

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 29th November, 1905.

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir George Shenton) took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Roads Act, 1902: 1, Bayswater Road Board—Special By-laws. 2, Lawlers Road Board—Exemption from rating. 3, Nelson Road Board—Additional By-laws.

## QUESTION—LIME DEPOSITS AT LIME LAKE.

HON. W. MALEY asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the value of lime and gypsum as fertilising agents, is it the intention of the Government to employ the boring plant now at Wagin to test the deposits known to exist at Lime Lake?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Inquiries are being instituted as to the value of the lime and gypsum deposits in the Wagin district for fertilising purposes. If the deposits are considered satisfactory as fertilising agents, the boring plant will probably be used for testing the extent of such deposits.

## BILLS (9)—FIRST READING.

On motions by the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill), Bills were introduced and read a first time as follow:—1, Public Elementary Education Act Amendment. 2, Fire Brigades Act Amendment. 3, Electric Lighting Act Amendment. 4, Municipal Institutions Act Amendment. 5, Fertilisers and Feedingstuffs Act Amendment. 6, Fisheries Act Amendment.

On motions by the HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. M. L. Moss), Bills were introduced and read a first time as follow:—1, Statutes Compilation. 2, Jury Act Amendment. 3, Life Assurance Companies Act Amendment.

## SITTING DAYS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill) moved—

That unless otherwise ordered, the House do meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and sit until 6.30 if necessary, and if requisite from 7.30 onwards.

Question passed.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

## SECOND DAY OF DEBATE.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I desire to add my congratulations to those which have fallen from other members in relation to our President. I wish also to express my pleasure at again seeing Mr. Kingsmill in the position he occupies (as Minister), and am glad to find he is so ably assisted by Mr. Moss. It is a pleasure to give utterance to these remarks. One cannot shut his eyes to the fact that other esteemed gentlemen have occupied those seats before, and one at least carries with him the strongest feelings of pleasure at the experience of his occupancy of the seat. Members all know to whom I refer. I think we have been most fortunate in the gentlemen we have had to lead this House, and I feel that we are in thoroughly safe hands at the present time. I do not intend to dwell at great length on the Address-in-Reply. As an agricultural representative of a province of which I suppose eight-tenths is agricultural, naturally my interests are more wrapped up in agriculture than in other subjects, although I try to take an interest in things generally. I purpose to deal with the Lands Department, and I have much pleasure on this occasion in stating that the Lands Department deserves the greatest credit and recognition of this House and the country for the manner in which it has caught up the surveys, and there are other matters the department has attended to which should not be lost sight of, including local agencies and priority of applications. The present arrangement is of great assistance and will be very helpful in the question of land settlement. Those two things alone are matters on which we may congratulate the State. At the same time there are shortcomings, and I shall have to bring up a need that exists on the part of very many selectors who select

second and third class lands. We should not ask these people to take up second and third class land as first class, for in doing so we are not only doing a grave wrong to those people, but acting in a way which will be to the detriment of the State. I trust and feel sure that some steps will be taken by the present Minister for Lands to remedy this difficulty. Much is expected from him on account of his past experience of settlers throughout the State. He will be able to judge well of their needs, and I feel sure he will recognise the justice of the claim I make on their behalf that they should be permitted to select the lands under their proper classes. In the province I have the honour to represent, there is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction in connection with the matter, and one cannot wonder at it; particularly one who, like myself, is working amongst them. Without going to the extreme of giving such large areas as before, the Government should allow them to take the lands up under easier conditions and under proper classes. The excuse that it is impossible to classify and survey is knocked on the head; and I cannot see why this privilege should not be extended to the settlers at this time when the Lands Department have caught up surveys. With regard to the reduction of area, I trust that the Act will not be altered so far as it applies to lands beyond the rabbit-proof fence. People who take risks outside that fence should have the privileges of the Act; and I repeat that I trust no reduction will be made so far as those lands are concerned. I consider that any man who takes the risk of having land 40 to 50 miles from the present railway should be entitled to the excellent provisions contained in the present Act. I wish to refer to one matter in connection with homestead farms. I trust the Minister will do away with the objectionable regulation which exists relating to transfer, and make the position such that as long as the owner has performed what the Act requires him to do, no obstacle shall be thrown in the way of transfer. There is one other matter in connection with this to which I desire to draw attention for the second, third, or fourth time, and that is with regard to preventing a man owning a block from turning

it into conditional purchase. The man says: "I do not want to lose the land. I am willing to take it up under conditional purchase and pay ten shillings an acre under ordinary conditions." But the department says: "You will do nothing of the kind. It will make the land liable to forfeiture if you attempt it." A regulation of that nature is idiotic in the extreme, and the sooner it is done away with the better. It is a regulation which prevents a selector from paying ten shillings an acre for a holding for which the State only got 1½d. per acre under the conditions of original selection. Let a selector take such lands and let the State benefit to the extent of something like £79, or in fact £80. I hope the Colonial Secretary and his colleague will take heed of that. There is one other matter to which I wish to draw attention, and that is with regard to the charge for second-class land. If the classification officer says land is of a certain class, there should be only one price for that class. In various instances we have prices varying from 1s. 6d. to 2s. and 3s. per acre for the same class of land. I maintain that the price should be fixed by Act of Parliament, and that once the class is established the price should be a fixed quantity, and people should know exactly what sum they would have to pay. Before I pass from that subject I would like to say there is not the slightest doubt in the world that the old Act is, with the exception of a few complaints I have made, a good one, and the administration excellent. In reference to the Under Secretary's report for 1904, we discover a state of affairs which I am sure everyone should be pleased with. We have heard a good deal about so much land being alienated and in process of alienation, but the report discloses this fact, that of the 11½ million acres for the purpose of alienation, over five million acres—to be exact, 5,064,709 acres—are held under conditions of improvement fixed by law. That is, nearly half the land held in this way is in process of alienation. I think that alone is something to be proud of. It is held under conditions of improvement fixed by Act of Parliament, which the owners cannot get away from. There is no need for fresh

legislation upon those holders. The amount is fixed by statute, and the holders know exactly what conditions they took the land under. We have 2,768,810 acres held by the Midland Railway Company. This land will not be disposed of unless it is subject to conditions of improvement the same as other lands. There again we have 2½ millions, leaving 3,724,789 acres in fee acquired by direct sale on conditional purchase, a good deal of which—and I think I shall be borne out in this statement by members—was under the old conditions of improvement. As far back as 1900 some of this land was acquired, and it is natural to suppose that most of the area is improved; otherwise the people have no right to their titles. I draw attention to this because much has been said about forcing the hands of landowners. Out of eleven and a half million acres in course of alienation, on 5,064,709 acres of land held under conditions of improvement an expenditure of seven millions is involved. The figures are big, but there is no getting away from them. The bulk of the land is under Clause 55, at 10s. per acre with 10s. per acre improvements. But the conditions are not sufficient. There is not sufficient land for a man to make a living on any ordinary farm granted under the Act, and a man must spend another 10s. per acre on his land before he can make a proper living. Thus by taking these figures and the expenditure which is necessary, it will be seen that my estimate is pretty near the mark. And these people have to spend the money before they acquire their fee simple. I am sure they are sufficiently taxed without any farther taxation; and in addition to this the farmers have their local taxes which are now fairly heavy. Much of this land has been taken up during the last few years, and we have given the people a certain time in which to make payments and carry out their improvements, this being laid down in the Act clearly. Therefore we cannot force their hands in regard to improvements. I have no hesitation in saying that the writer of the leader in a paper this morning is entirely wrong in regard to the quantity of land lying idle along the railways. Most of the land along the Great Southern Railway is occupied, and on much of it that is not occupied the owners are com-

plying with the improvement conditions according to the Act. I think the percentage in which there is any desire to shirk the responsibilities is very low. People in these districts devote their lives to the development of the country. There is a lot of real hard work in connection with it, and it is only fair to stand up and explain the position. I think the farmers deserve our best thanks for turning some previously worthless country into a source of profit for themselves and also for the State. We have in Western Australia 624,588,800 acres of land, and we have reason to congratulate ourselves that land affairs are not in a worse condition, that is that larger areas have not been locked up. Members must not forget also that the holders of that five million odd acres of land have to spend £7,000,000 on it before they can get their titles. I am tired of hearing this cry of taxing people to make them develop the land, when conditional purchase holders at least have enough to do to occupy it and improve it as the Act requires. It is interesting also to mention that last year only £45,000 was paid by the Lands Department into Consolidated Revenue over and above the expenditure. It was £76,000 for 1905. The figures will be £150,000 in years to come, because the Secretary for Lands has shown that it takes about three years to cover the expenses of survey fees. The cost of inspection will of course continue during the 20 or 30 years of extended payments; but it is only after the first few years that there will be a surplus. The reason why the revenue last year was only £45,000 over and above the expenditure was that they had so many applications for land necessitating the expenditure of money in survey fees. With regard to homestead blocks, it is sufficient for this State to give the settler 160 acres without bearing the expense of survey, which last year cost from £8,000 to £9,000, and the year before it was up to £9,000; and we have to add to that in many cases the cost of railway fares. The Government spent at least £18,000 in the two years, to give away 3,004 homestead farms.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: But we get the settlers.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Yes; but the least these settlers can do in these cir-

cumstances is to repay the cost of survey; and it would do away with the evil we have been trying to fight all through. Let us give away the blocks; but if the selector paid the cost of the survey it would make him more careful, and it would do away with the matter of tricking the department, while it would not take away from the advantages we offer. People will say that it is a big advantage to receive 160 acres at a cost of about 1d. an acre, and it would take away the burden of the cost of surveying these blocks. Any *bona fide* settler would not mind paying the cost of surveying his homestead block. Now as to spur railways, which I wish to touch on for a few moments. It is almost full-brother to the question of land settlement. I congratulate the Government on the stand they have taken in this matter, and I trust, so far as the Great Southern Railway is concerned, that we will be served in this respect; for the district is ripe for this concession in many places. I hope we will have no more cold water thrown upon the scheme by the leading papers. To me it seems that some of these papers, instead of taking up a stand for a progressive policy, begin to cry "stinking fish" straight away, and to throw cold water on any movement that does not quite fit in with their views. This is a movement that is general throughout the State, and for which good reasons have been advanced; but we find the papers crying it down without rhyme or reason. We should find these papers supporting one of the best movements in the State, the building of spur railways throughout the country. Without spur railways the main railways are of less use. The State should not expect developmental railways to pay from the start, or we had better say good-bye at once to all progressive land settlement and to all our ideas concerning immigration. We might just as well turn round and say that railways to mining districts will not pay because there are many instances in which it is a question of the future in making a thing pay. We started them for the simple reason that some inducement should be offered to settlement and development. This is a question I do not advocate altogether for the purpose of the Great Southern District. I advocate it in order to open up an immense

area that would otherwise not be touched. The argument that the Southern District is sufficiently served by railway communication is idiotic, and is like the argument that it was no use extending the railway beyond Perth. We hear a great deal about making people develop their lands. I invite the paper that says this to name any localities that are undeveloped. I know only one such estate in the Eastern Districts, and if it were divided among members of the family holding it, each one in the family would get no more than the Land Act now entitles him to. It is time we got rid of this parrot cry in which I have never yet found any truth. No one has set forth that there are any large areas locked up. Members must realise that we have given people holding land under conditional purchase extended time to effect improvements, and we should extend the same privilege to those who settled in the earlier days, and let them have fair play.

HON. J. A. THOMSON: But they are doing nothing with their land.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It is men like the hon. gentlemen who keep this ridiculous parrot cry going. Let them try to do something for themselves, and not expect all improvements carried out for them, or want the Government to provide all their expenses. I say, let them go out and do the pioneering work we had to do. Then we will hear another cry. Their views will be changed. I challenge the paper to name the large undeveloped estates, with the area and locality. I have taken up more of the time of the House than I had intended; but before sitting down I would like to say how pleased I am to be able to report that throughout the country, in my province at any rate, there is a feeling of satisfaction greater than has been the case for many years past, and this is due to the policy of the present Government. If the Government carry out the policy they have outlined, it will mean increased prosperity throughout the State.

