canterbury sewerage

scheme? (2) Will he give the House an undertaking that it will be put in hand this year?

Answer,—(1) Yes. (2) An order for the manufacture of the pipes required for the construction of the main Canterbury-Bankstown sewer has been placed with the manager of the State Reinforced Concrete and Pipe Works. It is anticipated that pipes will be available to commence the construction of the sewer within six months, when, if the financial conditions will permit of the necessary funds being made available, the work will be proceeded with.

ADVANCES FOR HOMES.

Mr. BAGNALL asked the MINISTER FOR HOUSING,—(1) What amount was expended by the department in advances for homes between 1st January, 1920, and 31st March? (2) What amount was expended by the department in advances for homes between 1st April, 1920, and 30th June? (3) How many homes were commenced during the months from 1st January, 1920, to 31st March? (4) How many homes were commenced during the months from 1st April, 1920, to 30th June?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) £108,659. (2) £151,462. (3) 375. (4) 127.

TRUCKING YARDS, SOUTH GOULBURN.

Lt.-Colonel RUTLEDGE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—Will he state whether provision has been made on the estimates for the provision of adequate trucking yards at South Goulburn?

Answer,—I am informed:

An amount has been placed on the draft estimates to cover the cost of alterations and additions to stations throughout the lines, and such amount includes provision for adequate trucking facilities at South Goulburn.

WORKING-MEN'S INSTITUTES.

Mr. A. F. SMITH asked the MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,—(1) Is it a fact that a site, costing over £10,000, acquired for a working-man's institute in Crown-street, Surry Hills, is not being utilised for such purpose? (2) Is it a

fact that this sum is large enough to purchase several working-men's institutes, and will he have inquiries made re the advisability of disposing of this property and establishing workmen's institutes? (3) Is it a fact that the workman's institute in the Glebe has recently been sold, and will he give favourable consideration to this important suburb in any future action he may take in the matter?

Answer,—(1) Yes, but I am not aware of the price paid, the resumption having been carried out by the Works Department. (2) The fact that the acquired property is not being put to the use for which it was resumed is a fitting matter to bring under the notice of Cabinet. That course will be adopted by me. (3) The department understands that the Glebe Working-men's Institute will shortly be put to the necessity of vacating their present rented premises, but the matter of acquiring other accommodation is not one for the responsibility of this department. This department's assistance to these institutes is confined to subsidy on actual expenditure on reading matter for library.

ART-UNION, BROKEN HILL.

Mr. OAKES asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—Will he state whether he has given approval for an art-union to be held for the relief of distress at Broken Hill, agreeing to allow the sum of £20 in every £100 collected as commission?

Answer,—The promotion of an art-union in aid of the Broken Hill Relief Fund has been sanctioned, and the articles of agreement provide that the proceeds are to be devoted to the relief of distress amongst the miners, their wives, and children. I did not agree to the sum of £20 in every £100 being allowed as commission, but it is common knowledge that in many of the larger art-unions the ticket sellers are allowed commission at the rate of 20 per cent.

HARBOUR WORKS, TWEED HEADS.

Mr. PERDRIAU asked the PREMIER,—In view of the fact that the Government proposes to reconstitute the Par-

liamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, and in view of the enormous production of tropical fruit in the Tweed River district, will he refer to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works the desirability of completing the unfinished harbour works at Tweed Heads?

Answer,—The question of referring the matter of the completion of the harbour works at the Tweed Heads to the Public Works Committee will be considered when the general Public Works policy is being determined.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, COONABARABRAN.

Mr. A. F. SMITH asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—In connection with a number of Crown lease blocks, forty-five blocks being now available in the Coonabarabran district, are any of these blocks set aside for soldier settlement; if not, why not?

Answer,—The land referred to is Crown lease area No. 3,555, embracing forty-six blocks, which became available for ordinary application on 30th August, 1920. The Coonabarabran Repatriation Committee advised the department that the sub-committee at Purlawaugh had reported that the land was unsuitable for soldier settlement. Regulation 44 of the Crown Lands Consolidation Act provides that any applicant who is a discharged soldier holding a qualification certificate under the Returned Soldiers Settlement Act, 1916, shall not be excluded from a ballot, and may be given preference over any other applicant for the land.

MINERS' ACCIDENT RELIEF FUND.

Mr. KEARSLEY asked the SECRETARY FOR MINES,—In the case of beneficiaries under the Miners' Accident Relief Act who are now in receipt of incomes from any form of personal exertion, what allowances are made from the Miners' Accident Relief Fund?

Answer,—Unmarried men, and married men without children, whose allowance is 15s. per week, may earn an additional £3 2s. per week, making £3 17s. in all, before allowances are affected. Married men with one child, whose allowances total £1 per week, may earn £2 17s.

Married men with two children, whose allowances total £1 5s. may earn an additional £2 15s. This also applies to men with three, four, five, or six children, whose allowances can be supplemented by earnings up to £2 15s. per week, making their total incomes £4 5s., £4 10s., £4 15s., and £5 respectively. When earnings exceed this basis the allowances are proportionally reduced.

**WITNESS GIFFNEY, I.W.W.
INQUIRY.**

Mr. DRUMMOND asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—Will he have inquiry made by the police as to whether it is a fact that Giffney, or Gaffney, a new witness in the recent I.W.W. inquiry, and to whose evidence the commissioner appeared to attach much importance, was expelled for expounding extreme I.W.W. views by the residents of Broken Hill some years ago?

Answer,—No useful purpose would be served by making such inquiry.

**BARMEDMAN-RANKIN'S SPRINGS
RAILWAY.**

Mr. BUTTENSHAW asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Is it a fact that the construction of the Barmedman-Rankin's Springs railway is being held up on account of an insufficient supply of sleepers and dog-spikes? (2) Will he make strong representations to the Railway Commissioners to do all that is possible to supply these requirements, so that the farmers along the route will have the railway to remove their wheat during the forthcoming harvest?

Answer,—I'm informed:

(1) Plate-laying is being delayed by scarcity of sleepers. (2) Arrangements have been made by which it is hoped to increase the supply of sleepers, of which there is a shortage over the whole State. Dog spikes are on order.

DISTRIBUTION OF WIRE-NETTING.

Lt.-Colonel RUTLEDGE asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—Will he state when a supply of wire-netting is likely to be available for distribution on time payment, through the Pastures Protection Boards?

Answer,—Wire-netting is being supplied to a limited extent.

**GORGE HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME,
CLARENCE RIVER.**

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Will he state when the further report on the Gorge (Clarence River) hydro-electric scheme will be available? (2) Is it a fact that the investigations show greater possibilities, at a smaller cost, than put forward by Mr. Corin in 1918?

Answer,—(1) It is anticipated the report will be available about the end of the year. (2) No conclusions can be drawn from the investigations now in progress until they are complete.

INDUSTRIAL DISEASES.

Mr. BROOKFIELD asked the MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY,—In view of the fact that in the finding of the medical commission which recently inquired into industrial diseases at Broken Hill it is stated, "two hundred mine-workers are so diseased that they should not be allowed to continue working in the mining industry," will the Government immediately take the necessary steps to settle these unfortunate men on the land?

Answer,—The report of the medical commission has not yet been received. The hon. member's suggestion will, however, be borne in mind.

PROSECUTION OF PROFITEERS.

Mr. ASHFORD asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—(1) What are the names of the other profiteers, apart from the Lord Mayor of Sydney, that have not been prosecuted because they were caught profiteering for the first time, and on what date was such decision arrived at? (2) How many have been prosecuted since his accession to office on the first reported offence? (3) How many have been prosecuted altogether during a similar period?

Answer,—(1) Forty-one persons within the period April to August. The hon. member may see a list of the names of such persons on application to me. (2) Forty-three. (3) Forty-five.

GOVERNMENT HORSE STUD FARM.

Mr. MAIN asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—Will he furnish particulars as under concerning the New South

Wales Government Horse Stud Farm at North Bangaroo, near Canowindra, since the purchase of the farm up to the latest date for which figures are available, namely: Expenditure on buildings, plant and machinery, breeding stock, live stock other than breeding, salaries and wages, all other expenditure. Revenue—From sales of stock bred on farm, sales of other live stock, grain or other produce, all other sources. Values of on hand—Breeding stock, other live stock, grain, fodder, and such like?

