

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, July 14, 1927.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. O. B. Snowball) took the chair at 11.5 a.m.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

MILDURA STATION IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE (Minister of Railways).—By leave, I move—

That there be laid before this House a copy of the Report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on proposed expenditure under Railway Loan Application Act, No. 3417 (Improved Station, Yard, Locomotive Facilities, &c., at Mildura); together with minutes of evidence.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE (Minister of Railways) presented a return in compliance with the foregoing order.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on Mr. Drakeford's motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr. ALLNUTT (*Mildura*).—It is indeed a great privilege for me to stand here as the first representative of the newly created electorate of Mildura. If I did not at this stage pay a compliment to the ex-Premier I should be somewhat lacking in my duty, because the Country Progressive party is utterly opposed to any further redistribution of seats. While we feel that last year's measure caused a general loss to the country districts of the State, Mildura greatly benefited. Whether that fact is due to an honest attempt to benefit Mildura or to a fluke I do not know, but that is the position. For the first time since its foundation, with the exception of two years when Mr. P. G. Stewart represented Swan Hill in this House, Mildura has direct representation. As a rule its representative, though he lived in the electorate, was a long way from Mildura, and the local people suffered the disadvantage of not being able to reach him when they wanted to do so. I think that I am right in saying that the electorate of Mildura is the furthest away from Melbourne, and it has been

sadly neglected. The interests of the district have been so neglected that the local taxpayers have had to suffer, and they have suffered to an unreasonable extent. There is a large area in that locality being pioneered by soldier and civilian settlers and unfortunately, as I can state from experience, it is the dryest portion of Victoria. Season after season we have to put up with climatic conditions that no other portion of this State encounters. After some ten or twelve years' developmental work at Carwarp and Yatpool it has been found almost impossible to make substantial progress. I am speaking particularly of the Mildura district, because I represent it, and it is going to be difficult, with the limited time at my disposal, for me to refer to the difficulties which settlers there have to meet. However, I shall be as brief as possible. In that locality, as well as in other parts of the State, we are suffering from the curse of centralization. It is difficult to get in touch with the Lands Department, and great changes will have to be made if we are to progress. The position of settlers adjoining Merbein is particularly unfortunate. When men took up allotments in the dry areas at Colignan and Yelta they were not only told that certain facilities were provided for them, but that many others would shortly be available. Settlers who wanted to take up land at Colignan were shown plans which indicated that water channels had already been constructed. The fact was that not only were no channels in existence, but no surveys had ever been made for them. I recall meeting a friend who was considering taking up land in the locality of Colignan. He told me that water channels were provided, and I said I thought he was making a mistake. To satisfy myself, as well as my friend, I went to the Lands Department and found that water channels were actually outlined on the plan. I told the officials, however, that there were no channels in the places where they were marked. It is obvious that those who took up land in that particular area did so as a result of false pretences, and we have to face the position and get over the difficulty without loss of time. The settlers are behind in their payments, and under present circumstances it is exceedingly difficult to prevent them falling into further arrears. Many

of those in the new areas who took up land there were inexperienced in Mallee farming, and the Closer Settlement Board has asked them to do pioneering work under conditions which should be required of no human being. It is bad enough for ordinary civilians who desire to take up land to have to meet these difficulties, but it is infinitely worse in the case of returned soldiers, because we practically sent them to these places. In a number of instances settlers took their wives and families with them, and their position has been deplorable. Take the soldier settlement at Redcliffs. Thousands of pounds have been spent in making water channels, providing pumping stations, and other requirements for satisfactory occupation. The land is second to none in any part of Victoria, but because men have been induced to go into an unstable industry, they are unable to make a living. I will, however, deal more fully with this matter when I am referring to the dried fruit industry, in which these settlers are engaged. The settlers there have been placed in an industry which does not give them a sufficient return to meet their instalments and interest charges on their holdings. A good deal of the trouble of the settlers in the drier areas of the State arises from the delays which take place in meeting their requests. It is found repeatedly that it takes not merely one week for a reply to come from the Department, but six or seven months. It frequently happens that even then it is necessary to pay a visit to Melbourne to get the answer that is required. In many places mails are delivered only once or twice a week, and in some places not more frequently in a fortnight. Members will realize that these settlers are anxiously anticipating a reply from the Department, intimating that advances have been approved of, but there is always this irritating delay. I know of many instances where the local inspector has recommended an advance for the purpose of some plant or seed, and the recommendation has been forwarded to Melbourne. It may be that the settler wants chaff or seed, or something else, to meet some urgent need so that he can proceed with the work on his block. I have known many instances of the reply having been so long delayed that the season has passed, and the settler has missed his opportunity of getting in a crop. There is usually a

