

# Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 14th November, 1911.

	PAGE
Election Returns, Pilbara and Roebourne	209
Papers presented	209
Questions: Scottish Collieries, negotiations for sale	209
Poison Lands Board, particulars, report	209
Conditional Purchases, residence and improvements	210
Railway officers' sick pay	210
Railway construction, Port Hedland-Marble Bar	210
Cattle shipment and price of meat	210
Mr. E. McLarty	211
Bills: Divorce Amendment, 1a	211
Early Closing Act Amendment, 1a	211
Address-in-reply, fifth day, conclusion	211

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## ELECTION RETURNS — PILBARA AND ROEBOURNE.

The Acting Clerk announced the return to writs issued for the election of members for the Pilbara and Roebourne electorates, showing that Rufus Henry Underwood and Joseph Peter Gardiner respectively had been elected.

Mr. R. H. Underwood and Mr. J. P. Gardiner took the oath and subscribed the roll.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Reports of the Railway Advisory Board regarding certain railway projects.

By the Minister for Justice: Regulations under Electoral Act, 1907.

## QUESTION — SCOTTISH COLLIERIES, NEGOTIATIONS FOR SALE.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that Messrs. Splatt, Wall & Co., of the Scottish Collieries, are negotiating to sell their concern to the Scottish Co-operative Collieries? 2, Is the Minister aware that under the terms of the sale Messrs. Splatt and Wall, or either of them, get sixpence per ton from the new company for all Government coal allotted to the new company? 3, Does the Minister approve of allowing individuals or companies to

barter prices and get agency fees on the coal they allot to assist local coal companies? 4, Will the Minister refuse to transfer or assign any of the contracts for coal from Scottish Collieries to the alleged Scottish Co-operative Company? 5, Will the Minister consider the advisability of stopping the local supplies to the Railway Department until above is remedied?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, I am unaware of the precise nature of the transaction. 2, I understand that this is so. 3, No. 4, Yes. 5, Yes.

## QUESTION—POISON LANDS BOARD.

### Particulars.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How long before the general election was the board of inquiry known as the Poison Commission appointed? 2, Who was the chairman of the said board of inquiry or commission? 3, Was there any statutory authority for the appointment of this board or commission? 4, If not, under what authority was the board or commission appointed and paid? 5, What amount per day was paid to the three members of this board or commission, respectively? 6, What has been the cost of this board or commission, incurred to date? 7, How many of this board or commission's sittings were held prior to the general election, and what proportion of that number were held in the Williams-Narrogin electorate? 8, As it is alleged that this board or commission was appointed for political purposes, and that the surveyors and other officers of the Lands Department have a thorough knowledge of questions concerning poison lands, will the Minister put an end to the existence of the said board or commission?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The board was appointed on the 26th July, 1911. 2, Mr. Frank V. Cooke. 3, No; it was merely a board of inquiry. 4, The board was appointed and paid by the authority of the Minister. 5, The two unofficial members of the board received two guineas a day and

15s. a day travelling allowance while actually engaged on the work; the third, being an officer of the Department, received no remuneration beyond his salary and the travelling allowance. 6, £346 12s. 8d. 7, All the sittings were held prior to the general elections, and six out of the nine sittings were held in the Williams-Narrogin electorate; Narrogin was made the headquarters of the board because the district surveyor, who was a member, was resident there. 8, The board sent in its report on the 10th October. and has since ceased to exist.

#### *Report.*

Mr. A. E. PIESSE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has the Minister received the report of the Poison Board recently appointed to deal with the poison areas in the South-West districts? 2, If so, will he make the report available to the public?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes.

#### QUESTION—CONDITIONAL PURCHASES, RESIDENCE AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr MONGER asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Whether the necessary residential and improvement conditions are being complied with in regard to conditional purchase blocks Nos. 13454, 24250, 25289, and 29005, and homestead block No. 16408? 2, If not, what action will the Department take?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, With regard to blocks 13454/55 and 24250/55, the residence condition has been complied with. With regard to block 25289/55, the holder is at present under exemption from the residence condition. With regard to blocks 29005/55 and 16408/74, the department is awaiting the inspector's report *re* residence. The improvement conditions on all the blocks due for improvements at the present time are being complied with. 2, No further action will be taken at present.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY OFFICERS' SICK PAY.

Mr. LEWIS asked the Minister for Railways: What was the total amount paid to railway officers on account of sick leave for the year ended June 30, 1911?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: £2,158 17s. 5d.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, PORT HEDLAND-MARBLE BAR.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the amount of the successful tender for the Marble Bar Railway construction? 2, The date of acceptance of tenders? 3, By how much was the tender price subsequently increased? 4, What was the reason for increase, and what date was it made? 5, What was the amount of extras included in the final certificate, independent of the increase in tender price?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £123,212 12s. 8d. 2, 20th August, 1909. 3, £22,000. 4 (a.), Excavation for rubble banks and rubble for same, extra side drains and culverts, raising banks over clay-pans where experience gained during the rainy season showed the necessity, the grading in the interests of economy having been kept too low; and extra metal ballast. (b.), Cabinet approved 4th July, 1910. The contract is not yet complete, consequently no final certificate has been made.

#### QUESTION—CATTLE SHIPMENT AND PRICE OF MEAT.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Premier: 1, What number of cattle were in the shipment purchased and brought to Fremantle by the late Government in order to reduce the cost of meat to the consumer? 2, From whom were they purchased, and what was the price paid? 3, How many were sold, when were they sold, and what was the price received?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No cattle were purchased by the late Government for the reduction of the cost of meat to the consumer. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Answered by No. 1. 554 bullocks from off Mulla Bulla native station near Hall's Creek were shipped from Wyndham per s.s. "Moonta," and arrived at Fremantle on the 18th September. These bullocks were bought on the station by Messrs. Phillips & Co. and J. & L. Baker, Elder, Shenton, & Co. being the agent of the Government. The price paid for the bullocks delivered at Wyndham shipping yards was £3 10s. per head for 508 bullocks, and £2 15s. per head for 46 bullocks. This was the first sale of cattle off the native cattle station.

#### QUESTION—Mr. E. McLARTY.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Premier: 1, Is Mr. E. McLarty, recently found guilty of an offence against the Roads Board Act, identical with the person of that name holding a Commission of the Peace? 2, Has the same person been before the police court previously on other charges? 3, What was the nature of the offence and the result of the police court proceedings?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3 (a.), Driving cattle through town, ordered to pay costs 1s. (b.), Allowing horses to stray in street, fined 5s. and 1s. costs. (c.), Disturbing proceedings at roads boards elections, fined £5 and £2 11s. 2d. costs.

#### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Divorce Amendment (introduced by Mr. Hudson).

2, Early Closing Act Amendment (introduced by Hon. W. C. Angwin, Honorary Minister).