Answer,—I shall have a return compiled to furnish the information desired, and present it to the House in due course.

PUNISHMENTS OF PRISONERS IN GAOLS.

Mr. BROOKFIELD asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—Will he furnish the following information:—(a) The number of punishments of prisoners at Bathurst Gaol from April, 1919, up to March, 1920; (b) the number of punishments at Long Bay Penitentiary and Goulburn Gaol during the same period, and the average number of prisoners at each gaol?

Answer,—During the period mentioned by the hon. member the number of punishments of prisoners at Bathurst Gaol was thirty, State Penitentiary forty-five, and Goulburn nine. The average daily number of prisoners confined in the establishments named during the same period was 197, 344, and 160 respectively.

MAITLAND-SYDNEY RAILWAY ROUTES.

Mr. KEARSLEY asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Have trial surveys of railway routes been made with a view to reducing train journeys between the Great Northern line north of Maitland and Sydney? (2) If so, (a) how many; (b) what are the points of junction at each end; (c) what in each is the line of route?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) Exploration surveys have been made. (2) A trial survey was commenced from Woy Woy via Wollombi to Singleton, but was not completed. Exploration surveys have been made from Wyong via Wollombi to Singleton, and from Morisset

via Cessnock and Pokolbin to Minimbah; also from Carlingford via Wiseman's Ferry, St. Albans, Wollombi, and Broke to Singleton.

ELECTORAL ACT REGULATIONS.

Mr. ASHFORD asked the PREMIER,—(1) Is it a fact that under the Electoral Act regulations in connection therewith should be laid on the table of the House before the expiration of fourteen days from the meeting of Parliament? (2) Will he see that this is done, so that the electors of the Murray can have full representation as early as possible?

Answer,—(1) and (2) Assuming that the hon. member is referring to the regulations for the filling of casual vacancies, I desire to inform him that it is a fact that the regulations should have been laid before Parliament within seven days of the opening of the last session of last Parliament. My colleagues and I are now considering the question of rectifying the omission. •

WAR MUSEUM FOR NEW SOUTH WALES.

Mr. HENLEY asked the PREMIER,—(1) Is it a fact that the Government has decided not to accept from the Federal Government "war trophies" such as captured guns, trench-mortars, and machine guns, offered to form part of a war museum for New South Wales? (2) Will he also state why it is he objects to establish a war museum in the mother State, remembering that New South Wales contributed more men and more money than any other State of the Commonwealth in defence of Australia and the Empire?

Answer,—(1) No. The guns will be accepted from the Federal Government, and will be displayed in parks and public places within the city and metropolitan area. (2) The establishment of a war museum is regarded as being entirely a Commonwealth obligation.

PUNT ACROSS KARUAH RIVER.

Mr. PRICE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Has his attention been directed by the hon. member for Gloucester to the fact that serious loss and inconvenience are being experienced by the fact that there is no suitable punt

available over the Karuah River, between Alicetown and Tea Gardens, Port Stephens, for the transit of stock and vehicles? (2) Is it a fact that starving stock from various parts of the State are being depastured in the Port Stephens district, and that in consequence of no facilities being provided this entails extra cost and national loss? (3) Is it a fact that this is a national work, and that the local councils are unable to make provision for a new punt, as their finances will not enable them to undertake the undertaking? (4) In view of the foregoing, will he be good enough to (a) have a special report obtained on the matter; (b) make provision for this being dealt with as a national work; (c) confer with the Local Government Department in connection with the matter; if not, why not?

Answer,—(1) Representations have been made to the department urging that a new punt be provided. (2) I am not aware. (3) No. As regards the local shire councils' financial positions I am not in a position to express any opinion, and would suggest that in this connection the hon. member might approach my colleague, the Minister for Local Government. (4) As my department has no responsibility in regard to this punt I would suggest that any representations in the matter be addressed to the Local Government Department.

BULK-HANDLING OF WHEAT.

MR. PRICE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) In connection with the bulk-handling of wheat, were quotations invited from American and British firms for the establishment of the necessary plant to deal with same? (2) If so, what stage did the negotiations reach in February, 1918? (3) (a) Were the quotations accepted; (b) what action was decided upon in connection with the offers submitted? (4) Is it a fact that at that date Australian firms were willing to submit quotations for the installation of complete plant, and accept a proportion of Treasury bills in payment of same? (5) Were Australian firms given sufficient time to enable them to submit plans and quotations for portion or whole of the plant? (6) Were tenders called to enable Australian firms to have

an opportunity of submitting quotations, or tendering; if not, why was this course not adopted? (7) Was the Government definitely committed to Messrs. John S. Metcalfe & Co.'s plans in connection with elevators; if not, why was competition not invited throughout America and Australia to submit plans? (8) Is the Government committed to pay Messrs. Metcalfe & Co. commission for supervising the erection of the elevators, whether their plans are used or not?

Answer,—(1) Tenders were invited in Australia for the erection of grain silos. (2) By February, 1918, contracts had been let for the erection of the country grain silos, material and machinery, and for the erection of the terminal elevator. (3) Certain tenders were accepted. (4) One of the contractors was willing to accept part payment in Treasury bills. (5) Yes. (6) Yes, and the contracts allotted were to Australian firms. (7) Yes. (8) I am unable to state the Government's liability in such a contingency.

COUNTRY SILOS AND WHEAT ELEVATORS.

MR. PRICE asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—(1) How many tenders were received for the silos advertised to be erected in the country districts? (2) What were the figures for each group? (3) Is it a fact that one firm whose tender was £140,000 below the next lowest was not accepted; will he give the reason why it was not accepted; by the non-acceptance of this tender will he inform this House how much extra the country has to pay for the erection of these silos? (4) Will he state why a contract was given to Mr. Teesdale Smith for the erection of a terminal elevator at Sydney without any tenders having been called; also the amount that this building is to cost; is it a fact that it runs into nearly £400,000? (5) Is Mr. Teesdale Smith the gentleman who lent the Holman Government £300,000, and took Treasury bills for the same, about fifteen months ago; is it a fact that this gentleman received and signed a contract for the whole elevator scheme for New South Wales near the end of 1916; was this contract afterwards cancelled?

Answer,—(1) Two. (2) Tenders for silos in group two were only received in

March last, and of the two bids one was for £159,200, and the other for £152,448.

(3) No. Neither tender has been accepted, as the Government is carrying out the work by day labour. (4) I understand that the contract with Mr. H. Teesdale Smith was entered into after tenders had been invited. (5) I am unable to say. The agreements are dated the 25th January, 1918, and 14th August, 1918, and the papers in the matter were laid on the table of the House and ordered to be printed on 14th March, 1918.

COMMISSION PAID TO METCALFE & CO.

Mr. PRICE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Was a report prepared by Messrs. John S. Metcalfe & Co., Limited, on the proposed grain elevators and silos for New South Wales; (a) if so, on what date were instructions issued to Messrs. Metcalfe to prepare such report; (b) what was the amount agreed upon as payment; (c) was there an extra commission agreed upon; if so, what was the amount of such commission? (2) Was the amount of £20,000 paid to Messrs. Metcalfe & Co., Limited; if so, on what date; will he be good enough to state if any further payments have been made to this gentleman, or the firm of Messrs. John S. Metcalfe & Co., Limited; what were the dates of such payments? (3) Were the plans furnished ordinary office copies, or were they designed for any particular sites; if so, did they give details showing levels, excavations, and necessary details; were they working plans for the particular sites on which the elevators were to be erected, or simply ordinary office plans? (4) What amount has been paid to date to the firm of Messrs. Metcalfe & Co., Limited, and what amount is the Crown still indebted to this firm? (5) Is it a fact that these plans cost the State over £30,000 for stock office plans, when complete working plans could have been prepared by draftsmen of the department for the sum of about £5,000?