period of two months for the planting of seed, and later another two months for harvesting operations, and if a settler misses these periods he has to put up with loss. Although this sort of thing has been going on for years, many settlers are still unable to obtain redress. Owing to the delays which have taken place, settlers have been cropping during the months of July and August, although they should have been at this work in May and June. I have known of settlers who have applied for a harvester in September and, although the local inspector recommended the granting of the application, the implement was not delivered until the week before Christmas. In the meantime the settlers have made arrangements with their neighbours to do some of their cropping. That is the position of many persons throughout Mildura, and it is one of the many reasons why they are not able to meet their liabilities. They will not be able to do so in the future unless drastic steps are taken to improve the present state of affairs.

Mr. HOGAN.—Does the honorable member know what is the cause of the delay?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—I know that delays occur in the Lands Department. As I have said, local inspectors have frequently sent in their recommendations, but no reply has been received within a reasonable time. That is one of many reasons why our settlers have been held back and discouraged. My comments apply both to soldier and civilian settlers, particularly on the Millewa line. In Redcliffs there has been an improvement. The soldier settlers there are under the control of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and that fact provides evidence of what the decentralization of departmental work means to the settlers and the State. While the settlers at Redcliffs are by no means in a happy position, they can go to the local office of the Commission and obtain approval there and then for supplies, and they can go down to the street and obtain their requirements without loss of time. They are not delayed and discouraged as are the soldier settlers in the dry area, who have to wait until their applications have been dealt with in Melbourne and replies have been sent back to them. Their plight, of course, is only so much the worse when it pleases the officials at the departmental headquarters to send back replies turning

down the applications rather than approving of the recommendations. Frequently, after a period of waiting for two and three months, and longer, a reply has been screwed out of the Department and the settler concerned has merely been informed that the recommendation in respect of his application cannot be approved. The allotment of lands has caused a great deal of dissatisfaction in the past. I am pleased to be able to state, however, that it is receiving the attention of the Minister of Lands to-day. The Minister has already indicated his determination to give justice where justice is due, and for that I congratulate him. When I put the position before him I am bound to say that he did not think my statements were quite correct, and on my invitation he did the right thing in looking into the matters for himself, and paid a visit, and I am pleased to say that we have already obtained many reforms that have been sought for years in vain. However, there are still others required. The unsatisfactory system of allotting land has been detrimental to the progress of the district that I represent. It has been the practice of the Department to have only one of its officials on the local land board. He is a land officer, who has been classified by the Public Service Commissioner, and has been established in the district to deal with the allotment of land. I could relate many instances of marked unfairness in this direction. While the Closer Settlement Board was established to make land available to men who were unable to obtain it otherwise, it has been adopting the principle of making allotments to persons who really need the least assistance from the Board. I know of men who have appeared before a local board and have been granted land, although they were in a position to obtain holdings for themselves from other sources. A case occurred in Colignan wherein a soldier settler, who had about £300 available, applied for an allotment that had been forfeited by the previous holder and was once more under the control of the Board. After this settler had given his evidence, the land officer calmly said to him, "Of course, there is another man whom we have in view. He is much stronger financially than you. We will communicate with him, and if we can

Mr. Allnutt.

come to satisfactory terms he will get the block." The soldier applicant asked if this individual had made application for the land, and the reply of the Board was "No, but we will communicate with him, seeing that the block has a lien on it, and he will be better able than you to carry on." The outcome was that the soldier settler did not get that block, while the other person, who had not applied for it, did get it. It has been stated that he paid cash to the Board, but I have not been able to establish that point. I know, however, that immediately after he had obtained the block he bought out the soldier settler whose land adjoined it, paying him half in cash and the balance in three years. Since then he has let contracts to clear the portion of his holding that had not been already cleared, and to sheep-proof fence the whole area. The soldier settler was turned down "cold." There are many other instances of the same character that I could relate.

Mr. DOWNWARD.—Can you name the persons concerned in any one instance in which the late Minister of Lands gave preference to a civilian over a soldier settler? You cannot do it.

