

The PRESIDENT: The question before the House is the amendment to the Address-in-reply.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West): As one of the last recruits to this House, and having just come from rather a strenuous election in connection with the late biennial elections, I desire for a moment to deal with, and quote some figures relating to, the last general election in comparison with the province election. The last general election resulted in a majority in the Perth and Fremantle electorates of 5,647 votes in favour of the present Administration. The province elections, held within eight months of the general elections, resulted in the Labour party, who contested every seat in the interest of the policy put forward by that party, being in a minority of 3,500 votes. During that election, and in my own campaign, I endeavoured to maintain this House as a non-party Chamber, and whilst, as the Colonial Secretary mentioned, he had many Liberal supporters opposing him in his electorate, I can also stress the fact that I had practically all the Ministers in opposition to me in the West Province. I think the figures I have quoted clearly demonstrate that the electors in the coastal districts, at least, have decided to reject the Labour party's policy for the abolition of this House. The electors have shown themselves to be hostile to the non-alienation of Crown lands; they distrust the financial capacity of the present Administration, and they are dubious of the outcome of the Government's many socialistic schemes. In connection with the purchase of steamers for the North-West coast, I can claim, after many years' shipping experience on the coast of Fremantle, that the Government, in embarking on this scheme, have apparently not received very good advice or taken opinions from experts in this matter. Their reasons for embarking on the scheme have unfortunately been given as many. The first was owing to the rates of freight quoted on this coast, and for the information of this House I desire to give members a comparative statement of the rates existing between the Eastern States and Fre-

mantle and for similar distances on our north-west coast. From Port Hedland to Fremantle stock is being carried at 35s. per head. A corresponding distance from Fremantle is Adelaide, and the freight is £3 15s. From Derby to Fremantle the freight is £2 7s. 6d., and from Melbourne to Fremantle £4; from Wyndham to Fremantle £3 10s., and from Sydney to Fremantle £4 10s. Now, I think that will clearly demonstrate to the House that the rates as quoted on the north-west coast are not excessive, and in view of the Government rates to-day being the schedule rates of the alleged shipping ring, that should be sufficient to show that the reason for embarking on this scheme is not owing to the high rates prevailing. The second reason given—and I think perhaps in this direction it would be wise if the Government were to exercise some censorship respecting the many conflicting statements appearing from day to day—the second reason is to assist small shippers who are unable to obtain freights from the alleged shipping ring; but in order to refute this I need only quote the fact that the July shipments of the "Darius" have been engaged by one of the wealthiest squatters on the north-west coast, and that only because, the feed being poor in the North-West, he desires to transfer his stock to another station in the South. The same thing applies to the August shipments of the "Darius"; large squatters in the North have secured space for the August shipments. In view of that, and seeing that the stock is not coming into consumption, can the second argument brought forward by the Administration, namely, assistance to the small shippers, be accepted as correct? If so, the only conclusion that can be arrived at is that we have no small shippers on our north-west coast. The third reason is the reduction in the cost of living. If the rates prevailing are not to be reduced, and if additional competition is unable to be brought about by the small shippers on the north-west coast, then it will be impossible, on the arguments put forward, for the cost of living to be reduced; but during my campaign it was strenuously argued that owing to the excessive cost

of living something should be done by the Government in order to bring about a reduction. I was asked on more than one occasion whether, if returned, I would support some scheme being initiated in order to carry this into effect; and although perhaps Mr. Sanderson will not agree with me on this, I said I was quite willing to enter into any arrangement that could possibly be made in order to carry this into effect. I have no desire to say that the Government have no experience. It is all very true that what one man can do another can do. Yes; but only if he has the training, aptitude, and capability. We find the first step made by the Government, not a step of good, steady progress, but a plunge into the deep in order to carry into effect a part of their policy irrespective of the consequences. The Premier has stated that the "Mongolia" cost £39,500 and the "Darius" £17,000, or a total of £56,500. To bring these steamers here and equip them for that trade, he said, would cost an additional £3,500, making a total of £60,000. Had the Government exercised that discretion they ought to have done, the first thing in connection with placing boats on the north-west coast or embarking on any scheme would be to some extent to prove the value of the trade they were entering into. This is not a trade that is being entered into irrespective of competition; and in view of the competitive nature of this scheme, certain advice should have been sought and accepted. Had they chartered a steamer for the seven months of the cattle season they would have been in the position of bringing down stock from the North-West free of charge, without spending a shilling on capital account and without creating a department, and being in the same position as they are to-day. The life of the "Darius" has been lived, the "Mongolia," with a further ten years of life, will be obsolete, and with 10 per cent. for depreciation and 4 per cent. for interest on capital, £8,400 would have provided for the charter of a boat during the cattle season and brought down stock free of charge and without any expenditure on capital account or without creating a department. This, I contend, would have given them an op-