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): I join with other members in saying how glad I am to see you, Mr. President, back in your position, and I hope you will remain there for many years to adorn your office. There is no need for me to protract this debate

to any extent, but there are one or two matters I should like to refer to and which are briefly touched upon in His Excellency's Speech. The statement is made that—

The development of the mining, agricultural, pastoral, and other industries is of the most gratifying nature.

In regard to the mining industry, I do not pose as an expert at all, but we have had some statements made by those who do, during the last few days; something to this effect, that the outlook is not too promising, that the gold yield is not increasing and that if we are to maintain the position we have reached it must be by making fresh discoveries and giving perhaps to the working miner some privileges or some facilities for holding on to his ground that do not at present exist. We see in this State how much we are dependent on the gold-mining industry. It is perhaps the backbone of the State, and the other industries are to a large extent dependent on it. It behoves the Government and the Houses of Parliament to take the matter into their most earnest consideration to see that the developments of the future be equal to if not greater than those of the past. Mr. Piesse has given us some very valuable information in regard to the settlement of our lands, and I am glad of his testimony, because we have so much of an opposite character from one or another, that the lands situated near our railways are not fully occupied. We may judge that from the sentence in the Governor's Speech:—

In order to provide farther necessary facilities for the successful occupation of those agricultural lands situated at some distance from our present railway system, it is the intention of my advisers to seek the consent of Parliament to the construction of several agricultural lines from various points on the existing railways.

We may assume then that the land contiguous to the present system of railways is fully occupied. Mr. Piesse bears that out, although we have had a statement from the Minister for Lands lately, saying that out of 11,000,000 acres of land in process of alienation 300,000 or 400,000 acres only are in successful occupation. We wish to know who is right and who is wrong in this matter, because one can hardly see justification for constructing new lines of railway and

putting the country to additional expense, if the lands near the railways are not at present in full and successful occupation. With reference to the construction of spur lines, that is a matter that can with profit occupy the attention of this Chamber. Mr. Piesse has indicated that all the spur lines are to abut on the Great Southern Railway.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I said, "and elsewhere."

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD: The hon. member was very enthusiastic. I think the question of whether it applies to the Great Southern or the South-Western Railway is one that can profitably be discussed and settled in this House. In regard to immigration, the main difficulty, I fear, will be—when we get the immigrants here—that of settling and keeping them on the land. Mr. James, the Agent General, has begun in an admirable way, and we had last week 30 or 40 settlers arriving from the old country. Quite a number of these are other than agricultural labourers and farmers, and the difficulty which confronts all is that of settling the people on the land and keeping them there. We know the irresistible attraction towns have for some people, and we shall have to give the people in one way or another facilities so that the general tenor of their lives may be helped to some extent in comparison to those who live in our cities. I hope before the session closes we shall pass the Aborigines Bill into law. We remember the great outcry that the publishing of the report of the Royal Commission brought about, and it seems to have been overlooked that this Royal Commission was appointed by the Government to look into the whole question. There is no desire, I take it, on the part of the Government or of anybody in the State to hide matters at all. That could have been easily done; but the Government appointed the Commission to enquire into the whole matter, and the whole of the evidence taken by that Commission has been thrown broadcast to the world. That does not look as if we have anything to hide, but I think we may take it as an honest desire on the part of the country to do its duty to, shall I say, a dying race. I hope this Bill will be passed, and it will then require wise and tactful administration in order that the interests

of those who employ the natives and live amongst them, and the interests of the natives themselves, will be wisely and judiciously guarded. It is proposed to have a thorough reorganisation of the electoral system. This matter is to receive early attention. There seems to have been widespread dissatisfaction at the state of the rolls this year in comparison with the rolls of last year, and I am sure the leader of this House is only waiting for an opportunity to give the information desired on this point. Why the rolls of 1905 contained 42,000 less names than the rolls of 1904 I do not know. The Perth electorates—four of them—have a deficiency of 14,177 names, and the Fremantle electorates a deficiency of 7,569 names. Either the rolls for 1904 were unduly inflated or those for 1905 have been unduly diminished. I am sure the Colonial Secretary will give the House the information desired as to why there is such a big discrepancy. While on this subject of the Electoral Bill, there is one other matter that is happening at present which particularly affects this Chamber. Members will know that one of the qualifications for a vote is to be on the roll of a roads board. The section of the Constitution Act reads, "if the name of such person is on the electoral list of any roads board district in respect of property within the province of the annual value of not less than £25." Owing to the action of many of the roads boards in adopting the unimproved capital value for rating purposes, these electors are receiving notices that their names will be objected to. There will be no returns sent in from the roads board to the electoral department. If roads boards establish the unimproved capital value for rating, that section in the Constitution Act will not apply. Electors are now receiving a notice to this effect:—

I beg to inform you that in consequence of the adoption by the roads board of a general system of valuations on the basis of the capital unimproved value of land instead of the annual value, the ratepayer's qualification under sub-section 5, section 15, of the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1895, ceases in this district. It therefore becomes my duty to object to the retention of your name on the electoral roll under the ratepayer's qualification; and I enclose form of claim for you to fill up and return to me so that you may be registered for one of the following qualifications.

MEMBER: Who sends that?

HON. J. W. LANGSFORD: It is being sent by the electoral registrar of each district to those electors of roads boards which at present are rating on the unimproved capital value. I think this is a matter the Government might help the Chamber in. I know of one province in which hundreds of electors will be disfranchised unless they make new application under the householder's franchise. Inasmuch as secretaries of roads boards will not be required to send in any returns—those roads boards adopting the unimproved capital value will not be required to send in any return to the Government, as that clause in the Constitution Act does not operate in that district—the Government might obtain the assistance of roads boards' secretaries in the matter. This is a question that deserves the serious attention of the Government, who should be willing to see that names are on the roll. These people will be removed from the roll not because of any action on their own part, but because of the adoption by the roads boards of the capital value for rating purposes.

HON. R. LAURIE (West): I do not intend to take up much time, but this is one of those opportunities which comes occasionally for members to discuss matters on a broad basis. I wish first to congratulate you, Mr. President, heartily, in common with other speakers, on your presence here, and I hope and trust it will be many years before there will be any necessity for you again to go away on a prolonged holiday of six months. In His Excellency's Speech are two or three matters on which I desire to touch. But one matter has not been included in the Speech: the question of the Fremantle dock, mentioned by my colleague, Mr. Briggs, in moving the adoption of the Address. I do not desire to press on the House, or even on the Government, the question of a dock at Fremantle; but this is for a number of years the only occasion on which a Governor's Speech has been delivered not containing any reference to that subject. I have only one object in calling attention to the matter. I trust that when the Government deal with the question, they will consider it in connection with the extension of the harbour at Fremantle.

The question of the extension of the harbour almost comes under the heading of what the Government of the day have laid themselves out to do—to give us very little legislation, and very much administration. I wish to impress on the Government and on this House that administration does not mean simply administering the affairs of the State as defined by officers of the departments, but rather the laying down by the Government of a policy whereby the various departments of the State can work together in unison, so as to avoid any squandering of public money. In that connection I should like to call attention to what has for a number of years past been taking place at Fremantle; and I do so with the desire, if possible, to prevent a repetition of such occurrences. When the harbour was projected a scheme was formulated for carrying on the harbour works under the Railway Department; and while that may have been very well in a time of rush, yet we have found that the work done has had to be in a great measure undone. I contend that it is about time the people of Fremantle and the people of this State had before them the intention of the Government with respect to the extension of the Fremantle harbour. I do not say its extension to-day or a year hence; but there should be some plan before the people of this State. The publication of such a plan would allay a great feeling of unrest that prevails in Fremantle, as to whether the harbour is only of a temporary character. We hear frequently that the shipping will inevitably go to Perth. [MEMBER: Or to Albany.] I trust that the Albany harbour may at some future date have as many ships in it as we see at Fremantle; but I trust that Albany will not take from Fremantle any ships coming there now. I wish to impress on the leader of the House the necessity of preparing a plan for the extension of the harbour, the building of the dock, and all other harbour works, so that there may be something which can be worked up to. Let me call attention to what has taken place. When the harbour works were started the wharves were laid down on a certain principle. Much of the work has had to be done over again. I can refer to the rising of the wharves, a matter of £7,000

or £8,000; I can refer to the building of the railway station on the wharf, a matter of some £9,000 or £10,000; I can refer to the construction of a road 150ft. wide alongside the wharf, picking up the road and laying it down again. I can refer to work now going on, the building of a railway station. A good deal has been heard of the Fremantle harbour and its approaches, and the Fremantle railway station. It is well known that the only approach to the harbour is by Cliff Street. The railway station and the yards are now being constructed; and so far as I am aware, the whole of the work is being done under the heading "Extensions and additions to main lines." In saying that, I am subject to correction; but about £80,000 is being spent there, and up to the time the work was well in hand the Engineer-in-Chief knew nothing about it. I say with all due respect to any Government in power, that if there were a plan which the engineers of this State or the other officers of the various departments might work up to, much money would be saved. For example, there is just one road to the wharf. A short time ago a bridge was made from James Street to the wharf at the east end. That bridge has been partly pulled down, and another opening made. It is only about three years since that bridge was built. If some proper fixed plan were prepared, there would be no pulling down and building up again. I take it, administration means making sure that public money is not squandered. The other day it was pointed out that our indebtedness per head of population is about £62. If that is so, and if we are, as I pointed out, squandering £20,000 at Fremantle in the course of seven or eight years, there is no wonder that our indebtedness is £62 per head. I say that the Government ought to lay down plans which the various departments may work up to. My own idea is that those in charge of the Fremantle harbour should be consulted, that the Commissioner of Railways should be consulted, and certainly that the Engineer-in-Chief should know exactly what is going on. He is responsible to the Government for public works throughout the State. In that manner public money could be saved, and we should have proper administration.

It may be said that I am speaking as an interested party in asking that those in charge of the harbour should be consulted; but I am speaking after nearly three years' experience of the administration of the affairs of the Harbour Trust. At the end of next month I shall sever my connection with that trust, and I can assure members that on no consideration would I remain in it; therefore I am speaking simply in the interests of the people of the State, for the purpose of preventing the squandering of thousands of pounds, and the unnecessary building up and pulling down of public works. I should like to say a word or two more. There is no question that some considerable time must elapse—a very considerable time, I hope—before any farther extension of the harbour will be needed; and the reason is because of the expeditious manner in which ships can be loaded and discharged. Moreover, in a short time, I hope within the next two or three years, much of the importation from the Eastern States will cease. One has only to look at the return compiled by the Harbour Trust, and placed in the hands of members, to ascertain the quantity of foodstuffs which comes from the Eastern States. While we are decreasing the importation of these from the Eastern States, we shall be increasing our exports, and particularly our export of wheat. This brings me to a point of interest to agriculturists both inside and outside the House. In order successfully to export wheat, we must place it as cheaply as possible on the world's markets. Five years ago I examined very closely the manner in which wheat and flour are handled at San Francisco and New York. In February last I examined the manner in which they were handled nearer home, at Sydney. There is no doubt that the Fremantle Harbour Trust will have to make provision for the storage and cheap handling of wheat. That points again to the need for proper administration by the Government, and the need for the Government getting the Engineer-in-Chief, and the Commissioner of Railways who has to carry the wheat, and the members of the Harbour Trust, to fix on one scheme, and when that scheme is formulated, to stick to it; not to construct works at haphazard, and pull them

down again. I trust that the people of Fremantle will have the assurance of the Government that such a plan as already exists will be adhered to. Such a plan does exist, showing the dock at Preston Point, showing the extension of the harbour works; and members have my assurance that an extension of the harbour will not be needed for some time. But before we can get the money for it, before we could start the work if the extension were now required, some twelve months or two years must elapse. Such work is not done in a day. If an extension were needed to-morrow, it would mean a removal of the bridges; and I am sure members are satisfied that the railway bridges and all the sand banks in the neighbourhood cannot be taken away inside of 12 months or two years. Therefore I would impress on the Government the desirableness of having some plan to work up to, something which will save them the necessity for building up and pulling down as in the past. Probably what happened in the past was not the fault of anyone; probably the great rush we had some seven or eight years ago had much to do with it. I trust that the leader of the House will take into consideration what I say, speaking as I am from actual experience; and I trust he will have such a plan prepared, so that the people of Fremantle and the people of the State generally will know exactly what is to be done with respect to the Fremantle harbour, and will know also that in carrying out the work there will not be any building up, pulling down, and building up again. That brings me to a matter connected with the dock. I am pleased to see that in a reply to a letter from the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) the Minister for Works has stated that the dry dock and the question of bridges across the river will be taken into consideration. I trust that the dry dock will be worthy of the State of Western Australia. About the only other matter I wish to touch on is the Port Hedland-to-Nullagine Railway. I have on various occasions urged the need of that railway to Marble Bar or Nullagine. I wish the Government, in this matter as well as in the matter of the Fremantle harbour, to consider carefully what they do, and on no account to start the railway from Port



Hedland, from Roebourne, or from Point Sampson, until they are thoroughly satisfied that the railway will not only meet the requirements of the district, but that the money spent will not have to be spent over again. I particularly refer to this, because there is at Port Hedland a bar harbour with about two to four feet of water at low tide, and about 16ft. or 18ft. at spring tide.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

HON. R. LAURIE: I would impress on the Colonial Secretary the fact that at Port Hedland there will be only two days before the spring tide and about two days after it when ships can go out to sea.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; it is a half-tide harbour. At neaps all the time, and at springs half-time.