Mr. ALLNUTT.—It was done in this instance that I have mentioned. The civilian is farming that land to-day.

Mr. DOWNWARD.—Can you give the name of any civilian settler to whom the late Minister of Lands gave preference, in the allotment of a block, over a soldier settler?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—The Board did so.

Mr. ALLNUTT.—Men in my district have applied on many occasions to the late Minister of Lands, and to his predecessors, but we have not been able to get satisfaction. Frequently we have not even obtained a reply.

Mr. DOWNWARD.—Can you mention a single instance in which you communicated with the late Minister of Lands and failed to obtain a reply from him? You cannot say that truthfully.

Mr. ALLNUTT.—If the honorable member for Mornington desires it, I will give him a bookful of such cases and particulars. Time will not now permit me to relate the many instances that I could mention; but if the honorable member for Mornington will visit Mildura as a member of the parliamentary

party which intends to make the trip at the end of this month, I shall be pleased to introduce him to the soldier settler whose case I have related. If that does not satisfy him, I undertake to bring dozens of other cases under his notice. The subject of immigration concerns my electorate by reason of the fact that it embraces an immigration settlement. This settlement, which is comprised of Britishers, affords another glaring instance of the treatment that has been meted out to our immigrants. I want to say that I am, to some extent, disappointed at the action of the Ministry in regard to the question of immigration. It has been suggested that an effort should be made to stop immigration. I do not hold with that view, but I am of opinion that the Government should endeavour to straighten out the causes of failures among immigrants who have settled on our lands. In Mildura we have an instance of a British settlement that must fail unless the Government make themselves cognizant of the facts and get a grip on the situation. Some English settlers in the Mallee have been placed on blocks that are from 14 to 20 miles distant from a railway. Moreover, they have to traverse sandhills of the steepest grade, in parts of the country that have not been supplied with water. These newcomers have been labouring under great difficulty without that assistance they might properly expect. In fact, they have not had a man who has been able to advise them. They have had to rely upon their own knowledge. They are putting up a hard fight.

Mr. LIND.—To what area do you refer, in particular?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—To Willah and Yaramba. These settlers have been held up in many directions. Their homes are built for them in unsuitable places. Some of the homes have been built on the top of a porcupine sandhill. A number of settlers have said that they like the sites, because they are high and dry. That, of course, is true enough. They are high and dry all right. But every man who knows the Mallee—and there are members of this House who know it well—knows that a porcupine sandhill is about the worst position for a home one could possibly select. The citizen of Melbourne would not choose a swamp for his house. Yet a swamp in Melbourne is

not more unsuitable for a man's home than is the top of a porcupine sandhill for the settler in the Mallee. However, the Department is building homes in these positions.

Mr. LIND.—Has the settler not a choice in the selection of his home site?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—No. He is told that he must have his house in this or that position, and the Department accepts no responsibility. I have known Australians to buck against the erection of their dwelling-place in such an unsuitable position. As a result of their bucking they have had to wait for months before they could get a home together. The British settler does not know as much as the Australian of local conditions, and he accepts a home on the top of a porcupine sandhill. It is absolutely wrong to house these settlers in this way. It is a wrong that must be set right. It is one of the causes of the failure of immigration. It can only cause dissatisfaction and result in the abandonment by settlers of their blocks in order to betake themselves to the city. These men should be encouraged to make good on the land. We should endeavour to make them happy and prosperous. We do not want them to drift into the city to swell the number of unemployed. I have been sent into this House to do whatever lies in my power to put these wrongs right. Of course, I do not claim that the previous Government deliberately connived at the settlement of migrants under improper conditions. I do not impute an unworthy motive to any member of a previous Government. I believe that they honestly desired the settlers to succeed. But I also know that none of them took the trouble to visit the outlying settlements in order to satisfy themselves that the settlers had a reasonable prospect of success. The only times Ministers, State or Commonwealth, have visited the district have been election times—periods when their future as politicians may be said to have been hanging in the balance.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—You are not looking at the Ministerial side of the House, are you?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—I am looking at both sides of the House. At election time Ministers have come to the district, not merely in their motor cars, but, on some occasions, in aeroplanes.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—They did not secure your political scalp, anyhow.