portunity of proving the value of the trade; and if successful in this direction, then a scheme could have been embarked upon with every degree of success; but, as it is, so far as I can see from my knowledge of this coast, and of the tidal ports, and of the difficulties surrounding navigation, and of the small amount of cargo offering, and of the many numerous ports at which the steamers have to call, I think the scheme is doomed to failure. I am glad the Government propose to keep a commercial set of books in regard to this scheme. So long as they do, and so long as a proper depreciation is allowed and interest on all standing charges, similar to private companies, and so long as the boats are maintained in anything like reasonable efficiency in order to carry out the work and give them the ten years of life, then I think that, after the first year or eighteen months, the Government will probably be glad to realise on them before they go too far. But what conveyed to me the want of knowledge on the part of those responsible for this scheme was the advertisement that appeared in the papers calling for applications for the position of manager. The position was advertised at £360 to £480. If the Government, or whoever was responsible, in order to make this a success, had got the very best man they could have got and paid him £1,000 or £1,500 a year, it would not have been a penny too much to expect for the class of commercial knowledge a man should have to administer a department like this. The gentleman appointed to the position is a very estimable man, he is a very fine chap indeed, but his knowledge of book-keeping and accountancy work is not the knowledge required to run a commercial undertaking in this direction. So far as the individual is concerned I have nothing to say, but the appointment shows that it must be characteristic to some extent of the discontent prevailing in the public service of the State when an appointment such as this should be advertised at £360 per annum. Without in any way desiring to appear parochial, I wish to say something in connection with my own province, and that is in regard to the position of the Fre-

mantle harbour. I am glad to note in the Speech a reference to harbour improvements; but what is the position of the Fremantle harbour, the first port of call, the chief port of the State. Chaos ruling and congested traffic. For the year ending June, 1910, the imports were 442,407 tons; for the year ending June, 1911, the imports were 614,861 tons, a total increase of 172,454 tons, practically a 30 per cent. increase; and if we have anything like a reasonable harvest, together with the Trans-Australian railway material that must be handled, sufficient accommodation cannot be provided within the next two years in the Fremantle harbour for the trade that is likely to develop. I have gone carefully through all figures relating to any extensions in any direction that can be made within the limits of the existing harbour, and the total new berthage accommodation that can be provided amounts to 1,900 feet. As against that 1,900 feet, unfortunately, we have the mail boat jetty in such a state of disrepair that in the near future it must be taken up; and as this T jetty provides a thousand feet of accommodation, the total increased accommodation that can be provided will be only 900 feet, or equivalent to two additional berths. Now, in view of that and in view of the increased tonnage daily, I am particularly anxious to know what the present Administration intend to do in respect to the future. We see the Suez Canal being deepened to 36 feet. We see Colombo, the next port of call *en route*, 36 feet, Fremantle harbour, the next port of call, still remaining at its 30 feet. We see Sydney spending sums of money in connection with the deepening of her harbour, and Melbourne the same, and Hobart, the despised little port of this Commonwealth, actually now making arrangements with the White Star line in order to establish a coaling station so that the White Star boats can top up and leave Hobart passing the Western State bound to the old country. This appeals to me as being a very serious phase and something which I ask the present Administration to take into consideration at the very earliest date. I feel sure it is news to hon. members that

the Aberdeen White Star line have now a steamer on the stocks to replace the "Pericles." Its dimensions are 550ft. by 67ft. by 40ft., and it has a draft of 31ft. 6in. The company have written to the Fremantle Harbour Trust wanting to know from them what provision they intend making in the future for receiving the boats of their line, but the harbour trust are helpless in the matter, they are unable to reply to the communication. I hope this will bring to the House to-night the absolute urgency of the Government appointing some commission.

Hon. M. L. Moss: We do not want commissions; we want the work done.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Well, somebody to immediately go into the question of the Fremantle harbour.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: All the information is there already.

The Colonial Secretary: There has been no estimate as to cost.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I am sure that no member desires that any steamer should have to pass our port and go to the Eastern States because we have not sufficient accommodation for her. In this growing State we must make that increased accommodation and provide the facilities without any further delay. The work should be started to-morrow in order to be completed in time to receive the steamers that will be coming to Fremantle. Of course in Fremantle, as many members know, it is a burning question as to whether it should be an outer harbour extension or an inner harbour extension. When one looks at the waters in the outer harbour one cannot help but think that there unquestionably is the place for an outer harbour scheme, but I am not here to-night advocating any particular scheme; I am here asking the Government to take into consideration the advisability at the earliest possible moment of the work being proceeded with in order that steamers may have their accommodation at our own port. I am sorry there is no reference in the Speech to the subject of immigration. On referring to statistics for the year ended June last we find that the increased population of the State amounted to only 15,000. It does not require any great ability at figures to

see that on an annual increase of 15,000 many years will be required before this State receives the population she is entitled to.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Is that the total increase?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Yes.