HON. R. LAURIE: I can but say that vessels needed to carry the material to start the railway will not be able to get in at neaps. They can get in at springs, but never at neaps. We come to the question of Point Sampson. Point Sampson, as most members know, has an open roadstead jetty. It has been said that if a hurricane comes along, the jetty will be swept away. But I have it on the authority of the shipping masters who trade there that such an occurrence is not likely; and it will be well if the Government have the fullest inquiry made before deciding on the starting-point of that railway, so that when the railway is started there will be an assurance that it will not be diverted later on to some other port. It appears to me there are a great many partisans on both sides; and I think it is about time for the Government to decide by their experts as to the proper place to make the harbour, and the proper starting-point for the railway, what part of the country will be best served by it, and also whether the harbour, when the railway is made, will be a permanent one that can be used in all weathers. The Electoral Act has been referred to, and I think every member of the House will agree with what Mr. Langsford has said, that it needs wiping out and something better put in its place. I had some experience of it during the late elections, and I can honestly say that it was absolutely disgusting to have to work under such an Act. In conclusion, I can assure hon. members that in

speaking with respect to the administration, I have done it with a sense that it is our duty to call the attention of the Government to what we may consider necessary for the proper administration of the country; and I trust that my remarks will be the means of ensuring the success and the thoroughness of any works that may be undertaken in Perth or Fremantle, so that it shall not be found necessary to pull down what may have been put up at great expense.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): Firstly, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your return to your duties in this House, and trust the improved condition of your health will enable you to preside over our deliberations for many years. I have read with considerable interest the report of the Governor's Speech; and I must say there is a great deal in it that requires careful attention and consideration by this House. I think we may congratulate this House and another place, also the country, upon the result of the general elections which have returned so large a majority for the present Government. I believe that result shows a careful consideration on the part of the electors of the State, who have not been satisfied, I think from the evidence, with the working of the parliamentary system during the last two or three years, and especially with the position of one party in another place; one result being that the particular party has been entirely overthrown by the will of the electors, so that we now have some hope of obtaining stable government in this State. Believing that we have now every prospect of this being the case, I can only repeat the cautions uttered both inside this House and outside, that a larger responsibility is cast upon the Government on account of the great majority they have in another place. I go farther than that, and say that a much larger responsibility is cast upon this honourable House; and I hope the members of it will see that they discharge their duties in such a way as will show that they fully realise the weight of that responsibility. I do not think, however, that the present Government, though so strongly supported in another place, will attempt anything detrimental to the interests of the whole State. I believe, on the contrary, they

will realise their position, and that we shall have measures introduced, when necessary, which will tend to promote the advancement and prosperity of the State as a whole. I am exceedingly satisfied with the result of the late elections; having had a share in securing the return of three members to another place who would otherwise have been lost but for the little arrangements made on that occasion. While saying this, I have no quarrel with the members of the late Government, or with the party which they represent. They had a right to be represented in Parliament, and I am pleased to see that, considering their numbers in the country, they have now a strong representation of their interests in another place; so that I have no doubt those representatives will be able to put forth views which they think will be for the interests of the workers of the country generally. I have no doubt those representatives in another place will take advantage of their opportunities, and as they number about 15 in the other House, they should be able fully to represent the views and interests of their supporters in the country; for when members speak in Parliament, it should be remembered that they speak not as individual members, but as representatives of constituencies. The Governor's Speech promises economic administration; and I would call attention to one feature of the Speech, that there are in it several words of a particularly significant character, such as—development, encouragement, assistance, economic administration, close attention to the finances, and improvements generally. These are the prominent words in the more important paragraphs of the Speech, those paragraphs which embrace all the subjects that are likely to engage our attention during the present session; and the words I have quoted embrace subjects which, if undertaken and duly carried out in the spirit of the Address, should give cause for congratulation. None of us here are very eager that the session shall close without that close attention being given to the finances which is indicated in the Speech, nor without such remarks as members may deem it necessary to make for the information and guidance of the Government in framing their legislation. I do hope,

at the same time, that nothing will be attempted involving important interests, unless we have the amplest opportunity of judging of the reasons which influence the Government in bringing these matters forward. There is, as I have said, every cause for congratulation in the result of the general elections, for the Governor to state in his Speech that there is now a promise of stable government; and I am sure that although it would perhaps be going too far to say that the Government can create prosperity or can promote trouble, yet the prosperity of the country, its trade and commerce, is more or less affected by the confidence which the people of the country repose in the Government and their administration of the affairs of the State. I feel sure that the want of confidence which has been felt for some time, which has found expression both in the State and outside of it, is now ended; and I feel confident that it will be proved by our experience in the next three months that it is an excellent thing that the conditions recently existing have come to an end. Reference is made particularly to the development of the mining, agricultural, and pastoral industries. Members will see what a wide field this opens for the Government, and how necessary it is that the Government should be well informed on the various subjects with which they propose to deal. I have been glad to hear members of the House this afternoon speaking in a way which must be helpful to the Government, when remarks of such a useful and weighty nature in regard to the settlement of the land, made by Mr. Piesse, and in regard to those practical questions dealt with by Captain Laurie. In connection with our great industries, those things that are making the fortunes of this country, I have shown how necessary it is we should approach these subjects with the utmost care and consideration. I see that some advice has been given, as reported in the newspapers, about our mining industry, and how it may be promoted by a more liberal assistance to prospectors for discovering new fields that may take the place of mines which must ultimately be worked out. I have no doubt the Government will give good heed to the mining expert who has expressed those views; having regard to his position in

the mining industry, and the friends who are interested with him in its maintenance and development. I regret that some of that gentleman's remarks were too outspoken, and may have created a wrong impression outside this State. I saw it stated the other day in Sydney, for instance, that the bottom may soon drop out of the mines of this State; and remarks of that kind have been made in other places. I am sorry that such a feeling exists elsewhere in regard to this State; but it is perhaps natural in other States, when it arises from the great strides we are making and the population we are attracting from those States to Western Australia, while they are comparatively standing still. I should like the Leader of the Government to give us, as soon as possible, some information as to the operations of the copper smelter established at Phillips River. I thought at the time that it was a step in the wrong direction. I shall be pleased if we are able to get information that it has turned out a fairly good success, and I hope that we shall be furnished at the earliest possible moment with reliable information on the point, showing the results of the experiment made there in a new direction by a late Government. I have been in favour of anything that will lead and tend to open up our State and develop its wealth and resources in any direction whatever; and I believe our vast resources which are not yet exploited or made known will ultimately be found out and developed. I think I am safe in saying that; because many things occur from time to time to show that there are minerals and other resources not as yet exploited in any shape or form, and the development of which at the proper time, I think, will be presented to the House for the consideration of Parliament, and which will help us on the path of progress. I may refer to that new metal, tantalite. I do not know its value, but I believe it has a value, and probably if it occurs in large quantities it will be one of the means to help us onwards; and I think there are other substances which are being discovered, which I believe are capable of furnishing fertilisers for some of our lands. If they are found in quantities, what an immense field for our expectations and hopes, to encourage us in

the belief that the future of this great State is something in accordance with its magnificent size! With regard to the railway from Port Hedland or a point on the North-West coast to Marble Bar and Nullagine, I am not in a position to express an opinion; but I heartily coincide with the remark of Captain Laurie that the greatest care should be taken by the Government to obtain the information necessary. I go farther and say that it should be furnished to the Houses of Parliament before we undertake this work and accept a contract from outside sources. I am not in favour of the building of railways by syndicates if it can, by any possible means, be avoided. Our connection with the building of railways by syndicates is of such a character as not to encourage us in accepting another contract or tender of the same sort. I believe it will perhaps be better for us to wait a little time and make some sacrifice from the revenue of the State in preference to accepting offers of a foreign syndicate for the construction of the railway, unless we are fully assured on every point in the contract that we are protected to the utmost degree. We have seen how easy it is for such gentlemen to draw contracts that are submitted to our Attorney General here and to the experts here, and yet somehow or other points are overlooked that afterwards operate to the injury and loss to the State generally. In the construction of a private railway of this kind by a private company, we ought to have the fullest consideration, and the Government should take the Houses of Parliament and the country into their confidence on this question, and on any question of a like nature.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** The conditions have been published by advertisement in the *Government Gazette*.

**HON. G. RANDELL:** I know; but at the same time I am quite aware that I do not understand the conditions; nor do I think that the conditions published are the final ones that may be set forth in the contract; and therefore I venture humbly to suggest that the greatest care and consideration should be taken before we enter into a contract. Some reference has been made to spur lines, and I think I gather from the speech of Mr. Piesse that he would be in favour

of spur lines on the Great Southern Railway, and that he would apparently monopolise them. At any rate we cannot have many of them. There has been a great disparagement of these spur railways. In Victoria, I think they have been accused of a great many things. They have been passed through Parliament by the influence of members, and have turned out in many cases white elephants, beginning nowhere and ending nowhere, and they have not promoted the interests of the State, and have been a serious loss to the railways. Before we embark on spur lines along the Great Southern Railway or on any other line, we want full assurance that they are to be put down in the right and proper places where they are likely to accomplish what they profess to serve. I see from a morning paper that there was a great discrepancy between the evidence given by the officers of the Railway Department and that given by experts outside as to the cost of these railways and their working expenses; but I am quite certain that the Government will not work a railway at the same cost as private firms. The country would not let them do it if they were willing to do it. People demand all sorts of conveniences and considerations, and they get them or there is trouble; and that will prevent the railways being operated at the same expenditure as perhaps they are run by timber companies or by gentlemen running them for their own purposes. For instance, if the Midland Railway were taken over by the Government to-morrow—which we know is not likely to happen, because it has been said that the purchase is as dead as Julius Caesar, and we know that he has been dead a long time, and I see by a letter appearing in the paper this morning that I am quite justified in my opinion—the Government would have to spend a great deal more on running the railway, so that it is almost certain they would not be able to make it profitable to the State, as I understand it is at present profitable to the company. I hope before these spur lines are undertaken that the most careful consideration will be given, and I have no doubt that many points of departure and many places in the country will be forced in the most laudable and enterprising and self-sacrificing way on

the attention of the Government, pointing out that this place and that place are the proper places to start, because the greatest number of inhabitants will be served and because the greatest area of good land will be helped. So it behoves the Government to take such steps as will ensure the country receiving the best value for its money. I see a loan is to be floated for these spur lines. I had hoped that we had come to an end of our borrowing. I believe we can go on very well without it. I believe that the taxation of this country is not so burdensome now that we could not submit to a little more taxation for the purpose of effecting these improvements and carrying out these developments. It would help the country forward, and at the end of the construction of a work we should not have to find the money for interest. I do not know exactly what the interest bill is now, but I believe it is pretty large; and I believe that if we had not had to pay that interest we might with the money have constructed a good many of these spur lines of railway or other conveniences that make for the development and progress of the State. I devoutly hope that we shall not approach the loan market again. I am entirely against it; and I believe that the end of it is disaster. In the other States we can see that the policy has been a bad one from beginning to end. The great country of America was not developed by loans. There they have a country permeated with railways and other conveniences, and never had foreign money on which to pay interest.