Mr. ALLNUTT.—They did not. I got a hold on somebody else's. The point that I wish to stress is that Ministers and members of Parliament on the few occasions they have visited the district have stayed in Mildura. They never seemed to be willing to visit the outback districts, though the Government of the day had settlements there, involving hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of land. The present Minister of Lands is the only Minister who has been sufficiently interested to see for himself what was going on. There is another point in connexion with immigration to which I wish to direct attention. I refer to the influx of aliens. In this respect we are faced with a serious problem, particularly in the dried-fruits industry. Aliens have been pouring in and working under what is known as the group system. The aliens are Greeks and Italians, more especially Greeks. They rent a portion of a fruit-grower's area and practise intense culture. Three, four, or five form a group. They pay a vigneron so much rent, look after his vines, and have the right to produce what they can in between the rows of vines. This system is gradually extending all over the place, and I am sorry to say that an attempt has been made to introduce it into the soldier settlement of Redcliffs. It has a hold in Mildura and Irymple. Unless the Government take drastic steps to stop this practice, we may live to see the dried-fruits industry at Mildura under the control of aliens in the same way as the control of the sugar industry in Queensland has passed over to aliens. I am sure that none of us would care to see that position brought about. I appeal to the Government, instead of trying to stop the immigration of British settlers, to take steps to find out the causes of uneasiness among men from overseas who are already settled in our country, and to do what they can to prevent the influx of aliens. The group system is a matter that might well occupy the attention of the Government. The dried-fruits industry is a big and growing one.

Mr. WEBBER.—Immigration is a Commonwealth matter.

Mr. ALLNUTT.—I admit that immigration is a Commonwealth matter, but we have settled immigrants on the land under State conditions, and the State must

therefore take its share of the responsibility in the settlement of these people. I want the Government to take the initiative and to bring the matter under the notice of the Commonwealth authorities. I now wish to refer to the dried-fruits industry as we find it in the soldier settlement of Redcliffs. Before the war the settlers were progressing, and the industry was exporting only 20 per cent. of the crop, Australia consuming 80 per cent. To-day that position is reversed, and we are exporting 80 per cent. of the crop while only 20 per cent. is being sold in the local market. This position has been created by the Governments of Victoria and South Australia stimulating production, and causing increased areas to be planted out. Later, I hope to be able to obtain some form of relief for the dried-fruits industry. Perhaps this House may come to a decision in that respect, and let the Commonwealth Government know it. As I have said, increased areas have been planted in giving effect to the repatriation policy, and the export surplus has been raised from 20 per cent. to 80 per cent. Thus we have placed in an impossible position not only the soldier settlers, but also the long-established settlers, including those who pioneered the industry. The present state of affairs affects the settlers at Mildura and Merbein no less than those at Redcliffs. In many cases the settlers, after meeting the cost of production, cannot make any repayments on account of either principal or interest. What I desire to indicate is that the Governments of Victoria and South Australia have stimulated production without making any provision for the marketing of the additional crops, and failure has resulted. I believe that taxpayers do not want to see the producer carrying heavy financial burdens. In Mildura, to-day, there are ten packing sheds which compete one with the other, and it is necessary that some should be eliminated, or the whole amalgamated. The sheds have the growers at their mercy to such an extent that the local business concerns are compelled to carry the responsibility. The fact is that the business people of Mildura, Merbein, and Redcliffs are shouldering a responsibility that rightly belongs to the State Government. In other words, the responsibility should rest with the tax-

payers. I maintain that as we have found the cause of the trouble we must take steps to set the matter right. It is our duty to place the growers on a satisfactory basis, so that both they and the local business interests can be relieved of anxiety. As an indication of the grip which the packing sheds have on the growers, let me point out that, during harvest time last year, one packing company sent a representative touring the settlement, offering a higher price for the fruit than that which the other sheds were offering. Consequently the company obtained, for processing, a much larger proportion of the crop particularly in the Redcliffs area than any other company. Now we find that the company is charging the growers £5 10s. per ton for processing, while the other sheds are charging £4 10s. a ton. It is easy to comprehend that the soldier settlers are in a bad position. Fortunately, they are receiving some assistance from the State through the Closer Settlement Board, and some people are inclined to point to that fact. The soldier settlers are entitled to all the aid that can be given, but I am sure that the taxpayers generally do not want the older settlers—though they may enjoy good health, and suffer no war disabilities—to be denied help.