Answer,—(1) No payment has been made to J. S. Metcalfe & Co. for the preparation of any report. The agreement with that firm was for the preparation of plans and specifications, and to act as

supervising engineers. (2) The following amounts have been paid for the preparation of plans and specifications: £2,500 on 8th June, 1916; £7,500 on 14th August, 1916; £3,000 on 27th October, 1916; £4,000 on 17th January, 1917; £2,000 on 19th April, 1917; £950 on 17th December, 1917; £1,500 on 19th January, 1918; £3,000 on 15th February, 1918; £3,810 on 17th February, 1919; £3,000 on 13th June, 1919. (3) The plans were designs of elevators for the requirements of each site. (4) (a) £43,096 1s. 11d. for preparation of plans and specifications and supervision of works carried out; (b) the amount cannot be definitely stated until the works are completed. (5) There was no officer in the department who possessed the necessary experience.

CONSTRUCTION OF GRAIN ELEVATORS.

Mr. PRICE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Is it a fact that Messrs. J. S. Metcalfe & Co. are competitors in America for the building of elevators with the very firms who will be tendering for their construction here; will he consider whether it is not a peculiar position for them to pose as architects and advisers on these tenders? (2) Why was such a huge sum as £20,000 paid to J. S. Metcalfe & Co. for plans; could not one of the best architects have been imported from America for about a quarter of the price; and would it then have been open to this firm, along with others, to submit their proposition on a fair and equitable basis of tender? (3) Is it a fact that when evidence was taken on 4th September, Mr. Carter, of J. S. Metcalfe & Co., stated that their firm tendered through Mr. Durham for drawing up the plans; who were the other tenderers, and what were their prices? (4) Did Mr. Carter state that up to date, 4th September, 1916, they had been paid £10,000 on account of plans; was this for the Sydney terminal elevator only; is it 2½ per cent. on the estimated cost of the terminal elevator; were these working plans to suit the selected site at Glebe Island or only specimen plans, similar to those supplied to South Australia in a pamphlet by

a Mr. Alford? (5) Why was the Burrell Engineering Company, which furnished a report on bulk-handling of wheat in 1913, not asked to furnish plans if competition was invited; why was their report thrown over when Metcalfe appeared on the scene; is it a fact that the Burrell Engineering and Construction Company is a bigger firm of elevator constructors than J. S. Metcalfe & Co.? (6) How is the building of the elevators to be financed when money is so dear? (7) Will he consider whether the building of elevators under war conditions and prices loads the industry with huge unnecessary expenses for all time? (8) Why were Harold Darling and Dreyfus & Co. not examined on the bulk-handling of wheat, they being the parties most concerned, being the largest wheat-shippers?

Answer,—(1) No. (2) I presume because the late Government considered the service worthy of the remuneration. (3) I am unaware. (4) I am unaware. Payments to the firm have been made in accordance with the agreement entered into with them by a previous Government. (5) I am unaware. (6) Funds have been made available from the loan which was recently so successfully raised locally. (7) I have already considered this aspect. (8) I am unable to say.

LAND FOR SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. PRICE asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—(1) Is it a fact that, by the resumption of the alienated frontages within the counties of Macquarie, Hawkes, Gloucester, Durham, and Vernon, a large area of Crown lands would be made available at a low price per acre for soldiers' settlements? (2) Will he consider the advisability of taking action with a view to such resumptions, also the establishment of light lines of railway to open up such soldiers' settlements?

Answer,—(1) The Crown lands in the counties referred to are inferior. It would probably assist in the way of their disposal if the frontage lands could be utilised in connection with them. (2) The difficulty of financing soldier settlement proposals precludes consideration of the subject proposal for the present.

PAYMENT TO MR. JUSTICE EWING.

Captain CHAFFEY asked the PREMIER,—(1) What was the total amount of money paid to Mr. Justice Ewing for his services as a commissioner to inquire into the I.W.W. cases? (2) Is there an understanding that any further sums of money are to be paid to him?

Answer,—(1) No fee has been paid to Mr. Justice Ewing for his services. Expenses only have been allowed, and it is intended to refund to the Tasmanian Government the amount of his salary for the time he was engaged on the inquiry. (2) No.

REPAYMENTS OF LOANS TO SETTLERS.

Mr. DRUMMOND asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—In view of the fact that the collecting of the entire loans to settlers from the proceeds of one harvest will entail great hardship, will he consider the advisability of extending repayments of the Rural Industries Board's advances over a term of at least five years?

Answer,—Owing to the fact that advances carry interest, some farmers may desire to repay as early as possible. Many applicants only received small loans, notwithstanding that the areas cropped are large, and given a reasonable season they will have no difficulty in repaying the full amount. In cases where settlers are unable to repay the full amount, the department will be prepared to grant extensions, taking into consideration the security of tenure. In previous cases the same procedure proved satisfactory, farmers having been given four years, or even more, in which to meet their obligations.

ALBION PARK CALF DEPOT.

Mr. DAVIES asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—(1) What was the capital cost of the Albion Park Calf Depot, including plant, building, and stock—these items to be given separately? (2) What was the amount they realised when sold? (3) What became of the cattle, and who received them? (4) Is a copy of the profit and loss account available?

Answer,—(1) £3,920, representing plant, £452; buildings, £2,291; stock, £1,000;

preliminary expenses, £177. (2) The sale of the plant and stock has not yet been completed. (3) The cattle are on agistment, and it is proposed to offer them for auction sale next month. (4) Profit and loss account will not be available until disposal of the stock and plant is complete.

COST OF SHIPPING COAL.

Mr. DAVIES asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) What is the cost per ton of shipping for coal at the Wollongong Harbour? (2) What companies are now shipping at this port? (3) What is the cost per ton of coal shipped at Port Kembla? (4) Is it a fact that if the same tonnage rate was charged at Wollongong as at Port Kembla there would probably be an increase of £1,500 per annum to the revenue of the State? (5) Will he consider the advisability of charging a uniform rate at these ports?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) 6d. per ton, in addition to tonnage dues on the ship. (2) Mount Pleasant Coal-mining Company and the Mount Keira Colliery Company. (3) 1s. 3d. (4) Yes; probably. (5) The question of the uniformity of port charges at coastal ports is receiving the attention of the Government.

PRODUCE AND COAL TRANSPORT.

Mr. DAVIES asked the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS,—(1) What is the quantity of wheat, wool, and other produce which passes through Goulburn and Moss Vale annually en route to Darling Harbour for export purposes? (2) What is the quantity of coal forwarded from Wollongong and other centres of the South Coast to stations south of Moss Vale and Goulburn annually;—that is to say, coal which is now being carried to Darling Harbour and then transhipped again along the southern line south of Moss Vale?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) 634,006 tons of wheat, 25,380 tons of wool, and 23,012 tons of fruit and vegetables were invoiced from various stations Albury to Goulburn, including the branch lines, during the year ended 31st December, 1919. Of this wheat, 347,994 tons were shipped at Darling Island, the balance representing deliveries at Darling Harbour, the actual destina-

tion of which is not known. The wool, fruit, and vegetables were all delivered at Darling Harbour to teams, and ultimate destination is not known. (2) Coal despatched from South Coast collieries to stations south of Moss Vale, inclusive, was 74,884 tons, and 7,407 tons for stations south of Goulburn. Definite figures cannot be given for coke. Approximately 4,000 tons are sent annually from the South Coast to stations south of Goulburn, but none for stations between Moss Vale and Goulburn.

SHORTAGE OF LOW-GRADE WOOL.

Mr. J. R. LEE asked the PREMIER,—(1) Is it a fact that practically the whole of the wool-scouring industry is at a standstill, and many employees are out of work in the State, and in Botany district in particular, in consequence of the shortage of low-grade wool? (2) Will he be good enough to make representation to the Federal authorities with a view of having a supply of wool made available from the wool now held in this State by the Central Wool Committee?

Answer,—The Prime Minister has already convened a conference of all sections of the wool industry to consider this matter.

RAILWAY SEASON TICKETS.