Hon. M. L. Moss: All the railways there are held by companies.

Hon. G. RANDELL: But they are working for the country. It does not matter by whom they are held. They spend the money in the country, and that is right. We have already borrowed £16,000,000, and we are proposing to add another £1,000,000 to that and to add to the interest bill. Year after year we have to pay an enormous sum in the way of interest. If we could only put our shoulder to the wheel and submit to a little more sacrifice we could accomplish all ourselves. I hope members will give me credit for sincerity in the utterance of these words, because I have a strong and serious misgiving about the policy of borrowing. When Mr. James was

Premier he suggested that half a million should be the extent of our borrowing, but if these plans are carried out they will involve a great deal more than that, and possibly we will have to obtain the money at a very dear price. We do not get £100 when we borrow. We only get perhaps £92 out of the £100 when all expenses are added, and we have to pay back £100. The interest is small and our burden rests on posterity, but it is an undesirable burden. I think if we could encourage immigration of the right sort we ought to do so by all possible means. I should like to know what support the Agent General received from the late Government. The present Government have not been in long enough to have done anything in this matter, but I am led to understand and hear from different sources that the very able and energetic efforts put forth by the Agent General in London to secure immigrants for this State of a proper and useful character have not been backed up. At least, I can gather such from a speech delivered by the late Premier (Mr. Daglish). We should direct the Agent General that we want no more immigrants, or else he should receive the earnest support of the Government for the time being. We shall expect very much from the present Government in this direction as well as in other directions, and we shall expect with the support they have now obtained that they will proceed in a way that is indicative of their convictions, that it will be their own policy and not one forced upon them by an Opposition as strong as themselves. Another question is the finances. I do not think I need deal with these, because I am very pleased to see that we are promised the Estimates in a very short time. I think it will be creditable to the present Government if these Estimates are furnished within a reasonable period, in the course of a week or two, and I trust that will be the case. "That the finances of the State require careful consideration" goes without saying, and I am not inclined to give very much applause to the present Government if they do that. It is only their duty to the country. In the administration of the affairs of the State they are expected to exercise the economy, ability, and experience which they have

gained to some extent in the management of the finances of the State. If they fail in this, I think it will be a very sore thing with a large number of their supporters. The Government should not be hurried into any expenditure that does not give a safe and good return. We are to have expenditure, I see, on various works; but all of them are useful and important. There are to be harbour improvements, and an increased water supply for the goldfields. I presume that is to carry the water from Kalgoorlie to Menzies and other portions of the eastern and north-eastern goldfields. It is very desirable to have the large supply of water at Mundaring utilised to the fullest extent. I see it is intended to use some at Midland Junction. That is a step in the right direction. We are promised an improved water supply and the initiation of a comprehensive scheme of sewerage for the metropolitan area, a work which is to be shortly commenced. I know it is desired that this matter should be taken in hand at the earliest possible moment. The people have had fault to find with previous Governments for breaking their promises in this respect. It is highly desirable, owing to the increased population in Perth, that steps should be taken at once to properly deal with the sewerage of Perth. I would, however, like to take this opportunity of saying that the difficulty of the problem has increased during the last few months when we remember the trouble that has befallen the Perth Council in the drain from Claisebrook and the trouble which has occurred in St. George's Terrace in reference to a drain running into His Majesty's Theatre. I draw the attention of the officers of the Government to this point: they have carried the drains into the quicksand. Whether it will be necessary to do that in connection with the deep drainage I do not know; but the greatest care will have to be taken to see that the drains are constructed in the right way, or there will be trouble and loss in the future. There is the trouble staring us in the face, involving a considerable outlay, of a small drain—it cost some thousands of pounds—in St. George's Terrace, and this drain will have to be taken up and relaid in some other way. I notice there is not to be much legislation this session, and the legisla-

tion mentioned does not seem to be of any very important character or requiring very much consideration at the present moment. I always think the proper time to speak on Bills is after we get the measures in hand and become acquainted with the details. I therefore do not undertake now to deal with the measures suggested. I only say I hope the Government will adhere to their programme and not try to pass any measures of a controversial or far-reaching character during this session. I think we can wait for the few months between now and the next session for any important measures. I hope under no circumstances will the Government undertake large works without great consideration, and that they will enable Parliament to give that consideration which is highly necessary, so that useful measures may be placed on the statute-book.

At 6:20, the PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central): I wish to add my voice to the chorus of congratulation which has been raised on every side at the safe return of our President in good health to Western Australia, and I can do so with the liveliest feelings of gratitude, for I recognise and wish to admit that I received from you, sir, during the time I was leader of this House, every kindness, every courtesy, and every assistance. In perusing the the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, I very much regret to discover that one of the pledges made by the present Government previous to the general election has not been fulfilled. That pledge relates to the liberalisation of the Legislative Council. A couple of months ago the members of the Government in their various electorates announced that they considered it advisable that the franchise of the Legislative Council should be reduced from £25 to £15. They were not in favour of the abolition of this Chamber, but they considered that the liberalisation of the franchise was distinctly necessary. On account of their moderate platform and their desire to carry out reform in this direction they received a large amount of support during the recent general election, and I think that under the circumstances it was their

duty, seeing that we are to have an election of 10 members for the Legislative Council next year, to take some steps during the present session to carry out the promise they made. I can well recognise that in Perth and Fremantle and the whole of the metropolitan area it is not considered very necessary that there should be a farther liberalisation of the franchise; but in the country districts and in the Geraldton district and Greenough district, and places like those where rent is not high, where property is not so valuable as it is in the metropolis, there are many inhabitants who feel that there is a genuine grievance owing to no step being taken. I know scores of people in Geraldton who are living in four-roomed cottages and who only pay 7s. 6d. a week rent, and in some country districts people live in very good residences indeed and pay even less than 7s. 6d. a week. So I think that, without jeopardising the safety of the interests of the State, some steps might be taken in order to liberalise the franchise in the direction I refer to. We are informed by the Speech that the finances of the State require very close attention. I think that for the last three years sentences of a similar character have appeared in His Excellency's Speech. There is no doubt that the finances of the State require very close attention, and more than close attention. We have been informed by the present Government that they propose no retrenchment and no extra taxation. After my experience in office I fail to perceive how it is possible to successfully carry on under the circumstances. I see a very large deficit looming ahead. We found ourselves in a very bad position, and I think their position must be much worse. In September they had a surplus of, I think, £24,000, but that was due entirely to the fact that the lands revenue for the month of September was £47,000 as against £11,000, which is the average for other months. The whole of the half-yearly rents due in September were paid in to the State. We find that they had a deficit of £17,000 in October, and I shall not be surprised if the deficit for this month even exceeds that £17,000 by a small figure; and yet it is proposed that there should be no retrenchment and no farther taxation. If the Colonial Treasurer of this State can successfully

carry on during the financial year without retrenchment or farther taxation, he deserves to be in office for the next five years—(Interjection)—for all time. This is the position, and he has to meet the situation. There will be a deficiency. The estimated deficiency in connection with the Commonwealth revenue is £295,000. It may not reach that figure, but at any rate it will reach a substantial sum. The increase in the interest bill will be something like £110,000. I think those figures are correct, so the present Government will be something like £200,000 in a worse position than the recent Government. I am glad to see it is proposed to introduce a totalisator tax. If that tax will lead to a reduction in the number of race meetings in Western Australia, I shall do all in my power to carry out that reform. With regard to agricultural lines, so long as those lines can be justified in this House, they will receive my support. I have travelled about Western Australia a good deal, and I can assure members that unless spur lines or loop lines are constructed within 12 months land settlement will, so far as first-class land is concerned, come to practically a standstill in Western Australia. Within 25 miles of the railway line all the best land has been selected, and if we wish farther selection they must construct either spur lines or loop lines. But I trust that if the Government intend to construct these lines they will fortify the House with every possible information on the point in order to justify their construction. There seems to be an impression that these lines are to be constructed solely in the Great Southern District or Southern portion of the State. In our district there is ample justification for a line from Northampton to the Cue line. I think the Colonial Secretary has recently travelled through that country. The country has been long settled and a couple of years ago the Mount Erin Estate was purchased at a cost of £9,000 to the Government. The first 22,000 acres were sold for £20,000, or nearly three times the amount the estate was originally bought at. After that there were something like 40,000 acres. But still these people are practically shut out from the market. There is a heavy sand-

plain between the Chapman District and Geraldton, and it behoves the Government to construct roads or build this new line, which I think absolutely necessary under the circumstances. About half a dozen spur lines could be constructed in the South, and I think the Government ought in justice to supply this loop line in the North.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It does not say that.

THE HON. J. M. DREW: It does not say that, but I think we thoroughly understand it. I may say that this railway would open up about 100,000 acres and would allow a good deal of settlement. I hope the Government will take immediate steps to ascertain the facts. I notice that our district is entirely left out in connection with the Government proposals, unless the Government propose to include the line I have just asked for.

HON. G. RANDELL: What is the distance, Northampton to Cue?

HON. J. M. DREW: Only 30 miles, and I think each of these spur lines will cover at least 30 miles. There is a comprehensive sewerage scheme for the metropolitan area, and numerous other works are contemplated, and I believe it is proposed to raise something like £1,000,000 of money. I shall be only too pleased if my prophecy turns out incorrect. If it does I shall be prepared to apologise. Anyhow, it is proposed to spend £1,000,000 in the Southern districts, and so far as I can see there is not a penny of the proposed loan to be spent in our district, although of course we shall have to pay our quota of the taxation towards providing interest and sinking fund. I hope the Government, in justice to our district, will see that we get fair play in this connection. With regard to the remarks of Mr. Piesse in connection with grazing leases, I have now to compliment the present Government on the stand they have taken in refusing to issue grazing leases at present. I may explain my reasons, and I trust that Mr. Moss will go into the matter carefully. The recent grazing leases were withdrawn in the first place to allow arrears to be overtaken, but afterwards there was a decision in the Supreme Court in the case of the late Sir James Lee Steere against the

Government, in which it was set forth that there should be no selection of grazing leases in any pastoral leases taken up under the regulations of 1887. There are  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million acres of land in the South-West Division of the State held under the regulations of 1887; and if we throw open grazing leases to-morrow, no one but the persons who have pastoral leases over that  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million acres of land can select grazing leases on that land.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Absolutely wrong.