Mr. MCKENZIE.—Is the trouble in the dried-fruits industry solely attributable to the failure to find a market for the surplus crop?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—Not altogether. I now wish to refer to railways and roads. This is a question of great importance to Mildura, but I shall not be able to spend much time discussing it this morning. With the construction of locks along the Murray, and the opening up of new land in Victoria and New South Wales, it is felt that the time has arrived for the creation of a Commonwealth Transport Department, which can see to the development of our river resources. The Government should take up the question and discuss it in conference with the Commonwealth authorities. One of the functions of the Commonwealth transport authority would be the construction of suitable wharfs for the River Murray traffic. At Carwarp we are 125 miles nearer Adelaide than Melbourne, yet we have to pay 1s. 9d. per

ton more for freight on artificial manures brought from Adelaide than we have to pay in rail freight from Melbourne. The reason is the border rate.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—Is it not due to the fact that the Victorian Government allows a large concession on the rail freight for artificial manures?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—No. It is solely due to State jealousy—the border rate, as I stated. If a Commonwealth transport authority were set up, the produce from many of our north-western districts could be sent to the sea-board by water at a lower freight rate than under present conditions, and the result would be that the freight on exports to oversea markets would be reduced. Adelaide is our natural port for the produce from north-western Victoria.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—Is it a fact that those districts can receive goods by rail from Adelaide at a lesser freight rate than from Melbourne?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—No; we have to pay a higher freight on goods obtained from Adelaide by rail than on those brought from Melbourne.

Mr. WEBBER.—On which railway line in Victoria would the goods brought from Adelaide be carried?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—The Ouyen to Murrayville line. The North-Western districts are also suffering from a lack of educational facilities. In the outback parts teachers and scholars are labouring under conditions which are almost intolerable. Young girl teachers between eighteen and twenty years of age who have been sent to outback schools have found it impossible to secure suitable living accommodation near their schools. In many cases those young teachers have refused to remain at the schools, and have returned to Melbourne. No reasonable person could expect them to do otherwise in the circumstances. I consider that the Education Department should provide reasonable housing accommodation for teachers at the outback schools. At the present time many of the teachers do not receive adequate remuneration to enable them to obtain suitable living accommodation and perform their duties satisfactorily. They are sent to schools which are as hot as bakers' ovens in summer, and as cold as

freezing chambers in winter. In my opinion, the question of providing adequate school accommodation in the North-Western districts has been neglected to some extent by the Department. Two years ago the Department erected a new school at Boonoonar, at a cost of £300. It is now erecting another building alongside that school at a cost of £600. When it was decided to establish the school the departmental officers should have been able to estimate the school accommodation that the settlers would require in the near future and erected a building that would provide ample accommodation for scholars; instead of erecting one small building and placing a larger school alongside it two years later. I have been asked what the Department intends to do with the first building that was erected. I do not think the Department knows what it is going to do. Two small school buildings were removed from another place and reconstructed at Bambill to provide a school to accommodate 32 scholars. At the present time there are more than 40 children of school age, and the number of children requiring tuition in that district is steadily increasing. Before it provided the school the Department assured the settlers that it would provide ample accommodation for the children who would require education in that district for some time. I know many parents who cannot send their children to school because no accommodation is provided for them. In a number of cases in the Mildura district, children are compelled to sit on benzine cases in the school-rooms, because adequate furniture has not been placed in the buildings. When I visited the Redcliffs Central State school recently, on a cold, frosty morning, I found young children seated on the floor. That school has accommodation for 500 pupils, but, owing to the lack of furniture, which is surely due to some fault of departmental administration, many children cannot be provided with proper seating accommodation.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—Do you know that the children in many of the infant classes are often encouraged to play games on the school-room floor? That is done in Melbourne schools. It is part of the education programme.