Mr. FRANK BURKE asked the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS,—(1) What is the annual cost to the Railway Commissioners for metal season tickets on the railways? (2) Are the tickets supplied by public tender? (3) When does the present contract expire? (4) Will public tenders be called for a fresh supply of these tickets? If so, upon what date? (5) Are the Railway Commissioners considering taking over or installing a plant for the manufacturing of metal season tickets? (6) What would be the approximate cost of installation of the plant? (7) What would be the annual cost of the up-keep of same? (8) Is the Commissioner considering the appointment of a manager? If so, will he call for applications for this position, and what salary is it intended shall be paid?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) £1,808 10s. 10d., based on existing rates and numbers of tickets required. (2) Tenders have not been called for some time, as repeated efforts to obtain satisfactory efforts by this means were not successful. (3) 31st December, 1920. (4)

Yes; during the month. (5) No. (As to 6, 7, and 8) As the Railway Commissioners do not propose to instal a plant, I understand that consideration has not been given to these matters.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

Mr. PERDRIAU asked the ATTORNEY-GENERAL,—(1) Since the year 1900 how many persons have been found guilty of a capital offence in New South Wales? (2) How many such were reprieved, if any? (3) By whose Government, and in what year? (4) Was ever a person found guilty and sentenced to death and executed at the direction of a Labour Government? If so, what Government?

Answer,—(1) 139. (2) 120. (There are also two cases which have not yet been considered by Cabinet.) (3) Lyne Government, 4; See Government, 16; Waddell Government, 2; Carruthers Government, 20; Wade Government, 14; McGowen Government, 19; Holman Government, 28; National Government, 11; Storey Government, 6. (4) One prisoner was executed in 1912 during the term of the McGowen Government.

SALE OF FERTILISERS AND FOOD-STUFFS.

Mr. LEY asked the MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,—Will he introduce during the present session a bill to fix standards for and otherwise regulate sale of fertilisers and foodstuffs for animals?

Answer,—Bills to regulate these matters have already been prepared, and, should the business of the House permit, will be introduced this session.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. J. R. LEE asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—(1) Is it a fact that the Government have declined to settle any more soldiers on the land, alleging as their reason no more money is available? (2) Was a definite understanding come to between the Federal Treasurer and the present Minister for Lands in regard to the financing of future soldier settlement; if so, what was that understanding? (3) Is it a fact that there is money available for soldier settlement, and that New South Wales has not utilised the full amount that was placed at its disposal by the Federal Government?

Answer,—(1) No; the number of soldiers settled on the land is being added to every week. Owing to the difficulty of providing the necessary funds, however, new proposals under the promotion section of the Closer Settlement Acts have had to be declined for the present. (2) Yes; the Commonwealth Government agreed to provide about £12,000,000 to settle 8,400 soldier settlers on a programme arranged by Mr. Ashford, and £1,000 for each soldier settler over 8,400. These amounts include the usual advance of £625 for equipment of farms. (3) The programme is being carried out, but it involves the construction of railways, irrigation, and other works, which must-necessarily take some time to complete. The arrangements made with the Commonwealth Government do not materially assist in financing proposals under the promotion section of the Closer Settlement Acts, which involve an average expenditure of about £2,900 per farm. The Commonwealth Government refused to provide funds for this class of soldiers' settlement, other than by way of an advance of £1,000 per settler (£625 for equipment and £375 for land, &c.). I may add that I contemplate introducing legislation during the present session, with a view to providing farms for all intending settlers, including returned soldiers.

STATE WAR MUSEUM.

Mr. JAUQUES asked the PREMIER,—(1) Is it a fact that the Government has been requested to make its selection of war trophies for the State war museum? (2) If so, will he expedite its selection, in order that the municipalities and shires may have their quota? (3) Is it a fact that the Government has decided against the establishment of a war museum?

Answer,—(1) Yes. (2 and 3) The State Government regards the establishment of a war museum as a Commonwealth obligation entirely. This decision has been communicated to the Federal authorities, who are now arranging for the direct distribution of the guns amongst the municipal bodies within the metropolitan area.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE:

'GUARANTEED PRICE FOR WHEAT.

Mr. OAKES: I desire to know whether the Premier has any information to give to the House with regard to the guaranteed price of 7s. 6d. per bushel for wheat in connection with the forthcoming harvest? The farmers are concerned as to how the guarantee actually stands, and I desire to know whether the Government has made any arrangement with the Federal Government as to the payment of its contribution of 5s. per bushel? Can a statement be made at once, as many farmers are threatening to cut their crops for hay?

Mr. J. STOREY: The question the hon. member has asked me is one that might reasonably be postponed until the Minister for Agriculture returns from Melbourne, where he is at present engaged on the matter of the wheat pool. I fancy the hon. member is in error when he says that the farmers are agitated because of some alleged uncertainty as to the attitude that may be assumed towards them.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The Dubbo farmers are agitated anyhow!

Mr. J. STOREY: The mere fact that the hon. member for Eastern Suburbs (Mr. Oakes) is asking the question, and not one of the representatives of the farmers in the country districts, indicates that whilst it may be that farmers of Waverley—the persons who, vulgarly speaking, farm the farmers—are agitated, it does not appear that the real farmers are at all concerned. I can say to the hon. member that the Government's attitude on the matter is definite, as is also the attitude of the Federal Government. The Commonwealth authorities have guaranteed 5s. per bushel to the farmer. This Labour Government, for the first time in history, has guaranteed half-a-crown per bushel, making a total guarantee to the farmer of 7s. 6d. for his wheat this year.

Captain CHAFFEY: When is the money to be paid?

Mr. J. STOREY: There is no ambiguity so far as the farmers are concerned, and no uncertainty so far as the Government is concerned, nor have we given any indication of such a character as would leave that impression. Under

those circumstances, I have to assume that the agitation referred to by the hon. member Mr. Oakes is more imaginary than real.

Captain CHAFFEY: In view of the Premier's reply to the hon. member Mr. Oakes, I wish to ask if he is aware that a very grave question is agitating the minds of the wheat farmers of this State—not so much the question of the amount of the guarantee as to how and when the 7s. 6d. is to be paid. The question in doubt is as to whether the Government is prepared to pay the 7s. 6d. cash on delivery at country railway stations or whether the farmer will have to be content with half-a-crown. If so, will the Premier take the matter into serious consideration, with a view to making a statement at an early date as to the method it is proposed to adopt in paying the amount guaranteed?

Mr. J. STOREY: I shall be glad if the hon. member will repeat his question on Thursday night when the Minister for Agriculture returns. So far as I could gather from the Minister, when discussing the matter recently with him, the most important fact is that whilst we may be in a position to determine what will be done with the half-crown representing the State's portion of the guarantee, it is clearly a matter for the Federal Government itself as to how it proposes to pay its share. This is the subject of discussion and negotiation now between the wheat pool and the Federal Government, and I shall be glad if the hon. member will repeat his question on Thursday, when I am sure the Minister, Captain Dunn, will give an answer.

MINERS' ACCIDENT RELIEF FUND.

Mr. DAVIES: I wish to ask the Minister for Mines whether, in view of the fact that miners can receive from the Miners' Accident Relief Fund only the small allowance of 15s. per week, with 5s. for each child, he will consider the advisableness of increasing the allowance commensurate with the increase in the cost of living?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Will the Minister make inquiries in his department to ascertain to what extent any increase can be made, in view of the funds available?

Mr. CANN: In answer to the hon. member Mr. Davies I may say that no increased allowance can be paid from the Miners' Accident Relief Fund. However, I will have the matter fully inquired into. Perhaps it may be possible to do something on the lines of the Police Pension Fund, and have the increase granted from the consolidated revenue. I will go into the case to see if anything can be done along those lines.

CONTROL OF RAILWAYS: HIGH COURT JUDGMENT.

Sir GEORGE FULLER: I wish to ask the Premier, in regard to the judgment given by the High Court of Australia last week, the effect of which is to take away from the control of the State Government, the railway and other public services, whether he has yet received a copy of that judgment, and whether he has had an opportunity to consider it; and if so, is he prepared to give the House any information?

Mr. J. STOREY: So far I have not received a copy of the judgment referred to. Neither have I had time to consider the matter. Of course I saw in the newspapers the fact that the judgment had been delivered but until I am placed in possession of a copy it is impossible for me to express any view.

BULLOT MEAT PROCESS.

Mr. BRUNTNELL: I wish to ask the Premier if his attention has been drawn to an article in the *Bulletin*, of the 2nd instant, dealing with the Bullot meat process? Is the Premier aware that this valuable preserving process has been employed for a considerable time with great satisfaction in the Orange district, and there is a grave possibility of the process being lost to the State by reason of certain action taken by the pure food authorities? Will the Premier have inquiries made with a view to getting some finality to the advantage of the State?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: On the same subject I would like to ask the Premier if he will cause inquiry to be made as to whether the Board of Health did not conduct an investigation into this same process and give its support and sanction to it, on the ground that no detri-

ment would be caused to the public health from the consumption of the preserved meat?