HON. J. M. DREW: I am perfectly right, because I have had experience of it. No one except the pastoral lessee or someone whom he has authorised can select; and I can assure you he will give his authority to no one except his dummy. Probably Mr. Piesse has not considered this aspect of the question. Of course, if we can throw open pastoral leases under the Act of 1898, or if grazing leases can be selected from these pastoral leases without interfering with the others, I have no objection, except that I should like to see the maximum reduced by half, and that instead of a man being allowed to take up 5,000 acres of third-class land, he should only be allowed to take up 2,500 acres, or instead of being allowed to take up 4,000 acres of second-class land he should only be allowed to take up 2,000 acres. But by all means provide him with second or third-class land if we can do it. Only 260 persons will be benefited by the wholesale throwing open of grazing leases; and the Government must have given that every consideration, otherwise they would have undone what the prior Government did. They have justified the attitude we took up. They have no power of resumption for selection as grazing leases. They have only power of resumption for sale or conditional purchase selections. I notice that it is proposed to undertake artesian boring in the North-West. I would point out that on the Lower Murchison there are large numbers of squatters where the water supply is imperfect. I trust the Colonial Secretary will try to induce the Minister for Works to put down at least one bore in the Lower Murchison district, and I am sure that if a good water supply is secured it will induce the whole of the squatters in that locality to follow up the good example set them. Last year more wool

was exported from Champion Bay than from any port in Western Australia except Fremantle. So we see the necessity for supporting the pastoral industry in our district in every possible manner; and efforts in this direction will be very highly appreciated. There is a large number of sheep annually destroyed in this State from one end to the other by the dingos, especially in our district. One man lost no less than 1,000 sheep in one year, and others in small proportions. There was a Bill in course of preparation when I was Minister for Agriculture providing for the placing of the administration of the funds in connection with dingos under boards which were to have the power of taxation on sheep, while the Government were to subsidise the boards, which were given full authority over the administration of the vote for the destruction of dingos. At present, the vote is not administered. It is supposed to be administered by the Department of Agriculture, but that department has absolutely no control over it. A justice of the peace gives a certificate to a man who brings in the scalps, and the Treasury pays on that certificate, while the Department of Agriculture has absolutely no control over it. But if this Bill became law, and it is modelled somewhat on the New South Wales Pastoralist Protection Act, the local boards would administer the Act and the vote in connection with dingos, and would tax people who are at present contributing in no way towards the destruction of dingos. There may be no time this session, but I trust the Government will submit the Bill to the House next session. The Brands Bill was passed last Parliament, but I recognised there were many defects in it, and promised that an amendment would be brought forward this year, when members would have an opportunity of discussing them; and on that understanding the Bill was passed. I endeavoured to carry out that promise, and when I left office there was a Bill almost prepared by the Parliamentary Draftsman and almost ready for submission to this Chamber. I am sorry to see it is not proposed to bring it forward this session, because I am sure that in its present ineffective state the Act will be a source of trouble.



**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Why not introduce it yourself?

**HON. J. M. DREW:** I fully expected the Government would have brought it forward. I have not a copy of the measure. It should be brought forward now. There should be no loss of time. Several members in this House are prepared to pass an intelligent opinion on the Bill, and I recognise there will be a lot of trouble unless the Act is amended. I am glad it is proposed to amend the Electoral Act, and I trust the amendment will take the form of the abolition of postal voting, or a very serious reform of that system. There have been gross scandals in connection with the postal voting in our district and gross abuses of the system. I have known postal voting officers to drive around the country and openly solicit votes, and in some cases to intimidate people. One might say, why not prosecute them? But it is impossible to get people to come forward and give evidence. They do not like to appear in a court of law as informers. I think the remedy is the abolition of the system or a very serious amendment in order to prevent the abuses that occur on all sides. I do not think I shall say very much on the subject of Bills. The Speech seems to be very cleverly drawn; and I think we shall have to wait until the details come before the House. I hope the business in this Chamber will be speedily prosecuted, and that we shall be able to terminate our labours before Christmas.

**HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (South):** I wish first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your return to the State in good health. We are very glad to see you back again. I also wish to congratulate our old leader, Hon. W. Kingsmill, on being reappointed to the office. I am sure he need have no fear but that he has the confidence of the House and that we will give him the same good treatment we gave him before. I am glad to see that the gold export has been noticed in the Speech; and I have no reason to view with alarm the pessimistic reports made by some of the engineers who have recently visited the State. I look with a more hopeful view on the mining industry here; and although Mr. Hoover, of Bewick, Moreing, & Co., a recent visitor, said that he thought that unless there were fresh discoveries the yield would

fall, I have an idea that as we go along we shall find cheaper methods of treating low-grade ores, which will maintain our output. We have heard these alarming reports before. We have gone through slumps and booms; and there have been periods during the history of Kalgoorlie, for instance, in which many of our mines have looked very gloomy; in fact, some of them have almost threatened to peter out; but at the eleventh hour a new lode has been discovered, and we find the mines again in a flourishing condition. I think that there are great possibilities that these fresh discoveries will continue. This time last year, for instance, the Associated Mine was looked upon as a foregone hope. The lodes were under the value of payable ore, but to-day they have made a discovery of a new lode, and the shares have nearly doubled in value, and the mine shows prospects of a very long life. The recent additions to mining machinery have shown us that we can treat very low grade ores at a profit; and not only that, but there are mines at the north end of Kalgoorlie, which a little while ago were looked upon as barren, that have recently been taken up and machinery put on them, and they are to-day producing gold. I certainly think that there is a good time in front of this State as a gold producer; also as a producer of other minerals. For that reason I have to heartily congratulate the present Government for the proposal whereby they intend to assist the prospector. I quite recognise it is necessary to go on prospecting in this country, and any assistance the Government can give the prospector will be heartily welcomed by the Eastern Goldfields and also by the North-East Goldfields. One way in which they can assist the mining community is by giving us cheaper water. I am glad to notice in the Speech that it is intended to extend the water scheme beyond Kalgoorlie. We are now paying very high prices for water, and it is only by extending the system to other centres that we will get the reduction we desire. I am sure the scheme will always be a boon to us. It has been to the present. It has assisted us by reducing costs; and by still cheaper water we will still farther reduce the cost of mining. With reference to the reports which have recently ap-

peared about our mining industry, I do not think that sufficient notice has been taken of the recent discoveries. For instance, there is a new district known as Davyhurst, where the Golden Pole is situated. There are only one or two mines operating there; but for the lode the mining engineers who have visited that district aver that there are very great possibilities. I hope that the Government will see fit to run a spur line out for 30 miles from the main line to Davyhurst. It will add considerably to the advantage of that district and to the cheaper treatment of ore. There is a line of reef there seven miles long, and I suppose you can roughly estimate the whole mine as worth about eight or ten pennyweights. The majority of assays I have seen from that district come from shafts down from 100 to 200 feet, ranging from eight pennyweights to over one ounce. There are districts of that kind, and I trust the Government will see the necessity of assisting them. There is one other thing we require to consider. Many members know that when a prospector takes up a mining lease the first thing he thinks about is how to get enough to pay for his work. He goes as far as he can. I feel sure the Government must do something with regard to assisting the miner where there is water at present. At present most of the men are working their shows down to water level, and then abandoning them. They have not the funds to provide expensive pumps or winding plants, and consequently they can go no farther. I know dozens of places about the Murrin and Morgans districts and Laverton and Burtville where it was pointed out very recently that those miners had sunk their shafts to 100 feet and could not go farther on account of want of capital. They have paying ore, but large pumps and the expenses of mining machinery will be beyond them. It will be for the Government to establish mining boards in centres like that with a view of letting to these men a pump or assisting them in the direction of getting one, and I feel sure it will repay the Government by opening up the industry. We all regard the gold-mining industry as a staple industry of this State. There is no other industry in the world that uses so much of every produce that a country

can give as does the mining industry. I am pleased to see the Government recognise that, and intend to help those men in every way possible. I notice a reference to the Port Hedland Railway. I intend to support any measure which will provide a railway line from any of the ports inland. In a great country like this that is what is required, and I think it is much better to do that kind of thing than to propose to subsidise companies. I am rather inclined to think the Government should build the line themselves. I am in favour of Government-owned railways, and we have not had a very happy experience of privately-owned railways. I think that the line is warranted and the Government could easily take the matter in hand themselves. Anyhow, for the sake of the mining industry and for the sake of development, I will support any measure that will have for its object the running of a line from the coast inland for the purpose of development. I would just like to allude to Mr. Piesse's reference with regard to spur lines. I have been in the agricultural districts in other States, and I find that good roads are often better than spur lines of railway.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Not when they have to carry agricultural produce 30 miles.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: You will see drovers in Victoria now who travel 80 and 100 miles with loads of wool and wheat.

MEMBER: Wool, not wheat.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I am not a farming expert; but I certainly think that good roads are essential to farming districts. Anyhow, I shall support the farming industry in the matter of spur lines. I always regard the representatives of the farming industry, and wherever it is possible I shall support them. I notice that the Government intend boring for artesian water, and I am glad they mean to start those bores. I feel sure there is a lot of artesian water throughout the northern portions of this country. They have it at Oodnadatta in South Australia, and in many parts of Queensland, and to my mind there is little doubt that in portions of the northern goldfields we can get artesian water. At all events, I am glad they are making the experiment, and I trust their

efforts will meet with success. I have very little farther to say, but this, that I feel sure that now there is a stable Government in power we can look forward to progress and prosperity. The former Government in power had not the majority necessary for carrying on, but now the country has given its voice and a good majority is secured, I trust we shall have the progress that I see looming ahead. I feel sure the gold-mining industry is going to improve, and with equal certainty I look forward to other industries improving.

HON. W. T. LOTON (East): I did not intend to intrude upon the House this evening, but as this is a new session, I should just like briefly to say a few words. In the first place, sir, I cannot refrain from joining with other members in saying how pleased we are to see you back in such good health. I am also glad to see the smiling members on the other side of the House, who were sick, so well supported. One hears it said that this House is inclined to be a little dilatory. I do not know whether such is the case, but I hope that we will prove at all events that it is a falsehood. The Speech of His Excellency is brief, but it contains a lot of matter. We are told in one instance that the finances require close attention. Then we are told that in order to go on developing the country the Government propose to enter the loan market for certain works. We are told, almost at the end of the Speech—

The scheme of legislation which will be laid before you during the present session will not be of large proportions.

If members will look at a clause prior to that, addressed to the Legislative Assembly, they will read:—

Expenditure from loan funds will be necessary upon the railways previously referred to; on harbour improvements, increased water supplies to the goldfields, improvements of existing and creating new stock routes, boring for artesian water in the North and North-West, and in other important directions. Improving the water supply, and the initiation of a comprehensive scheme of sewerage for the metropolitan area will shortly be commenced. You will be asked to grant a farther loan authorisation.

We have it in one clause that practically little legislation will be introduced, and in a prior clause there is a list almost as

long as one's arm. I suppose it is not intended to bring this legislation forward. It is a flowery speech. It is quite evident that at this stage they cannot seriously intend dealing with these measures. It is proposed, I understand, to practise economy. I would suggest to the Government, seeing they have been referred to as a stable Government and a strong Government representing the country and its best interests, that if they desire practising economy they should start with the Parliament first. Bring in a Bill—shall I say to do away with payment of members of Parliament? Is that too drastic for members? It would mean a saving of £16,000 a year. Perhaps it would be too drastic; but if so, be moderate and bring in a Bill to reduce the payment of members to £100 a year. Then we shall save £8,000 a year. That is one of the ways to economise, to start with. When we have a strong Government chosen to see that the money is well spent, let us start with ourselves and bring our salaries down. [MEMBER: Where are the supporters?] The work of Parliament can be easily got through in three months, and a payment of £100 per annum would be ample to meet all outside expenses of every member of Parliament during that period. So reduce the present payment. Let that be one of the first Bills. Then we shall see that they mean economy. I do not propose to deal with the details of the Bills that are suggested. There will be ample time to do so when we know a little more of their purport. But I will just refer, for instance, to spur lines of railway proposed. I have heard light lines referred to. Whatever lines of railway we have in settled districts—when I say settled districts I mean where we have railways at present, and not a railway in the North-West—one of the first proposals I should lay down is that we should not alter the gauge of the railway.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not proposed to do so.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Then another thing is we must not have our line of railway too light, because if we are to carry produce we shall have weight. Then as to the question of spur lines, it may be all very well for Mr. Piesse to ignore the fact that if we build a spur line the first 15 miles will be practically a waste