Mr. ALLNUTT.—I venture to say that no teacher at a Mallee school would

encourage young children to play on the floor on a frosty morning. I am glad that the Minister of Public Instruction has arranged to visit Mildura district on the 29th of this month, and observe the prevailing conditions for himself. I hope that a decided improvement will be the result of his visit. The question of suitable hospital accommodation is an important one for Mildura district. The Mildura public hospital serves a large district which contains thousands of settlers who are struggling to make a living from the land. In Mildura we have a population of 6,000, most of the people being engaged in an industry which is not paying at present. The local hospital, which is an important public institution, is sagging at the knees for want of money. Viewed from several aspects the Mildura Hospital is in a unique position among Victorian country hospitals, and I submit the claim that it deserves from the Government, not only sympathetic consideration, but effective assistance. I wish now to deal with the administration of the Fisheries and Game Department in the Mildura district. The present administration is prejudicially affecting the social life of the district. The River Murray provides a magnificent fish and game resort for more than 9,000 people in the Mildura district, and I consider that the fisheries and game laws should be administered sympathetically in the social interests of those people. Lake Hattah, which is about 40 miles from Mildura, is the main spawning ground of fish in that district. The fishermen are aware of that fact, and a great deal of poaching takes place at the lake. On one occasion a police constable visited the lake and caught a man offending against the fisheries laws. The man was back poaching again the next day, because he knew that Mildura police station is a considerable distance from the lake. I say that that offender should have been compelled to spend some time in gaol. A report was called for from an inspector. He stated that he had visited the place, and that no poaching had occurred there. Even to-day we are prepared to prove that the officer did not furnish a fair and just report. Such things were actually taking place at the very time when he made his inspection. Means are required to give the officer proper transport where-

by he can keep an eye on the water frontage. A constable can get his expenses only when he secures a conviction. Often he goes to a spot when somebody knows that he is going. With the introduction of a gun tax of, say, 5s., we should be able to pay an inspector to do work that is most necessary. He should be in a position to protect the water frontage.

Mr. LIND.—Would you suggest a rod tax, too?

Mr. ALLNUTT.—I cannot say. I know that sportsmen living near Mildura would welcome a tax of this kind. It is not right that this sort of thing should be permitted. It is a pleasure to me on the one hand, and it is a disappointment on the other, to come here and plead the case for the settlers in the manner in which I have done this morning. I assure the House that it is not only the duty of the Government of the day, but also that of Parliament to see that something is done in the interests of the settlers. I am here to put the case for Mildura as fairly as I can and to assist in passing legislation that will be to the benefit of the State as a whole. Any suggestion that any honorable member may make to place the portion of the State in which I am specially interested on a more economic basis will have my careful consideration, and I shall always be glad to help any scheme directed to that end, no matter from what party it emanates.

Mr. BODMAN (*Gippsland South*).—With many of the new members, I cannot quite see the necessity of drawn-out speeches on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. I will admit that possibly my view is the result of ignorance. No doubt, this debate has been established by long usage, and has become a system that is always followed. In my innocence I thought that we were sent here to get down to "tin tacks" at the very earliest moment.

Mr. TUNNECLIFFE.—That is what the Labour party did last session.

Mr. BODMAN.—Perhaps that is not a good precedent to follow.

Mr. BROWNBILL.—We have had some good speeches.

Mr. BODMAN.—That is true. This debate serves to introduce members, and

we learn to know what to expect from one another. Beyond that, it seems to cause a good deal of waste time. I do not intend to attempt to teach the House how to conduct its business. I am willing to learn. I can see the benefit of the system, but I feel that we are sent here to do business, and I should like to get into holts with it. I wish to say a few words on various subjects, but I shall not elaborate any of them, because after the expression of opinion to which I have given utterance, a long speech containing all sorts of details would not become me.

Mr. ALLAN.—You have the right.

Mr. BODMAN.—I have the right, but not the inclination. This Parliament is up against a serious financial position that probably no previous Parliament has had to face. While we are facing a deficit of £600,000, more legislation is proposed, and various railways and outer port schemes are suggested, which will all involve more expense. What will cost even more than any of these projects will be the putting of soldier settlement on a proper footing. I fear that there will be a lot of trouble because of our financial difficulties. I have been looking forward to an expression of opinion as to the way out of our troubles. It is easy to be destructive and critical, but it is not so easy to make helpful suggestions. It is always painful to economize in one's own business, and it must be difficult for any one in governmental power to economize. It is difficult for Ministers to refuse the legitimate requests of deputations, but the money is not available to carry out the requests made. I have not heard any definite proposal to take the place of the betting tax that was rejected last session. Honorable members know my political position, and it is not necessary to put that before them. I am groping in the dark to discover a solution of the financial problems that confront us. We are sent here to solve these problems. I wish to see whether there are some other means by which we can get revenue in a legitimate way in addition to class taxation. Land taxation is class taxation. We cannot avoid class taxation. The fairest of all forms of taxation is the income tax. That touches everybody. I think that after a fair living wage has been exempted, everybody should pay more or