Mr. J. STOREY: In answer to the hon. member Mr. Bruntnell I may say that I have not time to read the daily papers, let alone the *Bulletin*. In answer to the hon. member Mr. Fitzpatrick my reply is that owing to the conflict of opinion that appears to exist amongst hon. members themselves I think they had both better give notice of their questions.

POLICE FORCE.

Mr. LEY: In view of the information furnished by his department that the police force is undermanned to the extent of 192, and in view of the reported increase of offences against the person and property of citizens, will the Colonial Secretary be good enough to inform the House what steps he proposes to take to remedy this condition of affairs?

Mr. DOOLEY: I have already discussed the matter with the Inspector-General of Police, and as soon as his report is made available I will furnish the information to hon. members.

REPORTS OF HOUSE CONSTABLE.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I wish to ask the Colonial Secretary if he will make available the reports of the House constable for the last six months of 1917, and the whole of 1918?

Mr. DOOLEY: As a rule there is no objection to any hon. member of the House seeing papers. I do not know what report the hon. member is referring to, but if he will call upon me I shall be only too pleased to give him any information I can.

COST OF GAS FOR STREET LIGHTING.

Mr. ARKINS: I desire to ask the Minister for Labour and Industry whether he is aware of a serious position that has occurred in various municipalities in the metropolitan area, following upon a notice issued by the Australian Gaslight Company, that the rate for each street light was to be increased from £3 15s. to £8 per year; and further, in view of the fact that the Minister states in to-day's newspapers that he has no powers under the Gas Act of 1912, to deal with the Gas-

light Company, is he prepared to bring in legislation to alleviate the very serious position which is prevalent to-day throughout the Sydney municipalities?

MR. CANN: In reply to the hon. member, I am aware that there has been a good deal of disturbance among the local municipalities with regard to the increase in the price of the gas used in street lamps, but I wish to state that the Government is in no way responsible for that, and I have notified to that effect the various municipal councils that have communicated with my department. I have also referred the whole question to the Necessary Commodities Control Commission for investigation.

HON. MEMBERS PAIRED.

MR. LAZZARINI: I should like to remove a wrong impression in connection with the vote which was taken in this House last Thursday night. It has been publicly stated that the hon. member Mr. Cann and the hon. member Mr. Bennett were absent from the House without pairs. I should like to state that those gentlemen were paired by me.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MR. HOSKINS: Quite correct.

CLOSING GAOLS.

MR. BRUNTNEILL: I desire to ask the Assistant Minister for Justice a question without notice. Does the hon. gentleman remember a speech which he made in May last, in the northern part of the State, when he proposed closing a number of gaols? Can the hon. member inform the House how many gaols have been closed since that date, and what has been the saving to the State?

MR. MCKELL: In answer to the hon. gentleman, I would like to say that since that date the gaol at Armidale has been closed. I could not from memory give him the saving which has resulted, but if the hon. member likes to put the question on the notice-paper, I shall find out for him what the saving has been.

WAR GRATUITY BONDS OF STATE EMPLOYEES.

Major SHILLINGTON: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he informed the Premiers' Conference in

Melbourne in May last that his Government had agreed to cash the war gratuity bonds of State employees? Will he be good enough to say what steps have been taken to carry out that undertaking, and can he say how it is that the Railway Commissioners' employees have so far been unable to get their war gratuity bonds cashed?

MR. LANG: I did not inform the Premiers' Conference that the present Government had undertaken to cash the war gratuity bonds of Government employees. I did notify the Premiers' Conference that Mr. Holman on the eve of the Federal elections had promised that his Government would do so. We are informed that to pay cash for these war gratuity bonds of Government employees will cost, roughly, £1,000,000. The Government is now endeavouring to see how it can get the money in order to honor the promise which was made by the late Government.

SAFETY OF SOUTH COAST MINES.

MR. BROOKFIELD: I wish to ask the Minister for Mines whether, seeing that the Government mining inspectors have reported most unfavourably on a couple of coal-mines in the South Coast district, he will take steps to see that the wishes of the Government inspectors are carried out, and, if it is impossible to enforce the mining companies to carry out the wishes of the inspectors, whether the Government will take steps to remove the men from those places to other mines, which the inspectors consider to be safe?

MR. DAVIES: On the same question, I would like to know whether the Minister will make available the latest report of the mines inspector in regard to the Helensburgh mine?

MR. CANN: With regard to the report on the Mount Kembla mine, I think that that has been made public through the press, and as far as the commissioner's recommendations are concerned in that particular instance they will be followed up by the issue of an order bearing on the lines of his report.

MR. BROOKFIELD: Thank you!

MR. CANN: In connection with the report of the mining inspector with regard to the Helensburgh mine, it is not

the usual practice to make these reports public, but if any hon. member likes to make application to my department, the report will be made available for him to peruse.

TROUBLE IN THE IRON TRADES.

Sir GEORGE FULLER: I desire to ask the Premier a question without notice in regard to the position which has arisen in the iron trades in the city of Sydney. I understand that the Premier, recognising the seriousness of the position, proposed to take the matter into consideration at a Cabinet meeting this morning. I should like to know whether the Premier has come to any determination in connection with this matter, and, if so, whether he is prepared to communicate the result to this House?

Mr. J. STOREY: In answer to the leader of the Opposition, I have to say that, in replying to a question by a representative of the press, I did say that I proposed to make a statement to-day in regard to the matter. However, as the Government has been all day engaged in a discussion upon the estimates, I have found it so far impossible to give any attention to the subject which the leader of the Opposition refers to, but I hope to do so later in the day.

PROVIDING FOR RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Mr. J. R. LEE: Can the Colonial Secretary inform me whether it is a fact that, speaking at Lithgow in April last, he stated that the Government was preparing a scheme by which every returned soldier would be provided for in two months, at the latest? If so, will he be good enough to furnish the House with some information regarding that scheme, seeing that four months have elapsed since the statement was made?

Mr. DOOLEY: That statement was made, but not by me. I think it was the late Premier, Mr. Holman, who said that. I did not make any statement of the kind.

DUMPING AND WEIGHING WHEAT.

Mr. GRIMM: I desire to ask the Minister for Railways, whether he is aware of the fact that a bountiful wheat harvest is happily almost assured, and that several new railways are in course of

construction, traversing the wheat belt, in respect of which there is little prospect of their completion before the harvest is garnered? As a great service would be rendered to the agriculturists in those districts by the early selection of sites for wheat stacking, and by installing weighbridges, will he confer with the Chief Commissioner for Railways on the subject, in order that the wheat may be deposited on sites in places where the railways are not completed?

Mr. ESTELL: I will confer with the Railway Commissioners, and see what can be done to be of the most assistance possible to the farmers in connection with the next wheat harvest.

PETROL TRAIN MOTORS ON BARRABA LINE.

Captain CHAFFEY: I desire to ask the Minister for Railways if he is aware that the people residing in the districts of Manilla, Barraba, and adjoining centres only receive a mail service three times a week, because the train only runs to Barraba three days each week? In view of the experiments carried out on the North Coast, with petrol driven train motors, will the Minister discuss with the Railway Commissioners the urgent necessity for utilising tractors of that nature to run on the spur line from Tamworth to Barraba, for the purposes of carrying mails, passengers, and perishables?

Mr. ESTELL: I shall be very pleased to accede to the request of the hon. member.

GREAT COBAR COPPER MINE.

Mr. DAVIDSON: I desire to ask the Secretary for Mines has his attention been drawn to the fact that the receivers of the Great Cobar Company are disposing of the assets of the company, principally the machinery, at the Great Cobar mine; and will he give consideration to the reports received by his department, so as to determine what would be to the best advantage for the resuscitation of the mining industry; and has he received any report from the mines inspector in connection with a certain proposition I put to him in his department?