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### *Fifth day—conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): Before discussing the Address-in-reply I

desire to congratulate you, Sir, upon election to your high and honourable position. I also desire to congratulate the Ministry on their accession to office, and upon the magnificent majority behind them. While I congratulate them, I desire also to extend to them my warmest sympathy. It may seem contradictory, but you will understand when I say I feel convinced that the majority of the people of the State are expecting impossibilities from the Labour Government. I have no doubt that by honest administration and conscientious attention to their duties they will do credit to themselves and achieve the best they possibly can in the interests of the State. But, unfortunately, they have been set so much to accomplish that I fear we are likely to be disappointed on some minor points. I think they are also to be congratulated on the programme of Bills they have introduced, because we must realise that at this stage of their political existence it is necessary for them to devote some time to the securing of a grip of their various positions. We also know that, after all, administration plays a large part in the Government of any State. I think there is ample room for much better administration than we have had in the past. Of course my friends on the other side will say that is impossible; but I shall endeavour to point out a few things which, in my opinion, could be improved. In the Governor's Speech there is a number of interesting points. It is a matter for sincere regret that our eastern agricultural districts have been visited by an unfavourable season, and in consequence of the diminution of the rainfall many of the pioneers in those parts have had their trials and burdens increased. We all regret the want of rain in the agricultural districts. We realise the vast importance of the agricultural industry to the State, and we are agreed that the fostering of it is in the best interests of the State. The Speech goes on to intimate that His Excellency's advisers feel confident that the misfortune is only temporary, and explains that every effort is being made to meet the difficulty caused by the shortage of water supplies and the partial failure of the crops in the area

referred to. We must compliment the Government on their prompt action in this respect. I realize the importance of agriculture, and I recognise that the Government have done the proper thing in coming to the rescue; but I would impress upon the Government that there is a water famine in other parts of the State as well as in the farming districts, and that there is grave necessity for dealing with water supplies through the whole of the State as well as in any particular locality. I notice in the daily newspapers that at a meeting at Waverley it was resolved to ask the Government to condense water at the Government battery and to charge not more than 4s. or 5s. per 100 gallons. This price is what is paid elsewhere for 1,000 gallons. The people of Waverley point out that a permanent supply could be obtained from the Wangine soak, and I say the importance of Waverley demands that those people should be freely supplied with water. Last year I had occasion to declare that agriculture had run mad in this State, and again I desire to impress upon the Government that the great mining industry, which has been responsible for the wealth of the State up to the present, must be carefully and conscientiously considered. An industry which employs nearly 18,000 persons every year, which has produced £103,000,000 worth of gold and has paid £22,000,000 in dividends, is one that must be considered in all respects. I sincerely trust this question of water supply for the outlying goldfields will be seriously tackled. Ora Banda is a splendid place, capable of becoming one of the best mining towns in the State, but to-day it is suffering from a water famine. I believe the Minister for Mines has introduced a scheme which will serve to relieve the district, and I congratulate him on having done so. When speaking of matters in these particular districts I do so because they are within my knowledge, but remarks made in respect to these places appertain to the whole of the goldfields—north, south, east, and west. Now we come to the vexed question which occupied the attention of the Minister for Works the other day on the Kalgoorlie

goldfields, namely, that of supplying water to low-grade propositions. Any criticism I here offer adverse to the Administration will be, of course, directed against the late Administration. At the same time, while I am putting forth a few home truths it will probably be seen how essential it is to make an alteration in the charges as far as the goldfields are concerned. There is at Coolgardie a mine known as Tindal's. It is a low-grade mine, but it sets a splendid example to most of the mines, inasmuch as it has been working continuously for the last 18 years. It is a low-grade show, and it has been getting water for a certain period at 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons. But the moment it over-stepped that mark it was pounced upon and asked to pay 7s. That is not all. This particular mine has a certain quantity of salt water, which is better for treatment purposes than the scheme water, but they cannot utilise that salt water, because the department says, "You must take the whole of the supply from us, or pay a higher figure for what you do take." I maintain that is absolutely unjust. With Mr. Franks, the underground manager, I interviewed the late Minister for Works, Mr. Daglish. The late Administration wanted the mine management to spend a certain amount of money in getting pipes to take away the salt water, for fear that by any chance they might use a gallon of it, but the proposition of the mine was that they should pay the department the price charged for the scheme water and be allowed to use the water on the mine. Is it right and proper that this scheme should be worked in this fashion? I know that our Minister for Works said the other day that it must be worked on a commercial basis. I do not think the thing should be worked too strictly on a commercial basis. While every care should be taken, it must be apparent that we can extend commercialism too far. It must be realised that we are not working one business or one branch of a business alone, but various branches of a huge business; for instance, the railways, the water supplies, and other matters, and if we lose in one department we shall gain in others. And who shall

say that the gold mining industry is not the one from which, indirectly, we can get the greatest return? I think this business should be taken as a whole and not as a part. We should not put a pistol to the head of a customer and say, "You must take the whole of the water." That is a policy worthy only of combines and trusts. I therefore hope that in dealing with this question of water supply every consideration will be given to the goldfields. Let me say a word in regard to this magnificent water scheme of ours, which was brought into existence to serve the Eastern Goldfields. The main capital expenditure has been £2,866,454, and the supplementary capital £386,246 13s. 1d., or a total capital expenditure of £3,252,700. That has been decreased by a sinking fund, on the main capital of £882,769, and on the supplementary capital of £49,683, or a total sinking fund of £932,452, leaving a capital for which we are responsible of £2,320,248. I think it must be admitted that whatever else may be said of this work, it has enabled the goldfields to become immense producers, and that it has even assisted agriculturists. But I find that against that we have to place £903,812, which has been paid from the Consolidated Revenue towards the sinking fund of this great scheme. But I want it to be realised that we used to pay a deficiency of as much as £110,000 in connection with it, but now we have got the deficiency down to £25,000. This is a splendid scheme, and we ask why we should be burdened with a 3 per cent. sinking fund. This capital of £2,866,454 has sinking funds as follows:—On £2,500,000, 3 per cent.; on £128,206, 1 per cent.; and on £238,248, 1½ per cent. Now it seems to me that it would be a perfectly reasonable thing, and I think it is or was proposed by this Government to reduce that sinking fund. The result of that would be very considerable. We need only deal with the £2,500,000, and if the sinking fund on that were reduced we would convert the deficit into a credit of £25,000 at once, and make that money available for cheapening the water on the goldfields in order to increase

their productivity. Matters of this kind require the earnest and serious consideration of the Ministry. If this reduction were brought about the deficiency of £25,615 would disappear, and we should be able to immediately pay all our expenses, interest and sinking fund, and have, as I have already stated, a balance of £25,000 available. But it would not only do that, because it must be understood that the water scheme, even on the goldfields, is steadily and consistently advancing. If we take Kalgoorlie and Boulder for the years 1910 and 1911 we find that the revenue in 1910 was £168,792, and in 1911 £182,037, showing an increase during the past year of £13,245. Now it will be seen that the best customer of the scheme is undoubtedly the goldfields, and I sincerely and honestly trust that the Ministry will take into consideration this great question of reducing the price of water. The criticism of this matter up to the present point is absolutely and essentially a matter for the last Administration, and I have endeavoured to point out and give my reasons why that state of affairs should be altered, and why the scheme should be conducted more in the spirit of a national enterprise than of a monopoly. I sincerely trust that something of this description will be done in connection with it. Now, I just want to say a word or two in reference to ourselves. I take up the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and I drop across this statement of the Minister for Works, "They were looking to see where the consumption could be reduced so that the pipes could keep up the supply." Now, that is a serious statement, that the Government are trying to discover where the consumption can be reduced so that they can keep up the supply. Then I pick up the morning paper and I see the following headings, "Tapping the big main. Goomalling to be served. Acreage rate proposal. Comprehensive agricultural reticulation scheme." There seems to be a contradiction in those terms. Either there is some explanation, or it is a bit extraordinary. If there is not enough for the goldfields how can the farmers be sup-