Hon. W. Patrick: And even that is going to be stopped.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: We find some of the European countries, the great nations of the world, teeming with their millions—take Germany as an instance, with her millions, bounded on every side and unable to expand—yet in face of this we, with a coastline of 3,000 miles, expect to be able to protect our shores and reserve the right to this vast area. Unless we are prepared to populate this land we have no right to retain it, and the quicker the Government set to work to devise a sound immigration policy the better for the State and the people in it. Another thing my recent campaign brought to my notice was the question of the dairying industry. Probably the House will remember that a week or two ago we had in Fremantle a referendum as to the municipalising of the milk industry. The proposal was rejected by a large majority. I am told that we have a considerable tract of good dairying country in the State. If that be so I think we should endeavour to bring about an improved state of affairs. To-day we are sending out of the State from £75,000 to £100,000 per annum for dairy produce for our own consumption. Instead of that our own dairying industry should be assisted. We should not only manufacture sufficient for our own consumption, but should be sending away a surplus in return for coin of the realm to be distributed in our own State. Another point which appeals to me very strongly is that of the State Savings Bank. It is incomprehensible to me why the present Administration have not attempted to make some arrangements in this respect. Mr. Moss, when speaking, said that it was because the Labour policy throughout Australia was one of unification. I am not going to agree with Mr. Moss in that regard, because we find that the Labour Government of New South Wales are making arrangements to trans-

fer the State Bank from the control of the Federal authorities, while, so far as we know, no such arrangements have been made here.

Hon. M. L. Moss: It is all secrecy here. They refuse to tell us anything about it.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: When we remember that the four or five millions in the Savings Bank have been advanced to the Agricultural Bank and to municipalities and other corporations, it will be realised what a serious blow the State would suffer if the Federal authorities were to take control of the Savings Bank money. I hope that in this connection the Government will make some stand, and arrange for the transference of our own Savings Bank from the Federal authorities at the earliest date. I notice in the Speech a reference to the nationalisation of the Perth trams. I believe that public utilities of this kind should be in the control either of the State or the municipal authorities. I have taken a very active interest in connection with municipal matters, and in respect to the municipalisation of trams I was one of the first members elected to the Fremantle Tramways Board. I have retained my seat on that board from the very inception, and for the past four years have been chairman. When I tell hon. members that during the five years we have been operating that service no less a sum than £30,000 has been set aside in order to wipe off the capital cost at the maturity of the debentures, and that during the same time £1,516 of profit has been handed over to the municipalities in order to lighten the burdens of taxpayers, it will be seen how important this matter is. On reference to the tram systems of the United Kingdom, we find that there are there no fewer than one hundred municipal tramways with, approximately, a capital of 42 millions, and that during their existence a sum of no less than £354,676 has been provided in surpluses in order to assist the taxpayers of the respective municipalities and corporations. I desire to say that, in my opinion, the present Administration are not justified in any attempt to take away or confiscate the rights of the city of Perth. I am in no way interested in Perth matters, but I do know that if any attempt were to be

made by the Government to confiscate the Fremantle tramway system I should put up a jolly good fight to prevent it. The Perth City Council have an agreement with the Perth Tramway Company, which entitles them to 3 per cent. of the gross earnings, and to use the tramway poles for the running of light mains, while it also provides for the purchase of the system at 14 years, or at 21 years, and that after 28 years the concern is to revert to the municipality. I should like to know if the Government regard might as a justifiable substitute for right. If they do, and intend to deprive the citizens of Perth of their rights, then in my opinion they are not justified in their action. There are many other figures I could quote in support of my contention in regard to the tramways, but presumably when the Bill comes before the House further opportunity will be given me. I regret very much that probably the first vote I shall be asked to give in the House should be in connection with an amendment such as that moved by Mr. Moss. I do believe we should endeavour to retain this House as a non-party House. I believe we should be considered and consulted in matters relating to any schemes put forward by the Government. It is not my intention to be a hostile critic of the present Administration, at all events not to any great extent, but I have been considering the position from the standpoint that if out of a contingency vote of £250,000 the Government could provide capital for the purchase of steamers, and embark on a scheme for the sea carriage of goods, there is no reason why the same Government, out of the same vote, cannot build the Esperance railway for the land carriage of goods. To me it seems a parallel that, if they can commit the State out of a vote of a contingency nature—and commit the State for part only, where large sums of money must follow in its wake—then they can commit the State in any other direction they may choose. This, I think, would be a very bad principle indeed to permit.