Mr. CANN: With regard to Cobar I have had two reports called for. The first report was very unfavourable to

the Government undertaking any liability with regard to the mining industry at Cobar. The next report I called for and received was a comprehensive report by the inspector of the Mines Department with regard to the cost of unwatering the mines, &c. The report was to the effect that it would cost £143 per week to keep the chief mines unwatered. The inspector reported that he would let the Government know further as to what his opinions were, and whether a suitable site could be obtained, and what would be the best process for treating the copper, if it was found to be a payable proposition.

THE BASIC WAGE.

Mr. BAGNALL: I desire to ask the Premier if it is his intention to carry out the promise made by him as leader of the Labour party, during the election campaign, to have the basic wage declared by the Board of Trade applied to railway employees from the date of its declaration?

Mr. J. STOREY: The matter referred to by the hon. member is of such importance that I think he ought to give me notice of it. As a matter of fact, the question is one which might very well be replied to by the Minister for Railways.

THE MODEL LODGING-HOUSE.

Mr. MINAHAN: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether the Model Lodging-house is under the control of the Treasurer; and, if so, whether it is a fact that this building has been leased to certain big shipping companies; and, if it has been leased to these shipping companies, what are the names of the companies, and what are the terms of the lease; and does the Treasurer intend to restore the building to its former use?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should not read out a list of questions, as he is doing. He should give notice of them in the ordinary way. It is not in accordance with the rules of the House for an hon. member to read out a whole string of questions.

Mr. ESTELL: For the information of the hon. member, I might say that the Model Lodging-house, after it was handed over by the Harbour Trust, became the charge of the Secretary for Public Works.

I am at present dealing with the matter, and if the hon. member will put his questions in writing I shall be only too pleased to tell him in reply what I propose to do with regard to this matter.

Mr. MINAHAN: I will put my questions in writing.

BOLSHEVIKS IN AUSTRALIA.

Mr. ARKINS: I desire to ask the Premier is he aware that recently in the daily press the Russian Bolshevik Consul in Australia, Simonoff, stated that owing to Federal interference thousands of persons in Australia were unable to go to Russia with the intention to reside there; and, in view of that statement, will the Premier make overtures to the Federal Government to give these anti-Australian pro-Bolsheviks every chance of going to what they presume to be a paradise—Russia?

Mr. J. STOREY: I am very loth to refuse to answer questions, but really this is a question which affects the Federal Government. The hon. gentleman, I am sure, will acquit me of any discourtesy if I say that after the statement which has been made in the newspapers by Mr. Hughes, setting out comprehensively and clearly what he proposed to do in this connection, it is unnecessary for me to make any representations to the hon. gentleman's leader in the Federal Parliament as to what he should do.

CABLE TO DE VALERA.

Mr. OAKES: I desire to ask the Premier has he received any answer to the cable signed by himself and sent to De Valera?

Mr. J. STOREY: I am afraid that the hon. gentleman, like a number of other hon. members, is drawing very largely upon his imagination. I suppose that is due to the fact that this House was in recess for 101 days before Parliament met. I have to say to the hon. gentleman that I never heard of that gentleman before in this Parliament, nor have I heard of anything he may have to do with it, nor that he has any influence with this House. As the question put by the hon. member has no bearing with regard to anything done in Australia, I

shall be delighted to answer it. If the hon. gentleman will write me with regard to the matter, I will make representations to De Valera in order to see how he is getting on in Ireland.

COAL-MINERS' INCOME-TAX RETURNS.

Mr. DAVIES: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether, in view of the fact that the wages returns of certain miners, compiled for income-tax purposes, have been made public, will he consider the advisability of making public the income-tax returns of coal-owners, such as John Brown and others?

Mr. LANG: I am not aware that any coal-miners' income-tax returns were made public. I have always been under the impression, and am still under the impression, that all income-tax returns are absolutely confidential.

THREATENED RESIGNATION OF MR. MUTCH.

Mr. BRUNTNEILL: I desire to ask the Premier whether his attention has been drawn to a report in the daily press containing the very serious threat of one of his colleagues that he would resign from the Cabinet unless he procured certain moneys to be paid to teachers of the Education Department; will the Premier inform the House whether Cabinet has capitulated to the demands of the hon. gentleman; and, if not, what steps does the Government propose to take?

Mr. J. STOREY: In answer to the hon. gentleman, I may say that on the day on which Mr. Mutch is reported to have made a statement in the newspapers to the effect that he would resign unless the school teachers got their increases, I am informed that in accordance with the custom when Ministers are travelling, officers of the Department of Public Instruction had supplied the Minister with a large number of papers so that he might peruse them. Mr. Mutch having, I presume, perused these papers, and having come across so many such threats by his predecessors, quite inadvertently made another statement which added to the list of threats of resignation by Ministers; but, of course, he has no intention of carrying out his threat.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. DRUMMOND: I desire to ask the Secretary for Lands is it a fact that numbers of properties offered for soldier settlement have been tied up for long periods, and, if so, will he, in justice to all parties concerned, take steps to have the purchases completed at an early date, or, failing that, release the vendors from their contracts?

Mr. LOUGHLIN: Some of the negotiations have been held up, but in many cases the delay has been entirely due to the vendors refusing to supply the information for which they had been asked. As a general thing, I may say that for the past two or three months I have been endeavouring to expedite these cases where possible.

STATE LOTTERY.

Mr. HOSKINS: I desire to ask the Premier whether the Government has definitely decided to "raise the wind" by means of a State lottery; and, if so, will all the gambling dens in Sydney be relieved of further prosecutions if the Government decides to carry the proposed lottery into effect?

Mr. J. STOREY: I have to say that Cabinet has not so far considered the proposition referred to by the hon. member. I may add, however, that it is quite possible the Government will shortly be called upon to consider that proposition in conjunction with a large number of other propositions. As regards the number of gambling dens in the city, the hon. gentleman appears to know a good deal more about them than I do. The Government, I can assure the House generally, knows nothing about gambling dens, nor does its members frequent them.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: They frequent racecourses!

Mr. J. STOREY: Yes, racecourses, where every man can go, and so long as he goes there in the daylight, when everyone can see him, there is no objection. My great objection is to people going to places where there is no daylight. I say to the hon. gentleman Mr. Hoskins that if there are gambling dens in the city, they were there during the time the hon. gentleman's Government was in office, and

he, surely, does not expect my Government to set out to eradicate the whole of the plagues created during the time the hon. gentleman's friends were in office.

WAR GRATUITY BONDS.

Major SHILLINGTON: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer if the delay in cashing war gratuity bonds held by State employees is due to financial stringency, will he consider the expediency of issuing negotiable debentures for the war gratuity bonds, so that the employees may obtain the cash they need by disposing of the debentures at par on the Exchange in the ordinary way?

Mr. LANG: I am afraid the hon. member is asking me to depart from something the Commonwealth Government has done in order to protect the soldiers. It is their security. I do not see any advantage in replacing the war gratuity bonds by State securities.

MR. JUSTICE EWING'S CLAIM ON THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I desire to ask the Premier whether he has come across a statement in this afternoon's press to the effect that Mr. Justice Ewing has drawn upon the Commonwealth Government to the extent of £6,000 for conducting an investigation into certain affairs in the Northern Territory; whether included in that amount is the cost of his wife's maintenance in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane; whether, in addition to that, the cost of a number of curios which he purchased in the Northern Territory is charged against the Commonwealth Government; whether he will make inquiries with a view of ascertaining to what extent he will be saved the necessity of meeting monetary obligations of that kind; and whether, if the question is put to him as to whether curios shall be secured for the benefit of Mr. Justice Ewing, he will take ten of the I.W.W. men as curios?

Mr. J. STOREY: As I have already explained to the House I have not had an opportunity to read this afternoon's papers nor this morning's papers either. I am therefore unable to say whether Mr. Justice Ewing has put in a claim for £6,000. I may be permitted to add that

if he is to be paid according to the value of the work done by him in the Northern Territory I should say, if he has put in such a claim, I do not see why he should have gone to the Northern Territory for the purpose of obtaining curios instead of coming to the New South Wales Parliament.

MOTOR CAR ACCIDENTS.

Mr. BAGNALL: I desire to ask the Colonial Secretary whether his attention has been drawn to the number of accidents in the city caused by motor-car drivers; if so, will he communicate with the Inspector-General of Police with the view of taking drastic steps to limit the speed of motor vehicles? If because of the existing regulations he is unable to deal with this pressing matter, will he introduce the necessary legislation, in view of the large number of accidents which occur each year, and which are rapidly increasing in number, seeing that there is now serious risk involved to citizens in crossing the streets?