plied? This is primarily and essentially a goldfields supply. I remember that I was sent down on a deputation from Coolgardie practically before the scheme was started, when there was a desire to reticulate the town of Northam from the scheme, and so jealous were we then of the water supply that we objected to the main being tapped for that purpose. Wiser counsels have since prevailed, and I think we are all thankful that the scheme has been used for other purposes. Nevertheless, this scheme must be conserved for the goldfields, because it is a goldfields scheme. In the one case we have the Minister for Works stating that the scheme must be worked on a business footing, and then we have him stating in Perth, "referring to the 24 farmers, three-pence an acre would be a small rate to pay for the scheme water. We are going into it to see what rate per acre the farmer can carry." It is not what the low-grade gold mines can carry on the goldfields but what the scheme can get from them; but down here it is what can the farmers carry? That is a legitimate grievance for us to manifest in connection with this matter. I hope nothing serious is being done; I do not think there is; but I am taking care to get in early in order that they may understand the opinions and sentiments of one of the goldfields members. I think I have said quite enough on the water scheme to make myself understood. I want to speak for a few minutes on another question, namely, fixity of tenure in connection with mines. Mr. Gregory, the late Minister for Mines, was very emphatic in stating that we could not expect capital to come to this country unless we gave the capitalist fixity of tenure. He illustrated the case of Mexico. Heaven save us from such illustrations as Mexico. We do not want our miners and mine owners to take an illustration from the serfs of this country. I maintain that there is too much fixity of tenure; it is practically the curse of the goldfields of this State. Take my own district, for instance, and again allow me to repeat that I am speaking on this only because I understand it,

and not in any parochial sense whatever. Let me emphasise and repeat also that what has occurred in Coolgardie has occurred and is occurring elsewhere; it appertains to the whole of the goldfields. We have at Coolgardie a mine known as Bayley's, which has produced 107,739 ounces, and which comprises about six leases. What have the owners done? During 1910 they produced 213 ounces of gold by means of tributers. They are doing nothing themselves, but they are holding on to the mine in the hope that something will turn up in some other way and that they will be able to realise. Does anyone suppose for a moment that because 107,000 ounces have come out of this lease there is no more there? It is ridiculous. Coolgardie, as well as being one of the fairest, is one of the richest goldfields yet to be exploited. Then we come to Lindsay's, now rechristened Queen's Cross, and this is a glaring case. I may mention that they think it advisable to rechristen their mines from time to time so that they may lose their significance in this sort of thing. This mine has produced 4,594 ounces of gold, but in 1910 it yielded only 415 ounces by means of tributers. To my knowledge this mine has been held for years in this way, yet if properly worked and developed it would be a splendid proposition. Instead of that, it is held under these tribute agreements in the hope of something turning up. Another point about these tribute agreements is that they make the men sign as if they were drawing wages. The object of that is that by and by they can go along and say, "We have spent so much money on this mine, and we want exemption by right." That is the kind of thing that is going on in my district. Another feature of the agreements is that if the tributers strike a big patch of gold they have no chance of making a rise, because the owners limit the number of men whom they can put on. There is no chance of them putting on 40 or 50 men and getting the gold out quickly. The owners give them a tribute, but immediately something rich is struck they step in again and reap the benefit and advantage. This is the sort

of thing that is called fixity of tenure. Then there is the case of the Burbanks Birthday Gift, which has produced 150,497 ounces of gold, but during last year produced only 2,000 ounces. For years it has been worked by tributers; there are only about 14 men employed on it at the present time. This mine must undoubtedly have a lot of gold in it and be worth working if people could get hold of it, but by this fixity of tenure, this tribute system, this system of doing things of the kind, the district is kept back. Then we have the Westralia and East Extension Mines, Ltd., which has produced 116,683 ounces, and in 1910 yielded only 628 ounces. Exemption was recommended to this mine by Warden Finnerty a year or two ago conditionally on the mine being kept unwatered. If that condition had been observed the mine would be worth something to-day, but the Minister overrode that recommendation and gave them exemption without any condition whatever. The result is that the mine is flooded and absolutely worthless to the ordinary miner. Then we come along to the Redemption Mining Company. This show, of course, is held up by the Government, but although it has produced 5,062 ounces it produced nothing whatever last year. There is machinery there and it is a mine that is scarcely 300 feet deep. It is so rich that they dollied out of the specimens 1,257 ounces of the yield I have mentioned. Is it reasonable to think that the gold is exhausted at less than 300ft. in depth? But this is the kind of thing that is practised on the goldfields from day to day. Let me now say a word or two in a more pleasant direction. The Main Lode adjoining the Birthday Gift at Burbanks has produced 57,133ozs., and in 1910 yielded 9,698 ounces. Contrast that with the Birthday Gift, which has produced 150,497 ounces. Look at the difference between that mine and this mine, which is properly worked for what it contains, a mine that does not go in for exemption and humbugging about, but employs from one year's end to another 60 or 70 men. All these other mines would be doing the same thing if it were not for the curse

of holding them in this way, and yet we are told that we do not give security enough to capital. The Tindal's mine, which I have already mentioned, has produced 25,235 ounces, and is a mine which is conscientiously worked in every way, and is one which we can afford to be proud of. But when we see these mines being worked in this way, and know that we have a rich auriferous country capable of producing these results ten times over, we feel aggrieved that the present system should be allowed to continue. We do not feel aggrieved for the town of Coolgardie only, because one town is nothing; what has to be considered is the wealth that is lost to the community, the employment of a vast number of men in a legitimate occupation gaining wealth to the community. It is stated that the miner supports practically nine persons in one way or another. Imagine the lost wealth in this direction; imagine the loss to the men on our agricultural areas. Even the late Minister for Lands will admit some of the best settlers in this State are people who have been settled on the land from the goldfields. If extra population came along, how much better would it be in every direction. Now I think I have said enough in connection with these few mining points. There are many others such as the question of battery charges, that of the charge of 3dwt for treatment of sands, and the question among engine-drivers especially as to not carrying out regulations in various places and mines; I could go on for an hour or so airing these grievances, but I feel that with a sympathetic Ministry there is no occasion for it. I sincerely trust if I spare them much of my eloquence they will quickly reward me by acting in other directions. Now just a word in connection with the proposed Parliamentary Standing Committee. I think we all realise that it will be a step in the right direction. I think we are all agreed by this time that advisory boards' reports are not altogether satisfactory. We have for instance the advisory board's report on the Esperance railway. We all know what it contains, a majority report in favour of constructing the line 60 miles, a minority re-

port in favour of experimenting. I am pleased, however, to find the agitation in this direction has even aroused interest in the present leader of the Opposition, the ex-Premier, because in his policy speech, just before the general elections, he made use of these sentiments—

There is one line which I must refer to, and that is the proposed Esperance railway. There is an immense belt of country extending 30 to 60 miles north from Esperance which may prove good wheat-growing land, but the inspectors who classified some 3,000 square miles of this belt state there is no natural feed or water upon it. They point out that the land is very porous, and the salt water level appears to be rather close to the surface.