The Colonial Secretary: The previous Government exceeded the Treasury vote by many thousands.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I am in the happy position of knowing that I start afresh; it does not concern me what any previous Government have done. I am considering merely what the present Administration have done. I was sorry, indeed, to hear Mr. Connor make the reference he did to Collie coal. I regret he is not here now in order that I might enlighten him respecting one of the best products and industries of the State. I happen to be indirectly connected with that industry, and it must be known that some thousands of pounds have poured into this State by the bunkering of Collie coal. The calorific values of that coal are getting better, and if such organisations as the Hansa and German-Australian companies can load coal at Newcastle and call in at Fremantle for bunker coal on their way to Bombay, I think it demonstrates that the Collie coal must be becoming a very fair article indeed. I can assure the House that that has been done during the last month or two. The steamers of that line have been calling here on their way from Newcastle to Bombay in order to bunker our own local coal. It must be of great advantage to the railways of the State. The present Government, and also past Governments, have helped to build up this Collie coal industry, and if after having built up the trade and advertised the coal as a bunker coal, they refuse to burn it, what a splendid advertisement it will be for outside coals to send forth to the world. It would indeed be interesting to read that the State-owned steamers of Western Australia refused to burn the Western Australian product, preferring the imported article. Such a state of things could not be permitted. So far as spontaneous combustion is concerned, that is a trouble easily got over. All the Government will have to do in connection with the bunkering of Collie coal will be to carry sufficient bunker coal to take their steamers to and fro. Any spare supplies that they need and intend to keep on board the ship as reserve month in and month out, I should say, for the safety of the ship, and the convenience of all concerned, should be the imported article, but the coal to be consumed could be the local article. I have no desire to say any-

thing more to-night other than to thank the House for the courteous manner in which they have received me. I can only hope my stay in this House will be one of a cordial nature with all sections in it, and anything I can do in any possible direction to assist the members of this Chamber I shall be pleased to do.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I had expected the Hon. Mr. Connolly to speak to-night, but it seems at the last moment he has taken pity on the House, as he would have a good deal to say, and as I do not intend to detain the House long, I will make the few remarks which I desire. I have listened with very great interest to the admirable speeches of the three new members who have spoken since the Colonial Secretary's defence, but I noticed a serious omission, that they did not honour the Minister by any reference to his defence. I presume that they estimated it at something like its value, for even the Minister himself can hardly look upon that defence as worthy of the House. His defence was this: that the Government had not gone behind Parliament by using money that had not been appropriated; that the Government had taken the purchase money for the steamers out of the Treasurer's advance vote, which was voted for entirely different purposes last session.

The Colonial Secretary: For what purpose was it voted?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Colonial Secretary had gone further and said in his defence that he wished this House to believe that Ministers had no intention of insulting the Legislative Council. That disclaimer on the part of the Ministry must be accepted straight away, but it does not alter the situation one iota. Ministers have taken the course which on the plain face of it means an attempt to get behind this Chamber. However good their meaning towards this Chamber, it does not for a moment remove the offence which Ministers have committed. The singular part about this defence is that it is very different from the one put forward before the Hon. Mr. Moss made his charges. The answer before was this: the Government, as a matter of urgency,

had to anticipate Parliament's authority for the purchase of these steamers, and the Governor's Speech said distinctly that not Parliament, but one House of Parliament would be asked to ratify and approve of their action. Now, after Mr. Moss's speech, the Colonial Secretary says there will be no need to ratify or approve that expenditure. The Legislative Council need not be offended at a reference to the Assembly only, for neither House will be asked to ratify or approve that expenditure. The Government is taking the ground that the expenditure has already been approved. This is about the most manifest subterfuge that this House has ever had to listen to. I will say this, that the Minister blushed when he was putting it forward in this House. He is not a State socialist, he does not believe in these crude and rash ventures of the Government, but he has to stand by—

The Colonial Secretary: You have no right to say that.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: He has to stand by the more advanced socialistic notions of his party and I pity him. With reference to the claim of the Government regarding the Treasurer's advance, the Colonial Secretary said the wording of the clause had precedent, and that in previous Governors' Speeches there was something like the same kind of wording. It must be admitted that very frequently in Governors' speeches, the diction and punctuation leave ambiguities, but the meaning has to be interpreted by the action of the Government, and never before in the history of this country has any Government attempted to use a Treasurer's advance for any purposes but two, namely, excesses over votes that had been appropriated, or emergencies in the line of precedent.

The Colonial Secretary: You are wrong.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I am entirely on safe ground.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You are quite right.

The Colonial Secretary: The aboriginal cattle station was purchased out of Treasurer's advance and that represented an amount of £18,000.