of money, as the first 15 miles can be served by the present railway; and so far as I can see at present I am not prepared to pledge myself in any way. It seems to me that going from Newcastle south, if the country is good enough and the water supply is sufficient east of our present line, the best thing to do will be to have a loop line instead of these spur lines, because the loop lines would serve a larger area of country and at less cost. If we had a spur line of railway there should be something at the end of that spur line in addition merely to agricultural land. If the line is to do nothing but serve that locality and convey the products of the soil from the inland districts, it is a very doubtful thing to my mind whether there would not be a very serious loss in the working of that railway. I do not desire to speak against opening up the country by railways, because the country cannot be opened up without them; but it is a question whether we shall be in a position to do this extra work. It may be all very well for members to get up and say that all the land within 15 or 20 miles of our present railways is taken up. So it may be. But what is the position at the present time? What work is being done upon it? To what extent is it improved? How many years will it take to develop this land already taken up within 20 miles of the railway? Not a quarter of it is developed at the present time. There is plenty of land adjacent to the railways at present wanting development, and plenty of work for people who will go on the land either for themselves or as employees.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: You try them.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Can the hon. member controvert what I say, that the land is not improved yet? That is the point. I say it is not improved. People have got it, but it will take them some years to improve it. The hon. member knows that perfectly well. He cannot run away from experienced men like those who sit in this House, such as Mr. McKenzie, for instance, from the goldfields, who knows all about it. Now with regard to the finances, we are at the close of the first six months of the financial year. If the Government are desirous of setting straight and being able to keep straight the finances of this State, they

will have, to my mind, to do what I will very shortly indicate. They will have to call Parliament together before the end of June in each year. You have then got to the end of the working year; you will have spent all you have been authorised to spend; and by calling Parliament together say before the end of June, you can have your Estimates on the table by the middle of July at all events. In this way members will be able to see the real position. Under the present system, important works such as railways may be passed from time to time before the Estimates are on the table; whereas by the plan I should prefer, members would be able to see what was the policy of the Government in regard to the finances. I say that is the only way to get control of the finances. While you go on voting, as Parliament does now, a quarter of a million in one week and another quarter of a million a week or two later, half the revenue of the year may be voted away before the Estimates are on the table. Any financial institution of magnitude, if it carried on its business in that way, would soon be financially tight, I do not say bankrupt, but in an inconvenient position, probably unable to carry on for the year; and I must say that except for the leniency of Parliament, the Government would not have been able to carry on in the way that has been attempted during the last two years, and has been proposed again this session. It may be time for the House to seriously consider whether members should not stop the voting of money before the Estimates are considered. I have spoken plainly on the matter, not for any other than the interests of the country. Of course the Government know all about these things—they always do; and I hope that next year we shall have the Estimates placed on the table early, before we are asked to vote considerable sums of money. There is one other point, in regard to the railway for opening the North-West. Thesecond of the Address-in-Reply spoke against the proposal, and some other members have spoken against it this evening. Have the Government considered that in starting from Port Hedland they will first have to traverse 90 or 100 miles of sandplain? I do not know what traffic can be expected from

country of that sort; whereas in starting from the other place the line will go through auriferous country the whole way, and will also serve pastoral stations that will bring some traffic.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** There are stations on the proposed route, and they will all send stock.

**HON. W. T. LOTON:** I understand it is proposed to build this railway according to the standard of Government lines; not by the Government, but under a system of guarantee. I understand the Minister will ask Parliament to guarantee the interest on the cost of construction, with a right to purchase at cost price. It appears to me that if this line is to be constructed, it should not be on the expensive scale of a Government railway; because if it is found in the course of ten years that there is no permanent necessity for the railway, the Government will not buy it. It may in the meantime have served its purpose, and if built at a less cost there will be less risk of loss.

**HON. J. W. WRIGHT:** How about the guarantee then? How long will it last?

**HON. W. T. LOTON:** I am considering the matter as an ordinary business man would do, and these are points that require consideration. I do not know of course how long the guarantee will last, and we have yet to see whether Parliament will agree to a guarantee. We must ask ourselves first, what is the line to be built for? If it is to start from Port Hedland, it will be for one purpose only, that of serving the mineral industry, or a portion of it as a member interjects; but if it goes the other way it will be more permanent. I am not pledging myself, but only alluding to these points in order that the Government in their wisdom, and of course Governments are always wise, may consider them. With these remarks I support the Address.

**HON. W. MALEY (South-East):** I wish first to join in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your return to the Chair, and I concur in the hope that you will long continue your useful career in this House and in this country. The question that appears to me to be the most burning one at present is that of building agricultural railways. Members who have spoken on it seem to have been reading something outside the Speech;

for if we take the Speech as printed, it simply says:—

In order to provide farther necessary facilities for the successful occupation of those agricultural lands situated at some distance from our present railway system, it is the intention of my advisers to seek the consent of Parliament to the construction of several agricultural lines from various points on the existing railways. It is realised that the construction of these light lines, whilst proving of great assistance to the settlers already on the land, will also encourage additional settlement in the districts referred to.

I see here no reference whatever to railways for the Great Southern District, and I understand that some members in their remarks mean that the most important agricultural district of the State is alongside the Great Southern Railway. If, then, these agricultural areas stand out with such prominence, and if the Government proposal is to construct those railways inside that province which I have the honour to represent with my able colleague for the South-East, those railways should be constructed. But, on the other hand, one is not so parochial nor is it desirable to disguise the fact that there are other districts, agricultural, pastoral, and grazing, where such products as cherries, fruits, and fodder plants may be profitably grown, and there is always justification for the extension of railways in such districts. I am not here as an advocate for the Great Southern District in the proposal to construct spur lines in that province. I am satisfied that hon. members in another place and in this House, if they travel as the Minister has travelled recently through that part of the country, will discover abundant reasons why those railways should be constructed, not as an experiment but as a necessity, and as a farther extension of lines that have almost passed the period of experiment; and that country is one which lends itself to rapid development. It has been said that the building of these railways is to be an experiment; and while the cost of construction as indicated here to-night ranges from £700 to £1,000 per mile, that should not be a dangerous experiment; for if we construct 25 to 50 miles of railway at £1,000 per mile as an experiment, how will that compare with the giving of £40,000 for building a town hall in Perth as a gift to wealthy citizens? These are the facts, that £40,000

would construct some 50 miles of railway—putting it at the price quoted. If the Government are to hesitate for the want of funds in the direction of the construction of railways, if the Government are to put back the hands of the clock or stop the progress of settlement, then they ought also to stop the construction of other works that are not necessary for the upbuilding of the State. When once the country is settled it enables a fixed population to remain on the soil. With the question of railway construction comes the question of immigration. What is the most prominent question at the present time, which is the greater need, immigration or railway construction? In the face of what has happened lately—the condition of politics in the State—the Government cannot bring forward an immigration policy unless they tack on to it a railway construction policy. If the Government were to build one spur line and it settled a number of people on the soil, that would add to the wealth of the country. It would mean the placing on the soil of a number of persons who would help to bear the burdens of the State. The croakers and pessimists could not raise their voices, or put obstacles in the way. I trust this House and another place will proceed with the proposed measures, and that the Government in this instance will have the work done. I am pleased to say, while I recognise the James Government were the first to move in the direction of opening up agricultural lands, the Labour Government who were in power expressed themselves in approval of that particular railway in my province, which I think was suggested in the Governor's Speech, that is the railway from Katanning to Kojonup. The Minister for Lands at that time (Mr. Drew) toured the district and made himself acquainted not only with the district itself but with the wonderful energy of the people. Perhaps there are some of the most energetic people in that district in the State. I say advisedly there are no people with more energy or who have evinced so much energy as the people in the Kojonup district. When members are told that 20 miles out from the railway we saw one of the biggest shows in the State, bigger than any of the shows along the railway lines, they

will understand that the country there is not possessed of ordinary wealth, that it possesses a climate and advantages which perhaps no other part of the State possesses in the same degree. The question of loop lines is one to which I am not particularly wedded. I am not here to-night to advocate spur lines particularly; still I am not wedded to loop lines. I recognise this is an immense State and we have to allow for expansion, and if we construct a loop line and make it parallel with the Great Southern line or any other railway line, where is the expansion to take place in the future? Your loop line ends practically your railway system. If as is reported at the present time on the Great Southern Railway the gold industry is springing up, for they have discovered gold east of Pingelly, provision must be made for it, and these things can occur in other parts of the State. Other minerals may be found, and it may be necessary to construct railways farther east or farther north as the case may be. If that takes place and there is a loop line, that loop line will be found in the way; but if the Government construct a spur line with a view to settlement, they can push out the population at the end of the line, and it may then be found that the spur line will require to be added to. I am not opposed to any loop lines, for they are necessary in connection with other railways, but it is a moot point whether we should accept the advice of railway experts whose knowledge of agriculture and whose connection with politics do not warrant us in listening to their views. In regard to the grazing leases which are not now being allotted, I say I highly approve of the country disposing of its public asset at the earliest possible moment to people who will put it to use. There are large areas in this country, I was on some last week, and the old settlers there assured me that there were large areas of second and third class land suitable only for grazing purposes. If these lands are to lie idle and people come here and go away to the Eastern States again disgusted at the Government refusing to allow them to settle on the land, it is time the regulations under which the Lands Department is supposed to be acting be insisted upon. The land is lying idle, without any occupants at all, kangaroos are run-

ning over it and it is really a waste. One may travel for 30 miles through country that ought to be put to account at once. Not only is it suitable for grazing but there is water in pools in the vicinity. I want to see the Government inducing people to settle on this country. What is the price of the land to the country as long as the improvements are carried out? What is it to the country to have rabbits coming in here as they are coming and this land unoccupied? It is a great deal to the country: it means that the Government have practically to undertake the work of keeping back the rabbits. Again it means putting up farther lines of fencing. It will be a sad thing for the country if people are not allowed to go into occupation. If the land is occupied and fenced it is a great asset to the country, for the settlers are producers of revenue. In regard to the poison referred to by Mr. Dempster, I am surprised that I should be left to bring before the House the necessity for dealing with the poison. Every member of the House engaged in agriculture will realise that one of the greatest drawbacks to agriculture or stock-raising in the State is the poison, yet we find not only are the Government holding large areas of poison country, but the roads already fenced by the settlers for hundreds of miles at a stretch are infested with poison. Hundreds of sheep were lost in a day only recently in travelling along the roads. Every effort should be made to rid the roads districts of this nuisance. I advocate the appointment of a board to deal with this nuisance, or that the roads boards be empowered to levy a rate and that the Government insist that the roads board in every district should keep the roads clear of poison. I hope that necessary legislation will be brought forward to enable this to be done, or the loss to capital and to the State will increase year by year. We are advancing in agriculture: we have heard to-night about the arrangement to be made at Fremantle for the export of wheat, that is a sign of the times; but there will be other articles to be exported, there will be the export of bacon. A factory is being opened in this State by one of the largest bacon exporters in the Commonwealth. Then there will be the export of butter and lambs. Every member

engaged in agriculture will feel it his duty to advocate the best appointments for the handling of grain and the handling of stock and for shipping at our ports; and we all recognise the value of Fremantle, of Geraldton, and Albany, and of the other ports in the State, even Port Hedland. I hope I shall do nothing to obstruct the growth of the port of Fremantle. I said when I first entered the Chamber and I say it to-night, that the time is coming, as Captain Laurie said, when we should enlarge the port of Fremantle. But we must know before we venture on any farther enlargements of that port what is the best scheme of enlargement, or whether the country will stand it. We want to know when the limit of expenditure in connection with the port of Fremantle has been reached or will be reached. We must have our limit in the direction of harbour construction. I say this in no carping spirit, but in the interests of the State. As far as mining is concerned I am satisfied that with the price of labour at the present time it is somewhat difficult to make certain proposition pay. It is not only the price of labour, but, as already has been stated, facilities should be given for railway transit to mining centres. There must be increased facilities, and realising that I say I have great hope in the future of the mining industry. I do not say that wages should be so much reduced but that better methods and better conveniences should be employed for the treatment of low-grade ores and for the carriage of machinery. I am satisfied that with careful leadership on the part of the Government and careful attention to the finances and with careful attention to the questions which have been brought before the House to-night, and with the stable Government such as we have, we are going to win the confidence of many people in the Eastern States, we are going to win the confidence again of the British capitalist, for we cannot dispense with the British capitalist. We have had perhaps less British capital in Western Australia for its size than any other State in the Commonwealth. It is recognised we have wonderful resources, and I am satisfied that in the next two or three years, if the helm of the State is properly steered, we shall have very good

times and make very good progress throughout the country and the State, and we shall also prosper and flourish. I am pleased to support the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