Then he proceeded to say the land should be given a trial to show whether it will grow wheat—a trial for a place that has been producing splendid crops for twelve or fifteen years! Something like 200,000 acres of land has been applied for in this particular direction. Access to the port is sought for most earnestly by the people who reside on the Eastern Goldfields, because they say the shore of the Southern Ocean is an ideal spot with a climate superior to any other in Australia. They point out that they will get a fine supply of fresh fish if they have the line to Esperance, though I am not so sure of this because it is difficult to obtain fish even in Perth. At the same time I think it must be realised this is a railway that should be constructed. I do not say that the Government should burden themselves at present with more than they have done for this session, but I think this line should be one of the first measures for next session. So far as I am concerned, I will heartily support it this session or in any other session in which it may be introduced, as I believe it is a line that is justified. I am pleased to find that a Bill has been introduced to amend the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. During the elections the ex-Premier in his policy speech declared his intention of repealing the Act and instituting wages boards in place of it. We say, and justly and properly so I maintain, that it would

have been a misfortune to this country had that occurred. There is no doubt about that. We pointed out during the whole of the elections—at least I did, and I presume others did also—that, so far from repealing the Act, it was our duty to make it effective in the direction indicated by Supreme Court decisions. That seems to me to be a much more commonsense way of doing business than actually throwing the thing aside altogether. Therefore I am glad our Government have the opportunity of dealing with it. It seems to me arbitration aims at two purposes, the fixing of a living wage and strike prevention; and, if any civil court can bring about these desirable ends, it is an object worthy of the greatest possible support. In Great Britain a few days ago we saw an army of 58,000 men called out to quell people who were only asking for a living wage, only asking to be allowed to maintain themselves and their wives and children in decency and comfort. Seeing this makes us realise how necessary and essential is an Act such as we have at present. In England over 100,000 adult railway employees are working for less than £1 a week. We saw by the cables the other day that they are fixing the minimum wage at 19s. for adults. If by some such tribunal as the Arbitration Court we can fix a living wage and prevent strikes we have solved one of the greatest industrial problems of the age. I think I have occupied the time somewhat longer than I intended.

Mr. Heitmann: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDOWALL: No matter where one goes, no matter into what assembly one gets, the smallest in the world, whenever a speaker says it is his intention to conclude there is always somebody silly enough in the audience to say "Hear, hear." I really am pleased that we are here with such a splendid majority, and I am sure that my whole-souled support will always be given to the Ministry; but I shall criticise them if I find things are not as I think they ought to be.

The Premier: Will you only speak on such occasions, when you can criticise?

Mr. McDOWALL: I am not going to give the Premier an opportunity of



gagging me. I am not going to make any rash promises. It is essential to speak on some occasions when it is not necessary to speak. I think that will be realised, and I might be in that position on several occasions. However, joking apart, we have before us an opportunity of doing some good, and I sincerely trust we shall grasp matters and avail ourselves of that opportunity; because then I feel convinced that when the next general election comes round the people will, by a verdict as sweeping as the last, say that the Labour party has justified its existence.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): Before addressing myself to the Address-in-reply, I would like, Mr. Speaker, as other members have done, to offer you my congratulations on your appointment to the high position which you now occupy. I am quite sure that your experience in Parliament will have given you the necessary knowledge to carry out your duties well and faithfully both with credit to yourself and honour to this House. Since we last met many changes have taken place. The Government of which I was a member has been defeated and those who were sitting on the Opposition side now occupy the Government Benches. Believing as I do in the views of the Liberal party, and holding strongly decided opinions against the Labour platform as drawn up for them by the Bunbury conference held at the beginning of last year—the platform all members on the Government side are obliged to carry out if possible—I need hardly say how much I regret the change. We have now a Labour Government in power, certainly not quite for the first time, but for the first time with a working majority. It is much more satisfactory for them to find that they are in power with a working majority than with a majority with which they can do nothing. As I was saying, we have now in power a party with views of an advanced nature. I congratulate the party on their choice of leader as well as on their choice of Ministers. I believe the Ministers are sincere men, who, like ourselves, are inspired with the desire to do their best for the State; and I am sure they have the respect of both sides of the House. It is

not my intention to-day to discuss the Labour platform, for after all we find very few of the measures laid down in that platform referred to in the Governor's Speech. I did not anticipate finding in the Speech much that would be of direct interest to that portion of the State I represent. I fully appreciate the magnitude of the task undertaken by the new Ministers and I can well pardon them for leaving us quite out in the cold on this occasion. The question of new regulations affecting our land settlement policy has already been fully discussed by other members and I may be excused if I confine my remarks this afternoon to matters purely affecting the north of this State, more especially as I am now, I regret to say, the only member on this side of the House representing that portion of the State.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The sole survivor.

Mr. MALE: At the outset I would like to make my position clear to the Premier and the new Ministry. Although I cannot agree with them on their platform, at the same time I can assure them that on all matters affecting the welfare and progress of the North I shall do all in my power to assist them. Any knowledge I may possess I am ready and willing to place at their disposal. The development of the north of this great State should be a question removed from all party politics and political strife; and when the Government take this matter in hand, so long as they initiate a sound and progressive policy I will assist them all in my power both inside and outside the Chamber. The members of the present Ministry have promised on the one hand that they will assist the pastoralists to obtain a market and fair and proper prices for their stock, and on the other hand to obtain for the consuming public cheaper food supplies. They have set themselves a big task, but not entirely a hopeless one. I would advise them to make full inquiries on many points before deciding on any particular line of action, and in recommending this I do so after having read a circular issued by the Under Secretary for Agriculture with reference to the question of providing shipping facilities to enable stock

owners at all the principal ports in the north to get their fat stock to market. That circular I would like to point out is crude, and has not been issued with that amount of forethought which is necessary. It is not calculated to inspire confidence, and I cannot conceive any squatter agreeing to bind himself, for at least three years, to ship by Government steamer. No indication is given as to the amount of freight and charges to be incurred, and there is no precaution whatever to prevent cattle being landed in a glutted market. Full supplies of cattle will continue to come into Fremantle, and unless the supplies are regulated by some means, then they will enter a flooded market, and instead of the Government steamer being a blessing to the squatter it may prove to be quite the reverse. I would recommend that the Government ascertain the number of stock required for the metropolitan and gold-fields consumption, then calculate if the supplies arriving are sufficient, or otherwise, and if not sufficient, then assist the squatters to obtain freight for the estimated shortage. We have in the north a vast heritage, capable of producing far more stock than we require for our own consumption. We are to-day producing more cattle in Kimberley than can be marketed at Fremantle. Year after year and for many years past we have been overlanding thousands of cattle into Queensland; this includes a certain number of cattle from stations in the Northern Territory adjoining our border, and whose natural outlet is Wyndham. To-day thousands of cows are being spayed in Kimberley, and the natural increase has not been allowed to develop. The Labour party have talked about what they will do and yet if they are not careful their methods are such that may injure the small squatter. They have always opposed the erection of freezing works at Wyndham.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. MALE: I think so.