Mr. DOOLEY: I shall take the matter into consideration, and any information I can get will be supplied.

VACANCY IN MURRAY ELECTORATE.

Sir GEORGE FULLER: In view of the fact that the efforts made by yourself Mr. Speaker, to have the vacancy in the Murray constituency filled, have been rendered ineffective through the action of the Government, acting on the recommendation of the Chief Electoral Officer, I desire to ask the Premier whether he proposes to take any steps to fill the vacancy, and, if so, when; or does he propose to leave the people in the Murray constituency partly disfranchised?

Mr. J. STOREY: The present Government is not responsible for there being no machinery to provide for a by-election. The hon. member must be aware of the fact that he himself for several months was grappling, so we are credibly informed, with the problem, and he gave it up as hopeless. The Government has the matter under consideration, and so soon as machinery can be devised to fill the vacancy created by the appointment of Mr. Beeby to a judgeship it will be done. At the present moment we are inviting suggestions from the daily press of the

city and from the intellects of the Opposition, but so far there has been no response. It will of course, as in other cases, devolve upon the Government to find a solution for the difficulty created by the hon. member's Government under proportional representation. If there has been one sound suggestion put before my colleagues and myself for simplifying the position it is that the hon. members Mr O'Brien and Mr. Ball should resign their seats, and let the matter be fought out on the system of proportional representation.

Later,

Mr. BAILL: I desire to ask the Premier a further question with regard to the filling of the vacancy in the Murray electorate. As one of the members for the Murray I am quite willing to accept the Premier's suggestion to resign if Mr. O'Brien also resigns so as to again contest the election, provided that the Premier is willing to pay the personal expenses.

Mr. J. STOREY: I would be delighted personally to pay the expenses of the hon. members but I could not pledge the Government to do so.

AGISTMENT FEES.

Mr. MAIN: I desire to ask the Secretary for Lands whether the soldier settlers are to be paid agistment fees for the departmental and other stock depastured on their blocks during the late drought; and, if so, what amount the settlers on Dimaseer will get, and when will they be paid?

Mr. LOUGHLIN: They will certainly be paid the agistment fees. I cannot say what amounts will be paid, nor when they will be paid.

ADVERTISING HOARDINGS.

Mr. ARKINS: I desire to ask the Colonial Secretary whether he is aware that indiscriminate bill-posting has taken place in the city and suburbs during the last few months, damaging property, and detracting from the general beauty? In view of the fact that the City Council of Sydney and other councils have not made any regulations to deal with this objectionable practice, will the Minister see

that something is done by means of legislation to preserve the beauty of Sydney and suburbs?

Mr. DOOLEY: I have seen about the city of Sydney some advertisements posted by a theatrical company that I think ought not to be displayed. My department has certain restricted powers at present, and I have been looking into the matter to see if we can get a better means of controlling advertising matter.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer if he can say when he will make the financial statement; further, will he, prior to its delivery, lay on the table of the House papers which it is customary to make available to members?

Mr. LANG: As soon as I am in a position to do so, I shall let the hon. member know when I shall make the statement. He can rest assured that the House will not get less information in the forthcoming budget than has been afforded in recent budgets.

DISTRIBUTION OF FOODSTUFFS.

Mr. PERDRIAU: I desire to ask the Premier whether, in view of the fact that the Housewife's Association of New South Wales desires to establish co-operative distributing centres in all suburbs and towns to distribute all commodities, the Government will consider the desirability of appointing an expert organiser, who will be prepared to visit any centre when required, to advise and assist the organisers in the formation of such co-operative concerns.

Mr. J. STOREY: The suggestion made by the hon. member is covered by a provision in the Anti-Profiteering Bill.

CONVEYANCE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Captain CHAFFEY: I desire to ask the Minister of Public Instruction whether he is aware that there are a number of outstanding accounts in connection with the conveyance of children to country schools? Is he aware that the subsidy is paid to parents who take advantage of a vehicle to send their children to school, but in cases where the children ride to school no such subsidy is paid?

Will he inquire into the matter with a view to providing that where children ride to school on horse-back the parents shall be subsidised as are parents whose children are conveyed to school in a vehicle?

Mr. MUTCH: The subsidy is limited solely by the state of the finances. If the hon. member brings under my notice any special cases, I shall consider them on their merits.

LISMORE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND.

Mr. NESBITT: I desire to ask the Minister of Public Instruction whether he is aware that the playground of the district school at Lismore is congested? Will he review the decision recently communicated to me by his department that the Minister did not favour the proposal? Is he aware that a request for an additional area adjoining the school ground has been made to each successive Minister since 1910—the Minister in the McGowen Government, the Holman Government, the National Government, and now the present Government, and that in each case the request was refused? Will the Minister, during his visit to Lismore this week, personally inquire into the matter?

Mr. MUTCH: There has been a deplorable want of foresight on the part of previous Governments in failing to anticipate the requirements of the Education Department and a legacy has been left to me that no one Government could carry. I shall make an investigation of the site mentioned by the hon. member when I visit the district at the end of this week, and will then judge for myself whether the financial resources of the department will enable us to do something in the way of relieving the congestion which he states exists.

RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

Mr. BAGNALL: I desire to ask the Premier whether, on leaving office, the late Government, as appears from official records, left some hundreds of men in the State out of employment? Is he aware that since his Government has been in office that number, according to official statements made by himself and the Minister for Labour and Industry, has increased to several thousands—I think the latest figures are pretty well up to

the 20,000 mark? Will the hon. gentleman give the House some information as to what the Government is doing to provide employment for those who are so unfortunately situated; and, further, as to what steps are being taken to provide sustenance for the families of those who are unable to obtain employment?

Mr. J. STOREY: In answer to the hon. member, I wish to say it is true, as I stated originally, that there are a large number of men in the State out of employment, and it is true, as I also stated, that there were a large number of men out of employment when my Government assumed office. It is true, too, that we have been able to provide employment for some thousands of these men; but it is also true that, owing to the popularity of the present Government throughout Australia, large numbers of people are flocking from all the various States to New South Wales, and at present we find it next to impossible to provide for them all. We are, however, making strenuous efforts in certain directions to provide these people with suitable employment, and are hoping that, within a short time, we shall have so far recovered our normal position that there will be very few people out of work. I may add, further, that while it is at present a great handicap to New South Wales that people are coming here from other States, we shall benefit, no doubt, in the next financial year—unfortunately, at the expense of the other States—by having an increased population in New South Wales.

Mr. BAGNALL: Will the Premier deal with the latter part of my question as to what steps are being taken to provide sustenance for the families of those who are unable to obtain employment?

Mr. J. STOREY: So far as I know, everybody who is known to be genuinely in need is being provided for.

Mr. BAGNALL: Which Minister deals with that matter?

Mr. J. STOREY: There are several Ministers dealing with it, much to my regret, and much to the Treasurer's regret also. I mean to say that we regret the necessity for it. The Minister for Labour and Industry is providing, at Bunnerong farm, for a number of helpless people; the Minister for Public Health is providing for a number of people who are also in

distress, and the Colonial Secretary, as is the custom, is providing the usual food orders for everyone who makes application, and whose case is proved to be genuine.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. BUCKLEY: During the debate on the address in reply I made reference to the hon. member Mr. Anderson. I want to be quite fair to the hon. member if he feels that I have meant any offence to him. Hon. members know that I have been quite fair while in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Does the hon. member wish to make a personal explanation?

Mr. BUCKLEY: I have risen to make a personal explanation with regard to a statement I made on Thursday last regarding the hon. member Mr. Anderson. I want to say that no offence was meant in regard to his character. I did mention in the course of the debate a firm named Weaver and Perry, but I did so inadvertently. The name of Weaver and Perry is that of a reputable firm of agents in this city, and they resent the stigma placed upon them by classing them in the same category as the hon. member for North Sydney (Mr. Weaver).

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not do that in future. The hon. member rose to make a personal explanation. He must not under cover of a personal explanation make a further attack upon another hon. member of the House. If he does so again, I shall have to deal with him in an effectual manner.