HON. E. McLARTY (South-West):

It is not my intention to take up much time, as the Governor's Speech has been pretty fully discussed. I desire, Mr. President, to offer you my congratulations, in common with other members, on seeing you back in your place in this House. I note with pleasure that the Government propose to build farther agricultural railways. An hon. member has said to-night that he has seen wheat carted for 80 miles in this State. I pity the farmer who carted it, even if it were given to him. If we take the price of the wheat at 3s. per bushel, and take the ordinary load at 70 bushels, that load would cost 10 guineas to cart to market. Such a cost will not permit of many days' travelling with a team sufficiently strong to take the load over bush tracks. Therefore I think it is apparent, if we are to open up the agricultural lands of the country and to create an export trade in wheat, that we must have railway facilities. At the same time, I perceive that great caution will be needed in building spur railways. There will be a tremendous demand for them from all parts of the country; and the Government will have to be very careful indeed in the selection of localities to be favoured by railways of whatever description may be decided on. For my own part, I think it questionable whether it is worth while departing at all from the present system of railway construction; whether, if we are to have spur railways 20 or 30 miles in length, it is worth while to construct a different kind of railway or one of lighter material, necessitating different rolling-stock at a considerable difference in cost. At the same time, I am under the impression that we shall have ample opportunity during the next session of Parliament to discuss the spur lines; for it is utterly impossible that the Government can carry out immediately all the works mentioned in this very short Governor's Speech. At the present time we have what I suppose I may call a spur line branching from the Great Southern Railway; and I should prefer to see the Government continue that line as

originally intended, instead of stopping half way between Narrogin and Collie. The Narrogin to Collie railway has already been authorised by Parliament, and has been commenced; and I think the Government would act wisely by finishing the work already begun, by continuing that line to Collie. Then again, we require railways not only in the interests of agriculture, but of agriculture and other industries combined. In the South-West District that I have the honour of representing, we had a survey authorised by Parliament and made a few years ago, at a cost to the country of about £4,000; and it was demonstrated beyond doubt that we have a practicable route, with no engineering defects to speak of. That line has never yet been begun. The route traverses what is admitted, I think on all sides, to be one of the best untouched timber forests in the State. That line is fully justified; and I hope the Government will take steps to construct some portion of it, thus giving employment to a large number of men now travelling the roads and starving. I refer to the Marradong Railway. Undoubtedly scores of men are travelling about the country, simply starving and unable to get employment; and I should like to see some timber lines started, because there is plenty of work, and the cry wherever I go, from sleeper-hewers and people wishing to put down saw mills, is that they are unable to obtain concessions and facilities for carrying on their industry. I am quite sure that 20 miles of that Marradong Railway would be immediately reproductive. I know several companies with ample means prepared to work mills as soon as they have a guarantee that they can get their timber carried away; and hundreds of men will be employed. That is what the State needs; and the railway will, moreover, benefit a considerable number of settlers who have been somewhat misled by previous Governments, on the strength of the survey of this line, and the practical assurance that it would be constructed. On that assurance a considerable area of land has been taken up and settled, and the people bitterly complain that they have not the facilities to which they are entitled. Another railway which for years I have strongly favoured is the



Nullagine Railway. From what point on the seaboard that should start is a matter which will, as was said to-night, need very careful investigation; but I am not in accord with Mr. Randell's argument that the work should not be undertaken by private enterprise. I think, if there is one railway that we may safely leave to private enterprise, it is the Nullagine Railway. It will have no connection with any other railway system in the State; and in our present financial position, I feel sure that if they wait till the Government are prepared to build about 200 miles of railway in that district—a very costly undertaking—the people of Nullagine will wait for many years before they see a railway at all. The district is languishing, and the people are living there only in the hope of railway facilities. I am entirely in accord with leaving the construction of the line to private enterprise. Mention has been made of the omission from the Speech of any proposal for a dock at Fremantle. That work has been referred to in a number of Speeches; and I think the Government have acted wisely in this connection, considering our financial position, in leaving the proposal out of this session's programme; for it is quite certain they are not prepared to undertake it. I am quite in accord with Captain Laurie that when a dock is constructed at Fremantle the country wants it to be a proper dock; and I should prefer the country to wait for two or three years, or longer, until we are in a position to construct such a dock as is needed for the first port of call in Australia. The matter of immigration is mentioned in successive Speeches almost every year. It is always gratifying to find that we are about to get a class of immigrants who have plenty of money in their pockets, and are prepared to settle on the land and force the country ahead. I see in the paragraph referring to immigration that "no effort will be spared to secure a class of immigrants who will become contented, prosperous settlers amongst us, and a valuable addition to the community." If we can obtain immigrants of that class, we shall hail with great satisfaction their introduction to the State; but I think there will be considerable difficulty in getting them.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We are already getting them.

HON. E. McLARTY: I am glad to hear it. I do not generally find that class of people anxious to leave their homes. Mention is made in the Speech of opening up and improving the stock routes to the North. That matter is of great importance to the whole of this country; and I hope the Government will keep it well to the fore, and give better facilities for watering and for travelling stock. Boring for artesian water will have to be undertaken. There is no question that we have hundreds of thousands of acres of good pastoral country in the North not being utilised, simply because it is waterless. When we get a dry season such as we are now unfortunately experiencing, that is the very country on which we should be able to rely. It has stock feed that will carry stock through a dry season; but we are unable to make use of that country because it has no water. It will be very important to prove whether artesian water does or does not exist there. I do not think that the whole cost of providing water should fall on the Government. I have a little interest there; and I do not think that those associated with me, and the squatters generally, will object to paying their share, or to going on with the work themselves, if the Government will demonstrate that water is procurable by boring. We want to know whether water is available; and I hope the Government will come to the rescue, and give all possible assistance. The Aborigines Bill is one which for some time we have been anticipating, and it is now on the Notice Paper. I think I may compliment the Government on the measure, which, while it will afford every protection to the aborigines, seems to be very fair in other respects. The Speech generally is one which I am sure will commend itself to members; but I can assure the Government that great responsibilities rest upon them. The whole country is looking forward to quite a new era of prosperity. All feel great confidence; and it rests with the Government to show that they are worthy of the trust reposed in them by the country. Mention is made also of the Brands Act passed last session. There is no doubt that is a very unsatisfactory measure. It was practically rushed through at the last moment, when I think few of those interested in the matter were

present; and I should like to see it amended. There is undoubtedly plenty of room for its amendment. I do not know that I need take up any more time, save by congratulating the Government and hoping that all the good things expected of them may be realised.

HON. C. SOMMERS (North-East) : Like other members, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your restoration to health, and hope that you will long be spared to occupy your high and honourable position. I see it is prophesied that we shall have a short session; and I for one am quite agreeable. I think it but right that the present Government should have the chance of looking into various departments which must be in great disorder. We know that during the last 12 months Ministerial attention to detail has not been accorded. The Speech congratulates the country on the progress of mining, pastoral, and other industries as of a gratifying nature. As regards the development of mining, I for one cannot agree with the statement. It is well known that the development of mining is not of a gratifying nature. The yields are decreasing; we have had no new mines of any importance opened up for several years. The great body of prospectors we have had in the past are men who have faced great hardships and endured all sorts of privations in attempting to discover payable mines. Those men are diminishing very rapidly indeed in numbers; nor can we wonder that their numbers are diminishing, because they have not had the support warranted by their energies. They should have been supported; and until they are supported the mining industry cannot progress. The people of the State have recently been addressed by a great authority, Mr. Hoover, though we must take his utterances with a grain of salt, and he looks from a rather gloomy point of view on the state of mining. Nevertheless, there is a great deal in what he says. The prospector spends his money; and by the time he discovers something capable of development, he finds that his money is exhausted. He has no means of paying fees, rents, etcetera; he goes into centres of population, and endeavours to secure monetary support. If he cannot get it, he loses his labour. I should like to see some new mining regulations dealing

with prospectors. I should say that the prospector, taking up a claim, should for the first year be altogether free of rent, save some nominal fee for registration. Then I should say, if he put in a month's labour for the first year, that should be sufficient. From what I know of prospectors, if a prospector's funds warrant it, he will continue to prospect. But very often, after a month's prospecting, he finds his little store of money becoming exhausted. If my proposal were adopted, he could then do what is done in other countries—work for somebody else. I believe that is the custom in some of the American States, where men have held on for years, working a few months in each year earning money, and going back again to their own claims, knowing that their leases were secure so long as a month's work was done in each year. I should say that for the first two years at least, one month's compulsory work on a lease should be quite sufficient. That might result, as a member says, in locking up a good thing. But we have had thousands of leases taken up, and very few worked. That is the sole reason why so much ground is not prospected. There is not sufficient encouragement, and no security of tenure. A prospector cannot leave his lease without a formal exemption from the warden. I should like to mention a case which quite recently came under my notice. The Mines Department officers say they are endeavouring in every possible manner to assist the prospector. I know a little company, composed partly of capitalists in a small way and partly of working miners, the one part putting in their labour and the other part supplying capital. After spending £700 cash and putting in an equal value in labour, the funds of the little company ran out. The company asked for three months' exemption; and after that period had expired they could not agree as to the manner in which they would carry on with a view to winding up and reconstructing, so they applied for a farther extension of three months, which I regret to say was refused. The lease was lying unprotected for a few days, and was jumped. An appeal was lodged against the warden's decision, and it came before the Minister, who would not interfere. That little company which had asked for only six months' exemption

in all, which was flatly refused by the warden on the second occasion, had to let the mine go by the board. There is no security of tenure in such cases, and such an incident could not happen in any other country than Western Australia. We must, therefore, give more assistance in the way of reducing the labour conditions on leases. With regard to public batteries, they have been doing good work, but the charges ought to be lower. I notice, however, there is a considerable loss on the working. Another thing is that prospectors getting below water-level find that the rate for crushing is not payable, and in many cases the lease is thrown up and the prospectors try elsewhere. I think that consideration should be shown by reducing the charges for crushing ore from below water-level, as compared with charges for ore obtained above water-level, so as to enable prospectors to obtain some pumping gear for reducing the water. Also, in many districts where it does not pay to have a large battery, it would be well if such districts were tried first with small batteries, say 3-head batteries, such as are used for prospecting purposes in Victoria. These would be sufficient to test some outcrops in the early stages of working, and when it was found that a larger battery was warranted in any particular case the smaller plant could easily be removed to another district where it would be useful. In that way we should enable prospectors in outlying districts to have their leases tested. The extension of the water scheme to outlying districts on the goldfields, where this is warranted, would be very beneficial, for there are many places where the water could be usefully applied, although of course money would have to be expended. In the case of Menzies, for instance, many small mines are hung up for want of water, and I think an extension of the water scheme to Menzies would be a good work, as every place on the route could also be supplied. That question will have to be considered; for as the whole of the pumping machinery is available, it is only necessary to expend money in extending the pipes. I think short lines might be extended with great benefit in many mining districts. Mention has been made about the abolition of payment of members. This

is a delicate subject which I brought up in a previous session, and Dr. Hackett made some amusing remarks on my motion. Still, I think the abolition of payment of members for this House would be popular in the country, and I intend to bring the matter up again, although I would rather see such payment abolished entirely. With regard to sewerage for the Perth and Fremantle districts, this is the more necessary when we are attempting to get increased population, for I think we have only to look at the death-rate to see how seriously it is affected by the drainage question. Looking to the whole world for examples, I know of many places not nearly so important as Perth and Fremantle that have had a sewerage system for many years, and the time has surely arrived when we should have it here. With regard to bringing down the Estimates earlier, so as to deal more effectively with the finances, I know it is a difficult matter; but a change in this direction is urgently needed. The expenditure for the present year, as an example, has been going on since June practically unauthorised, I may say illegally; for if works are not being carried out that have been authorised, they ought to be. I know that in many cases works which cost twice as much in winter cannot conveniently be done in summer because the Estimates are not passed earlier; and I can mention cases in which the cost of particular works has been increased as much as 40 per cent. through delay in passing the Estimates. Say the Estimates are passed by Christmas; it is probably the February following before contracts can be arranged for carrying out the works; and of course contractors must increase the price for works carried out in winter, as compared with the price for such works carried out when the ground is not so hard. For that reason alone, I trust that an effort will be made in future sessions to have the Estimates dealt with earlier. Something has been said about poison lands and the loss caused to the country. I do trust that the Government, in dealing with cases of this kind, will be considerate; for I know one gentleman who has spent something like £20,000 during three years in attempting to eradicate poison on land he has taken up. In

doing this he has shown that the country is good and will carry stock ; yet because an inspector comes along and finds a few poison plants still in existence on the ground, he will not give a certificate that poison has been eradicated. That happens often in places where thousands of head of stock are running and only a poison plant here and there can be discovered. These are practically the waste lands of the country, and as long as the holders are willing to work and develop them, it is an object lesson to surrounding occupiers in showing how the land can be successfully treated. In conclusion, I agree particularly with the last lines in the Governor's Speech :—

I confidently trust that, aided by divine guidance, you will materially advance the well-being of the State.