The Premier: You should not think; you should make sure.

Mr. MALE: We lost two seats through advocating freezers at Wyndham at the election before the last, and on many

occasions members of the Labour party have declared themselves to be in opposition to the erection of the Wyndham freezer. Even my opponent at the late elections opposed the Wyndham freezer. The fact remains that the non-existence of the freezer at Wyndham has necessitated the overlanding of cattle to Queensland by as many as 20,000 head a year. To encourage the squatter in the north and to develop that portion of the State we must build up and secure an export trade. The question of cheapening the local meat supply is a large one and one that I will not deal with now further than to say that the prices obtained by the squatters for their cattle during the past few years have been very low. That was instanced even this afternoon by a reply given to a question asked in this Chamber as to the price obtained for the cattle sold from the Government station within the last few months.

Mr. O'Loghlen: No one disputes the low price of cattle up there.

Mr. MALE: I think myself that the remedy, if any, of cheapening meat in the local market lies at this end, and not at the squatter's end. It lies at this end in the fact that the slaughtering and the distribution of meat must be made cheaper. It is quite certain that our meat supplies should be drawn from our more southern grazing districts, and from these parts they could be drawn regularly every week.

Mr. Price: If you think that meat should be made cheaper at this end, why advocate the freezing works at Wyndham?

Mr. MALE: Because we have a surplus of stock there. If we were to bring stock down here and give it away, the public would not consume it all. Government or municipal abattoirs should be provided and made available for the use of the small butchers, who would then be in a position, if they so desired, to purchase and handle their own cattle, instead of being dependent on the large shipper and buyer. The heavy cost incurred in bringing stock from the north, coupled with the loss of weight on the journey and the cost of holding and feed-

ing in yards at Fremantle, prior to killing, must always tend to keep up the price of meat so long as the supplies are drawn from the far north. The position we have to face is this, we have surplus stock in Kimberley and unless we are able to build up an export trade, either with live stock or frozen meat, then we must continue to overland to Queensland, or cease breeding. It is no use bringing stock down here if the market is not here to consume it; it would be folly to do that and it would ruin the squatter. The overlanding of stock in large quantities, and for long distances such as to Queensland, can only be done by the wealthy squatter, and the small man must go to the wall or sell to the larger man at what the latter likes to offer. Even if we gave away all our cattle down here the people could not consume the whole quantity because there would be a large surplus over and above what would be required. In connection with the export trade, I would like to say that for the last 12 months I have been trying to build it up, and to some extent I have been successful. It might interest hon. members to know what has been done in this matter. As one of the small squatters, I have always had to seek a market for my own cattle. Last year I was offered a price in Perth which I was not prepared to accept, and I decided to ship those cattle down here for sale on similar conditions as has been suggested in the Government circular of to-day. With what result? I struck a glutted market and netted a less price than was offered to me earlier in the year, a very unsatisfactory state of affairs, and for that reason I would point out to the Government the danger of bringing the stock of the small squatters down here, placing it on a glutted market, and perhaps realising very little over and above the freight and charges of bringing it down. I warn them of that danger before they start. Shortly after that inquiries were made for stock from Java and small trial shipments were sent there. After several shipments had been successfully made, the principals in Java wrote asking me to go and see them and

let them know what prospects there were of arranging freights and supplies for a regular trade between Western Australia and Java. Naturally, after my experience, I was anxious to see such a trade established, so that we might have a further market for our cattle, and I went across to Java at the first opportunity, which was as soon as this House went into recess at the beginning of the year. After discussing the matter fully at that end, I found that a trade could only be worked and developed by agreeing to make regular shipments all the year round, not like the Fremantle trade, which hon. members who are interested know is a matter of supplying for seven months and ceasing for five months. I satisfied the Java people that supplies could be sent from Derby or Broome. Having got so far the question of freight and steamer space was raised. Being a new trade there was some difficulty in securing the necessary space there, and it was pointed out that unless the shipments were regular and guaranteed all the year round, the trade would be useless. This difficulty had to be overcome; the Java people said they had done their best and they wished to know whether I could assist them. I said I thought I could do so by going to Singapore and interviewing the agents there. I did so and I am pleased to say that I was successful, and regular shipments were arranged. To-day there is a trade of 260 head of cattle fortnightly between Derby or Broome and Java, and I have every reason to believe that this trade will not only continue but that it will increase. This has also enabled us to export a certain number of sheep from our northern ports to Java and Singapore.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Then the increased cost of beef in the metropolitan area is not due to the shortage of cattle?

Mr MALE: I am going to refer to that. A short while ago, owing to shortage of cattle in Fremantle, the price went up for a week or two.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It is still up.

Mr. MALE: Not judging by the sales reported at Fremantle. Within the last fortnight stock has been sold at Fremantle at a ridiculously low price, a price which barely left a margin over and above freight and charges from the north. As I was saying, the prices went up abnormally, and I noticed that some people attributed this shortage to the fact that cattle were being shipped to Java, and they even went so far as to suggest that an export tax on stock should be imposed. I wish now to try and disabuse the minds of those people on that point. I have already pointed out that we have a surplus of stock in Kimberley, that not only have we been overlanding our stock to the Eastern States for several years past, but that we have also been spaying heavily. The class of cattle which are being supplied to Java are such as could not be brought to Fremantle and sold to advantage. The greater portion of these cattle are spayed cows, which would probably, if shipped to Fremantle, net very little over the freight and charges entailed in coming down. The bullocks supplied are of a class not sufficiently fat or prime to come down here and be sold as prime cattle. Again, at the present time it would not pay a squatter to send his prime fatts to Java, as he obtains a better price for them here in the local market. The Java trade will not stand fancy prices. The cattle have to be landed at a price to compete against the native cattle there. I would urge upon the Government the advisability of appointing a trade commissioner to visit Java and the East. What we have started in regard to cattle can be done with our flour, our fruit, our timber and other products. Our millers are crying out for outside markets for surplus flour, and for steamers to carry that surplus away. The Premier had evidence of this when, a few days ago, he was waited upon by a deputation of millers. Those millers are anxious to stop the export of wheat, and to foster and build up an export of flour, so that the offal may be retained in the State, and the labour necessary for the milling of flour be furnished within the State. I would like to point out that

to-day 1,000 tons of flour is landed every month in Java from South Australia, and is being landed there at lower freights than can, at present, be obtained here. Only a day or two ago three army officers landed here from Java en route to the Eastern States to purchase remounts for the Dutch army in Java. This is another source of trade which might well come to this State. We want to work up a sufficiency of trade of cargo between Western Australia and Java, Singapore and the Eastern markets, in order to enable us to command a more regular and efficient steamship service, so that we can say to the steamship owner, "We will guarantee so much cargo if you provide us with a regular line of steamers"; and, further, in order that, if the steamship owner refuses, we will have sufficient cargo to warrant the Government in stepping into the breach. With a population of nearly 40 millions of people on one island within three or four days' steam of our coast, the commercial possibilities between Western Australia and Java are enormous, and by virtue of proximity the trade is more properly ours than it is that of the Eastern States. When the cattle trade with Java was first established, so keen were the South Australian Government to secure it that they offered a bonus of one pound per head on all stock shipped there. That was several years ago, but even with that inducement they were unable to build up the trade. I want our new Government to be interested in this export trade, because, in my opinion, it is in that direction we are going to give the greatest benefit to our primary industries, whether squatting in the north, or agriculture in the south. The opening up of this export trade for our cattle, and the successful results of boring in Kimberley, lead me to anticipate a great development in our squatting in the north. It is my intention to suggest to the new Ministry a scheme for the assistance of squatters and squatting. On the one hand, financial aid has been extended to the settlers of the south, and I see no reason why the same assistance should not be given to those in the squatting districts. One of the great

problems we have to face is the peopling of the north. There are still millions of acres of pastoral land available and now lying idle.