Mr. ANDERSON: I accept Mr. Buckley's explanation. He has done the right thing, and I appreciate it!

SESSIONAL ORDERS.

SITTING DAYS.

Motion (by Mr. J. Storey) proposed:

That, unless otherwise ordered, this House shall meet for the despatch of business at 4 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK (Bathurst) [5.36]: I do not want to be looked upon as being opposed to the hon. member's ideas on this point; I only want it to be recognised that if opposition is offered to proposals of this type at the

beginning of the session, that opposition must be respected. I stand to that protest.

Mr. QUIRK (Balmain) [5.37]: In view of the question I submitted to the Government at the beginning of the session, I should like to know, before the hours of business are decided, whether the Government has considered the advisability or otherwise of sitting from 2 o'clock until 10 o'clock each evening. My reason for asking for this information now is that I am desirous of seeing something done in the direction already indicated by me. I do not wish to come into conflict with my leader or with my party in any matter of this kind, believing as I do that they are desirous of giving full effect to the legislation embodied in the Governor's speech; but I should like to know if some agreement could not be arrived at which would enable the House to meet at 2 p.m. and adjourn at 10 p.m.

Mr. WEARNE (Namoi) [5.38]: If this is the time to object to any alteration in the sitting hours of the House, I desire to do so now. On behalf of country members, I wish to put these facts before the House. It is utterly impossible for us country members, representing the large areas we do, to have our work finished—to interview different departments and to wait on different Ministers—by 2 o'clock in the day.

Mr. J. STOREY: That is only a suggestion!

Mr. WEARNE: I want to know whether it is to be adopted. I do not want to see any alteration made.

Mr. QUIRK: I asked a question to which the Premier has not replied!

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can ask a question, but I cannot compel the Premier to reply.

Mr. QUIRK: Would you be prepared then, sir, to grant me an opportunity of giving notice of a motion at this stage?

Mr. SPEAKER: No. The hon. member will have an opportunity to-morrow of giving notice of a motion.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. J. STOREY):

(1) That during the present session, unless otherwise ordered, general business shall take precedence of Government business on Tuesdays.

(2) That general notices of motion and general orders of the day shall take precedence respectively on each alternate Tuesday.

(3) That Government business shall take precedence of general business on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Motion (by Mr. J. STOREY) proposed :

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Stuart-Robertson, Mr. Lazzarini, Mr. Bavin, Mr. Bruntnell, Mr. Simon Hickey, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Weaver, Sir George Fuller, and the mover, with leave to report on any matter or thing referred to or pending before the said committee, and to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council, and that Mr. Speaker be empowered to convene meetings of the committee.

Mr. OAKES: I desire to know whether, in the event of any vacancy occurring in this or any other of the sessional committees, the Premier will see that when new appointments are made the balance of parties is preserved.

Mr. J. STOREY: I see no reason why the ordinary constitution of the committees should be varied in any way.

Motion agreed to.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. J. STOREY):

That the Library Committee for the present session consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bruntnell, Mr. Bagnall, Mr. Drummond, Mr. Simon Hickey, Mr. Greig, Mr. Gosling, Mr. Davies, Mr. J. R. Lee, and the mover, with authority and power to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council, in accordance with the Assembly's resolution of 6th August, 1862.

REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. J. STOREY):

That the Refreshment Committee for the present session consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Grimm, Mr. Weaver, Mr. Frank Burke, Mr. J. W. Doyle, Mr. Molesworth, Mr. McClelland, Mr. Wearne, Mr. Buttenshaw, and the mover, with authority to act in matters of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. J. STOREY):

(1) That the Printing Committee for the present session consist of Mr. Oakes, Mr. Kearsley, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Nesbitt, Mr. Brookfield, Major Connell, Mr. Ely, Captain Chaffey, and the mover, to whom are hereby

referred all papers (except such as the standing orders or the House direct shall be printed, reports from select committees on private bills, estimates of expenditure, and estimates of Ways and Means) which may be laid upon the table of the House. It shall be the duty of such committee to report from time to time which of the papers referred to them ought, in their opinion, to be printed, and whether in full or in abstract, and it shall be in the power of the committee to order such papers, or abstracts thereof, to be prepared for press by the clerk in attendance upon such committee, and such papers or abstracts shall be printed unless the House otherwise order.

(2) That the Clerk of the House shall cause to be printed, as a matter of course, all reports from the Printing Committee.

(3) That the committee have leave to sit during the sittings of the House.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. LAZZARINI (Western Suburbs) [5.47] moved:

That Robert James Stuart-Robertson, Esquire, be Chairman of Committees of the whole House for the present session.

He said: The hon. member Mr. Stuart-Robertson has been a member of this House for about thirteen years. He has, during that time, represented an important constituency, and has maintained the confidence of the people for the whole period. During his membership here he has displayed an intelligent and keen interest in all the legislative proposals which have been submitted for our consideration, and his contributions to debate in the committee stages of important bills have been invaluable. Further, it can be truthfully said that although he has been a keen partisan, and has throughout been true to his party, he has always been a fair opponent, and has never done anything calculated to breed enmity between himself and members on the opposite side. This is something to his credit. While he was prepared to put up a hard fight for the principles in which he believed, and to which he was pledged, he never allowed his political differences to cause unkind personal feeling to arise between him and his opponents. That is something we should all strive for. He has had considerable experience in this House, and I believe he has on more than one occasion acted as Temporary Chairman of Committees. We have had many illustrious men in the position of Chairman of Committees, but I believe that, without

unduly praising Mr. Stuart-Robertson, I may say that he will prove equal in capacity and fairness to many of his very able and impartial predecessors.

Question proposed.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK (Bathurst) [5.50]: I am going to say a few words not from any desire to say anything derogatory of the hon. member who has just been nominated for the Chairmanship of Committees. He has been proposed by the party which is in the ascendant in this House and I take it for granted that, having been proposed, there is no chance of any second nomination being successful even if it should be made. We have known the hon. member Mr. Stuart-Robertson for a number of years. He has taken a keen and active interest in all measures which have been submitted, many of them of vast importance to the community at large; and I would be the last person in the world to say a single word against him. I want to say something on another question. Recently in the public press statements have been made to the effect that the Speaker has felt himself brought to a condition of physical exhaustion. To use a phrase common in the old degenerate days he is a physical wreck. I do not say that with any hostile feeling, but I do say—and I shall say it on every occasion when the opportunity presents itself—it is not the duty of the Speaker to accept a position of this kind and leave his chair whenever he feels inclined to go to a function down the street.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: All right, Mr. Speaker. I knew I would be brought up.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may discuss the merits of the nomination as freely as he wishes, but I will not allow him to reflect upon the Speaker under cover of the motion now before the House.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I do not intend to reflect upon you, Mr. Speaker. I say at once that I have no feeling in the matter at all. The fight, squabble, or whatever it may be designated, which took place some time ago, is over so far as I am concerned; but I do submit—and if I am to go out for

[*Mr. Lazzarini.*

saying it I am going out—the Speaker has no right to take the chair if he is going to delegate his duties to some subordinate. There you are.

Mr. SPEAKER: I again call the hon. member to order.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: In this morning's paper a statement is made of an absolutely lying and untruthful character by yourself.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I do not want to enter into details; I presume I would not be allowed to do so even if I so desired. Perhaps I may leave it until a later stage when I shall have an opportunity to discuss your salary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I can say what I like in Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I certainly did not come here to create trouble. I have only been influenced and actuated by a keen interest and desire to uphold the dignity and honor of Parliament. We know what the Speakers were in days gone by, from the time of Sir Joseph Abbott almost down to the period when another traitor took the position.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat. I call upon the hon. member, in consequence of continued irrelevance, to discontinue his speech.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I am much obliged to you. I shall take the opportunity to say what I want to say on another occasion.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member makes it necessary for me to call him to order again, I shall, in accordance with the rules of the House, take other action.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Balmain) [5.55]: I desire to express my thanks to hon. members of the Legislative Assembly for electing me to the position of Chairman of Committees. It is exactly thirteen years to-day, 7th September, since I was first elected to this House and I can conscientiously say that I shall endeavour to perform the duties of Chairman of Committees without fear or favour to any member or section of the House.

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.