I do trust that only legislation of the most urgent character will be attempted in this session, and that we will endeavour to get through before Christmas.

HON. W. PATRICK : I move that the debate be adjourned till to-morrow.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	...	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	...	12

Majority against ... 5

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. H. Briggs
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. T. F. O. Brimage
Hon. R. D. McKenzie	Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. W. Patrick	Hon. W. Kingsmill
Hon. J. A. Thomson	Hon. J. W. Langford
Hon. J. W. Wright	Hon. W. T. Lorton
Hon. C. E. Dempster	Hon. W. Maley
(Teller).	Hon. M. L. Moss
	Hon. C. A. Pesse
	Hon. G. Randell
	Hon. C. Sommers
	Hon. E. McLarty (Teller).

Motion thus negatived, and the debate continued.

HON. W. PATRICK (Central) : Allow me, along with other members who have spoken, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your return to the State in health and strength, and to express a hope that you may long continue to occupy the position which in the past you have held with such fairness, courtesy, and dignity. I think we may say that this Speech, although not very long, is a kind of *multum in parvo*—a great deal in little. In dimensions it is of the most modest character, but at the same time it contains an immense amount of matter. I can congratulate the Gov-

ernment on the splendid majority they received at the last election, but I do not intend to dilate on this subject. Personally I consider the result very satisfactory, and evidently the country is of the same opinion. I agree with a great proportion of the sentiments expressed in the Speech, and I will support the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. There is the paragraph stating that

The development of mining, agricultural, pastoral, and other industries is of the most gratifying nature.

Of course I know that in a Governor's Speech there is usually a considerable amount of what one might call padding, and as far as I can remember this same sentence was in the last Governor's Speech, and I said in the few words which I uttered on that occasion that the development of mining was not of a satisfactory character. I repeat that sentiment on the present occasion. I do not think that in a country such as this, with an area greater than the whole of New South Wales and four times as great as the whole of Victoria, mining can be considered to be in a satisfactory condition when as regards progress it has been practically at a standstill for the last two years. That is the present position, and I consider it is the duty of the Government to inquire the reason why this condition of things exists. There must be a reason for it. It is not, of course, that we have not immense areas of undeveloped auriferous country, because everyone knows we have immense areas of undeveloped country. There must, I say, be some reason, and it is the duty of the Government to find out why there is no progress or why it is going backward as far as our gold-mining industry is concerned. I have no doubt they will give this subject the attention it deserves. Whilst there is no doubt whatever that the agricultural and pastoral industries have made very great progress—immense progress within the last two or three years—I am not aware that the statistics show that other industries have made any great progress. It is a notorious fact that manufacturing of all kinds in this State at present is practically at a standstill. There is no doubt whatever about that, and the reason of this condition of things in reference to manufacturing might be inquired into,

although the manufacturing industry up to the present time is not of very great consequence to the State. In reference to the copper smelter at Ravensthorpe, before crowing very much over this matter I think we ought to know the whole of the particulars in connection with the copper industry at Ravenssthorpe. I would like to utter a word of warning in reference to the copper industry. I have had a considerable amount of experience as far as owning copper mines is concerned, and my experience is that copper up to between £70 and £80 per ton to-day might be down to £40 in about six months. The present position of the price of copper is quite an abnormal one. The same price occurred during what was called the French Syndicate some eight or ten years ago, and it also occurred about three or four years ago. In both cases copper fell within a few months to the neighbourhood of £40, and people who bought copper at the inflated prices in many cases lost thousands of pounds. I understand the Government are the buyers of the copper ore, and they ought to be very careful as to the price they pay for the ore at the present time. Again—

The agricultural prospects of the State continue to improve day by day. Land settlement goes steadily forward, while the prospects of the coming harvest are satisfactory.

There is no doubt whatever that agriculture is making great progress in this State. I would like to remind hon. gentlemen that one of the greatest agricultural districts in this State exists in the province which I have the honour to represent, and I may say that district has not hitherto received anything like the attention it deserves so far as the development of agriculture is concerned. I do not altogether agree with my honourable colleague Mr. Drew, because I think that when they talk about the construction of several agricultural lines from various points on the existing railway we have a right to assume that some of those spur lines will be built in the North. If five or six spur lines are built say about Perth, one or two may be built in the North. There is another line of railway which I think ought to be built at a very early date. It is also a spur line. I do not know very well

whether we can include it in the agricultural spur railways or not, but I think we may safely say so, because recently the Director of Agriculture told us that wheat was grown at Lennonville. I think he mentioned this fact before the Tariff Commission. I am not at all of opinion that it will be possible to grow wheat satisfactorily at Lennonville, that is about 300 miles east of Geraldton; but as this statement was made by Mr. Chapman, I think we may safely say we should also build another agricultural spur line, and at the same time develop one of the most promising goldfields in the State at the present moment, on the Black Range. We should build a railway from Magnet to Black Range, and I think we may safely assume, as the Government have not defined exactly how or where these spur lines are to be built, that at least two of them should be built in the Northern Province, and I can assure the Government they will get the undivided support of members representing the Central Province who urge this matter. In reference to land settlement, I was very pleased at the remarks made by my friend Mr. Piesse as to settlement of lands already alienated or in process of alienation, and the Government might well see that the conditions are fulfilled. The great bulk of the land that has been alienated for agricultural settlement has been alienated within the last few years. According to the regulations, people are entitled to take ten years to finish their improvements, and until the ten years have elapsed, provided that in the meantime the Government inspectors do their duty, there should be an enormous development during that period in the State of Western Australia. I think the Government have no reason to grumble at the development so far in the agricultural districts. I can say regarding the agricultural district in which the Central Province is situated that development, so far as they are allowed to develop, is going on at a very rapid rate at the present time, and I would just like to draw the attention of the Government, whilst mentioning this matter, to the fact that I think they ought, seeing that the deal with the Midland Railway Company has passed off, to take steps to throw open country on the Midland line at present belonging

to the Government. I understand that there is a considerable area, at least 100,000 acres, of first-class land belonging to the Government, which has hitherto been held back on the dog-in-the-manger principle, because no Government has been prepared to buy the Midland Railway; and seeing that the deal has passed off, the sooner the land is offered for sale by the Government, I think the better it will be for the interests of the State. In that case we require to construct no railway, because it is already built. We are informed that the question of immigration in connection with the development of our agricultural resources is receiving the most earnest attention of His Excellency's advisers, and that no effort will be spared to secure a class of immigrants who will become contented and prosperous settlers amongst us, and a valuable addition to our community. I quite agree with the policy of the Government in regard to immigration. I consider it the greatest question before Australia at the present moment. The most melancholy piece of literature I have read was in the Budget Speech Sir John Forrest delivered before the Federal Parliament during the present session. The Federal Treasurer drew attention to the fact that since Federation was inaugurated Australia had lost some four or five hundred of her native-born population by emigration, a most depressing condition of things. It is no use bringing people here if they are going to leave. There must be some very serious reason; and it is a matter which deserves our very careful thought and consideration; because while tens of thousands are going to Canada and to Argentina, the native-born population of this magnificent country of Australia is going abroad. If ever we are going to build up a great nation in Australia—and I believe that we will—we must have, not four millions, but forty millions of white men and women. There is plenty of room for them. In reference to the class of immigrants, I will never forget a conversation I had on an Atlantic steamer with a Canadian immigration agent, who was on his way to England at the time. I asked him what was the best kind of immigrant to settle on the land; and he said, "We do not care a straw what the men and women have been

before they come to Canada. If they are willing to come and take the risk of immigration, we can depend that these men and women intend to make homes in Canada." He pointed out that in the province of Ontario, one of the most successful farming properties was owned by 50 or 60 men in what was named the Paisley Block, because they were composed of Paisley men who came there with no ideas of farming, but were willing to work. I think that we are quite safe in leaving in the hands of the present administration the finances of the State. They say that they can carry on without retrenchment and without additional taxation. Of course they must improve their administration to do that. Economical administration in every department is of paramount importance. I think that in one department alone there is room for attention; and I have no doubt that the Government are aware that the Railway Department, which I understand has been for some time losing money, needs attention. At any rate, any public department that gives services to the public, such as the Railway Department, should not be run at a penny of a loss. The Government are going in for farther loan authorisations for development in every direction. I quite agree with Mr. Randell that borrowing is a bad thing. In private life the less money we borrow the less we have to repay in return; and the same thing applies to the State. I did not agree with Mr. Randell when he said that if we had not borrowed we would have had the £600,000 paid in interest to spend on works, because the greater portion of that money has been earned by the £16,000,000 already borrowed. I take up the position that, so long as the money is efficiently spent so as to return sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund, there is no danger whatever in borrowing. In such a great State as Western Australia, there is tremendous room for the judicious expenditure of foreign capital. I think Mr. Randell referred to the fact that the United States of America never borrowed any money. Of course, there are different ways of borrowing money. The greater portion of borrowed money in Australia has been by the State. In the United States about a hundred years ago

they did borrow some money; and as far as I can remember from reading history, they forgot to repay it. At any rate, in some of the Southern States they did borrow money. [HON. G. RANDALL: And repaid it with greenbacks.] Every year America sends to England from eighty to a hundred millions sterling more than is sent from England. In other words, America pays eighty to a hundred millions a year in interest on money borrowed from the old country. A large proportion of the development of the United States of America has been carried out by means of capital obtained from Great Britain. All the American stocks are stocks held in the old country. It all comes to the same thing, whether we borrow through the bank or through the State. I quite agree with the statement "that close attention to administration is of greater importance at present than adding to the statute-book;" and I believe that the Government will carry out their promise in that direction. With reference to the state of the rolls at the recent elections, there is no doubt that an alteration is needed in the Electoral Act; and I think the chief alteration should be, as suggested by Mr. Drew, the abolition of postal voting. There is bound to be a great deal of nonsense talked about the number of people struck off the roll—about 40,000, it is said. As a matter of fact, at the previous election there were apparently about three-fourths of the population on the rolls, which was perfectly absurd. I know one election where, if the people had been counted, the number on the roll would have been more than the total population. The number on the roll in that electorate was reduced by a thousand, and I think it can still be reduced by several hundreds. If one looks at the population of the State and at the present number on the rolls, there is no doubt that though a good many were left off, there are still many names that have no right to be there. If any citizen of the State does not take sufficient interest in the affairs of the State to see that his name is put on the rolls according to his qualification, he has no business to be assisted in getting his name on the roll. At the last elections I knew several people whose names were not on the roll but who were entitled to have votes. They

were men in prominent positions and who would have voted for the Government supporters. Every man and woman entitled to vote should see that their names are on the rolls so that they may vote as citizens on the affairs of the State.

On motion by HON. R. D. MCKENZIE, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.43 o'clock, until the next day.

### Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 29th November, 1905.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Annual Report of Public Library for year ended June, 1905.

By the MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND LABOUR: Amended Regulations under the Workers' Compensation Act, 1902.

#### QUESTION—MINING INSPECTIONS.

MR. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has he at any time during his present term of office received information bearing out the statement made by Mr. Scaddan during last Parliament, that the inspectors of mines were in the