Mr. Underwood: Where?

Mr. MALE: If you take the line of rabbit-proof fence from Wallal to where it strikes on the Eastern Goldfields, I am given to understand by Mr. Crawford, the Chief Inspector of the Rabbit Department, that there are millions of acres of land there still waiting to be taken up, and equally as good as a large quantity of land already in occupation. To enable a beginner to open up and stock these great waterless lands a progressive scheme is necessary, somewhat on the line of what has been done in the south by means of the Agricultural Bank. I may here refer to certain lands between Fitzroy river and the DeGrey. How much of that country is taken up, excepting the fringe along the sea border? Nearly the whole of that waterless land is still unoccupied, and a large portion of it is suitable for squatting if only water were provided. I suggest that a party be sent out to inspect and report on those lands. Suitable areas, if found—and I believe they will be—should be reserved from selection for a time. The land should be surveyed and divided into blocks of, say, 200,000 or 300,000 acres, varying in size according to the carrying capacity of the country. A boring party could follow up and secure a water supply on each block, and these blocks could then be thrown open to selection. We know that the water is easily obtained there, because it is well within the artesian basin. There are numbers of suitable men who would be willing to embark in this scheme. They would not require a large capital and, if necessary, a pastoral commissioner could be appointed to look after and control such a settlement. I am certain a properly worked out scheme of this nature would settle many men on the vacant lands, would increase the carrying capabilities of this vast country, would bring in a revenue from those lands, and would be a practical way of making a start with the peopling of the north. The northern portion of Aus-

tralia is, in my opinion, pastoral country pure and simple, and it is in that direction that we must expend our energies, and I feel sure that these efforts will be successful. For those already settled on the land it is my intention to ask that a sum of money be allotted from loan funds for the purpose of sinking artesian bores. Any squatter requiring a bore on his station will make application, and if this be approved by the Government the Government will sink a bore and, if successful, charge the squatter interest on the capital cost. So far as I can see I do not think it would be necessary to ask squatters to pay sinking fund, for the reason that the land belongs to the Government. The leases will fall in in 1928 and if we charge the squatter for the sinking of the bore it would then constitute an improvement to be bought back by the Government when the leases are resumed. In my opinion, it will be a good business proposition for both the squatter and the Government. It will improve our Crown lands and at the same time enable the squatters to obtain water supplies by easy means, and thus be able to carry much larger numbers of stock than they can at present. These suggestions are non-party and non-political, and the more supporters they have the more likely are they to become accomplished facts. It makes no difference to me who is in power; the suggestions, I believe, are good, and I trust the present Government will give them consideration and, if possible, act upon them. I would like to say a few words in connection with our aborigines. As members are aware, the late Government started a settlement scheme in East Kimberley, which embraces the purchase of two small cattle stations, and the establishment of feeding depôts has been given effect to from those stations. Since then I find that hundreds of natives have been discharged from our prisons on the expiration of their sentence for cattle killing. A few weeks back I found there remained only 15 natives convicted of this crime in our gaols in the North-West. This led me to believe that cattle killing had been considerably reduced, if not stopped altogether. During

my election campaign I had occasion to travel several hundred miles up the Fitzroy, and I made a point of ascertaining as much as I could from squatters and others as to what the local conditions were. I regret to say I learned on all hands that cattle killing is going on as badly as ever on the back stations. The establishment of meat depôts has not yet overcome the difficulty. The question will have to receive further consideration. The safety of our white settlers and the preservation of their herds must be attended to. The establishment of a system of further depôts in West Kimberley may assist, but if, after that, the natives persist in cattle killing then they must be punished, and I can see no better remedy than punishment by imprisonment, and removal from the district of the ringleaders. I think that is the only thing that would have any effect. This is a matter which must receive the consideration of the new Ministry. Now let me say a few words in connection with the pearling industry. It is, perhaps, inadvisable that I should say as much as I could or as much as I feel, for the reason that the question of the pearling industry is at present receiving the attention of the Federal Legislature. At the beginning of the year the late Mr. Batchelor, then Minister for External Affairs, was evincing considerable interest in the industry. Let me say, in passing, how much the pearlers and I, myself, regret the sad and sudden death of the late Minister. He was a man in whose hands the destiny of the pearling industry lay. He had taken a great interest in the working of that industry, and had been sufficiently long in office to be tutored in its methods. We always found him ready and willing to listen and give consideration to any suggestions which we might place before him. As I was saying, at the beginning of the year the Federal Minister for External Affairs issued a regulation to the effect that permits to introduce alien labour for the pearling industry would not be granted after the 1st January, 1913, except in respect of boats on which the diver and tender are white men. The effect of this regulation has been to put the industry in a very unsettled state.

A deputation waited on the Minister in Melbourne and explained to him the impossibility of securing sufficient white men willing to train for diving in the time prescribed, and after considering their request the Minister granted an extension of 12 months. The intention of the Federal authorities to make the industry as much a white man's industry as possible is something to be commended, and I am glad to-day that the pearlers are responding to this in a very earnest and sincere manner. After much thought and many meetings a scheme was drawn up by the pearlers whereby they decided to endeavour to fit up five working luggers and a schooner for the purpose of carrying into effect a scheme for the recruiting and training of white men as divers and tenders. This scheme, as may well be imagined, will cost a considerable amount of money, and it was decided to ask the Federal Government to assist in carrying it out, and further, to ask them to appoint an officer to see that the scheme was worked properly and effectively. It was also urged by the pearlers, and supported by the late Government, that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the whole working of the pearling industry, also that a bonus be given of, say, £25 per ton on all shell raised by white men as an extra inducement for them to come here and try the work. The scheme has been drawn up and submitted to the Federal Government for their approval, but owing to the absence of Ministers in England at the Coronation it has been considerably delayed. The motion now before the Federal House is also delaying it, inasmuch as if a Royal Commission be appointed the Government will naturally await their report before doing anything further in the matter. In my opinion, what the pearlers have to do is to effectively prove the possibility or otherwise of working white men as divers. Firstly, they must prove whether white men can be obtained who are willing and ready to try the work, and having found them, and assuming they are willing, it has then to be proved that they are capable of doing the work and willing and able to endure the life. I have always maintained that the industry is not a fit

and suitable one to be worked entirely by white men, and if it be found that white divers and tenders cannot be procured, or if procured, are not willing and able to adapt themselves to the work, I shall then do my best to get the present methods of working continued. At the present moment we have in London men who are willing to come out and try the work. They are men trained in salvage and dock diving, but they are not trained in shelling. We are now only awaiting the permission of the Federal Minister to allow these men to land under contract. With the possibility of the Royal Commission being appointed, I shall not dwell further on this matter of the pearling industry. To the pearlers this is a serious and critical time. It was one of the principal reasons that influenced me in again standing for Parliament at the last election—not for the love of office or position, nor yet for honours to be gained—I was prompted to stand again by the desire I had to assist the pearlers at this most critical time in their history—to assist, if possible, in saving this great industry for these people who deserve it and comprise it; and in saving it for the State of which they constitute no mean part.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): Please include my congratulations amongst those you, Mr. Speaker, have already received on the high position to which you have been elected. The coming into power of this popular Government has raised great hopes in the breasts of the people of Western Australia, and we feel confident that when the members of the Ministry have settled down in their respective offices and brought themselves up-to-date with the requirements for the successful running of each department, these hopes will be speedily realised. We know it, because we know the men. We have seen them and their work since in 1905 they faced what the present Opposition are facing now, a strong Ministerial party. They faced the position undauntedly and with perseverance and untiring efforts, and the success of their organisation was shown in the splendid victory afforded them on the 3rd October. The Governor's Speech has been

criticised freely on both sides of the House. Members of the Ministry have been congratulated on bringing forward important subjects for legislation, wise and democratic. It is not necessary for me to go over the same ground as others have, and I am not likely to for the simple reason that up to the present, although every portion of the State has been referred to, the great North-West has been only slightly touched upon. When the member for Geraldton was speaking at the end of last week I had hopes when he referred to "the coming of the north" that at least the North-West would have an opportunity of being adequately represented on this side, but unfortunately he stopped at the Murchison River. The member for Coolgardie speaking to-day also sounded a note which I thought would suit our purpose, when he referred to the fact that much had been done for the farmers of the State. I had hopes that he would say a few words on behalf of those engaged in the pastoral industry in the northern portion of the State, but unfortunately he came no further north than Ora Banda, Waverley, and Coolgardie. Each member, it seemed to me, made reference to the particular wants of his own district and generally, after congratulating the Ministry, referred in a more or less slight degree to the welfare of the remainder of the State. I may be pardoned then, even at the risk of having a parish pump hurled at me, if I refer more particularly to the policy laid down by the Labour party for the development of the great North-West. We have heard much in the course of the debate about the price of meat in the metropolis. That, members may be assured, is controlled by what is called a meat ring. There are two things in the policy for the North-West which would do much to ensure cheap meat for the people of the metropolitan area, the first being the establishment of a State line of steamers, and the second a fresh classification of the pastoral lands of the State. The late Minister for Agriculture stated that he thought the Labour party had promised a boat to trade between Fremantle and the north

and north-west coast. They did more than that; they promised a line of steamers, and we who have been elected to represent the north-west portion of the State repeated the promise during our election campaign. The pros and cons of a State line of steamers have been pointed out on every election platform, and those of us who are pledged to State ownership in all things, the ownership of the means of distribution and exchange, need not ask for reasons to justify this scheme. The member for Fremantle referred in his speech to the shipping disabilities which exist between Fremantle and the north-west ports, and to the appointment of a Mr. Sinclair to report as to the best methods of removing them. That report I have not seen; I merely know of its existence through the member for Fremantle. But I know something of the methods of private enterprise in this respect. Some time ago a sheepowner in the Gascoyne country contracted with a private company to forward 2,000 sheep to Fremantle. The House has heard much of the dry season in different parts of the State, and the Gascoyne constituency is no exception. After great trouble the owner succeeded in bringing these 2,000 sheep to the port, only to find that there was not space available in the boat by which the sheep were to be shipped, and he was forced to send 1,200 of them back to the station. The freights from Fremantle to Singapore are at the present time 12s. 6d. per ton. Private enterprise, however, insisted on a man who wished to shift some stuff from Carnarvon to Shark Bay, a distance of a few miles, paying at the rate of 12s. per ton. Some time ago a business man at Carnarvon made a successful effort, as the member for Kimberley seems to have done in his own district, to establish a trade in live stock between Carnarvon and Java, Singapore, and other Eastern ports. Having established that trade in live stock he thought he might be able to establish a trade in cereals and other products of Western Australia. When he approached the merchants in Singapore they met his proposals very readily, but asked him. "What

about freights?" He remarked that there was no difficulty about freights at all, for the stuff would be landed at Singapore from Fremantle at 12s. 6d. per ton. The merchants in Singapore laughed at the idea, and showed an invoice and bills of lading whereby stuff was landed in Singapore from Victoria for 5s. 3d. per ton. Furthermore, he asked what might be done in connection with taking a shipment of flour, say, 4,000 tons, from Western Australia and landing it in Singapore. The merchants assured him it could not be done owing to the absence of shipping facilities. On inquiry he found that the export agent in the East for Victoria, Mr. Sinclair, regularly shipped consignments of 4,000 tons of flour from that State to the port of Singapore. I have no doubt that so far as this trade is concerned, State steamers would go a long way towards insuring cheap freights for the producer. I met in town to-day the owner of one of the stations in my constituency. He brought down some thousands of sheep from his station and they were sold in Fremantle for 4s. 1d. apiece. The freight on these came to 2s. 8d. a head, so that after commission and other charges were met there was very little left for the grower. Another man sent down 3,000 sheep, and the result was such that he declared it would have been better for him to have sent the sheep back to the station, taken the wool off them in the coming year and then cut their throats. I mention these things to show that although the price of meat is high it is not on account of the growers, it is on account of the shipping charges and the other expenses of handling the carcasses at this end of the voyage. A steam boat was recently chartered to bring 400 bullocks and 2,000 sheep from Carnarvon. The cost was £62 10s. a day, and the average speed was five knots an hour. Another boat of slightly greater carrying capacity cost £70 a day. Those who have gone into the matter and understand shipping stock, maintain that a boat that will ship 500 cattle and 2,000 sheep and travel at 11 knots an hour could be chartered at £90 a day. We can realise the amount of interest that can be earned on money



expended should these ships belong to the State. Steamships trading between Argentina and different parts of Europe, fitted up properly for the beef and mutton carrying trade, may be had at the cost of £30,000. Taking three of these ships it would cost £90,000; and if we estimate the charter rate at £90 a day, we can see there is a very good business proposition in the matter. In regard to another matter I desire to mention, I am emboldened by the example set by the member for Fremantle who pointed out that, as a Bill would be introduced for the appointment of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, he wished in the first instance to save the time of that committee by stating at once what his constituency required in the way of harbour facilities. Now, we have a jetty at Carnarvon and just before the elections the late Minister for Works went on a tour of inspection, a tour of promises. I am informed the jetty at Carnarvon returns a profit of £1,500 a year, so that also, it will be admitted, is a very good business proposition, but it is not capable of coping with the increasing trade at Carnarvon. As I was saying, the late Minister for Works went on a tour of inspection, and he was interviewed by people at Carnarvon and taken to inspect this particular work. He at once saw the urgent necessity for increasing the length of the jetty by 50 feet and widening it, and he promised that a report would be made. I do not know whether it was to be placed on the Table of the House or what was to become of it, but we have not heard of it since. He promised to get the report from the Engineer-in-Chief and to communicate at once with the people of Carnarvon through their mayor. This has not been done, but I hope the present Government will recognise the importance of Carnarvon with a view to having that work put in hand immediately. While speaking of the jetty I may also mention another work going on in the Gascoyne district that might also be characterised as an electioneering job; that is the building of the foreshore. Like many other Ministerial works, it begins at the right end and stops in the middle.

Owing to the expediency, efficiency and good work of the supervisor, the work has cost much less than was originally anticipated, certain things were found to be unnecessary and money has been saved on the job in that respect; but I hope that work will be completed, instead of finishing as it does in no particular place and being absolutely useless to protect the foreshore of Carnarvon against the lapping of the tide. I hope as much more will be done in point of distance as has been done at the present time. I have no exact idea of the distance required, but it is something like 200 yards more that will have to be done to complete the job and render the foreshore of Carnarvon safe. Mention is made in the Governor's Speech as to the encouragement of prospecting, and as to the latest discoveries at Payne's Find, Mount Egerton, and other places. The Speech also says that copper mining is becoming more and more a settled industry. The member for Roebourne will probably refer more particularly to copper mining later on. I just wish to say that during the elections there were many industrial disputes, strikes, and one thing and another altogether militating against the success of this industry; and were it not for the fact that an amendment of the Arbitration Act is promised by the Ministry, the chances are that, quicker than even the Ministry expect, the industry at Whim Creek will be settled. I would like to remind the Minister for Mines of the existence of such a place as Bangemall. According to a report of the Government Geologist, Bangemall is situated in the Gascoyne goldfield about 270 miles from Carnarvon on one of the tributaries of the Lyons river and about 30 miles west of Mount Augustus, one of the highest mountains in the State. According to Mr. Maitland this field was discovered early in 1896, but owing to its geographical situation and want of the necessary machinery for extraction, it has not produced any large quantity of gold. I would like to compare Bangemall to Linden in the Mount Margaret district to show that the fact of non-production of gold in the early stages of the field's existence does not show that gold is not

there in any large quantities. The Government Geologist, referring to Bangemall, says—

The main or vertical shaft passed through the reef at 35 feet. Free gold may be seen in the stone lying in the dump; the quartz is of the ferruginous type common to the reefs of Bangemall; portions are highly brecciated, the interstitial cementing matter being oxide of iron.

In 1903 a report was received from Mr. Bennett, owing to a request being made at that time for Government assistance towards helping the people of Bangemall. That report also is lost, but Bangemall in the three years of its existence produced 531½ozs. of gold; yet the Government are talking about giving assistance to a place much further out on the Gascoyne. I refer to Mt. Egerton. I do not ask that a Government battery be sent to Bangemall at once on account of the 531½ozs. of gold won from it, but I maintain that an expert should be sent there to look over the place and make some offer to willing prospectors. Some of the older men, those who originally took up the land in the first place, are quite prepared to spend from £1,000 to £2,000 for the development of the district, provided the Government will ensure for them some means of treating the stone when they have it raised. I mentioned I intended comparing Bangemall with Linden. Linden was a promising place in the early days of the Coolgardie goldfields. Somewhere about the end of last century, however, work stopped there for the simple reason that the only means of crushing stone raised by the prospectors were two batteries owned by private enterprise. Private enterprise was so strong and so keen on accumulating profits that before very long the prospectors got tired of raising stone the benefits of which only went to the owners of the batteries, and the field was deserted for five or six years. However, in 1907 a gentleman well known in the mining world, Dr. Laver, interested himself in some properties there and a Government battery, a small Huntingdon crushing plant, was sent to Linden. In 1907 the total gold raised from Linden amounted

to 82ozs. Between then and 1910 no less than 6,227 ozs. of gold was won from the former deserted goldfield, and since then 400 tons have been crushed for 1,000ozs., bringing the total to 7,227ozs. from what had been deserted as a mining centre. I know these figures fall into insignificance beside the mighty figures quoted by the member for Coolgardie in his speech to-day, but at the same time they are not without a certain amount of significance, more especially as the voided leases in the Linden district have crushed 7,000 tons for a yield of 10,000ozs. I mention that as a comparison for the simple reason that what has happened in the Linden may well happen in Bangemall, seeing that better conditions exist now than existed when Bangemall was discovered in 1896. The establishment of experimental farms is also a subject I might bring under notice. Some members of the Opposition have mentioned the question of irrigation in the south-western districts. For the last two or three weeks we have had the Commissioner for Tropical Agriculture and Mr. Scott, the irrigation expert, in Gascoyne, and they have declared that the country along the banks of the Gascoyne river is eminently fitted for the growing of lucerne. Mr. Scott went into figures and they are so surprising that I feel a certain amount of diffidence in mentioning them; but the example he saw, ground that had been sown with lucerne and irrigated, produced lucerne of such quality that he said 70 sheep to the acre was not by any means too high an estimate to make of the carrying capacity of that ground. On account of the dry season 3,000 tons of fodder have been imported to Carnarvon this year at the average cost of £7 a ton. A small sum in arithmetic will show that means £21,000 has been spent by the people of the Gascoyne district for fodder which under irrigation might well be grown in the district. Bores have been put down on both sides of the Gascoyne and good water has been found. I hope therefore that the Minister controlling this particular department will see his way clear to sending a water expert up there to gauge as far as he possibly can whether water exists in suffi-

cient quantities in the river sands of Gascoyne to ensure proper irrigation of land which, according to Mr. Scott, the irrigation expert, are well worth irrigating. The Labour policy also promises a continuation of the present treatment of diseased natives in lock hospitals. That is right enough from a humane point of view; but I maintain that, as far as those natives who are not diseased are concerned, there is a slavery existing in Western Australia more vile, more abhorrent than any which existed in the Southern States of America before the War of Secession. I had pointed out to me on one particular station a native who had been drawing water from one well for 20 years and the only recompense he received during the whole of that time was an occasional stick of tobacco and old clothes left by shearers and just enough flour and kangaroo to keep him alive. On another station in the North-West all the shearing is done by natives. I passed through one where 13 of them had finished shearing for the day 1,013 sheep; at another station 13 white men in one day sheared 1,303 sheep. Those who are employing the white shearers had to pay 25s. a hundred, and to keep 12 or 13 shed hands, in order that the shearing might be carried on properly. Those who are shearing with the natives gave the ringer a gun, and the natives got nothing except their tucker. What sort of tucker they received may be gained from what I am about to say. A stockman was being sent out with a black fellow, his gin, and three youngsters to look after sheep. He said to the manager, "What about tucker?" The manager said, "You can take for the natives eight pounds of flour a week and allow them meat at your own discretion." The man, to a certain extent, was humane, and said "How can you expect this family of natives to live on that?" "Why," the manager replied, "before you came here the native had two more children, there were seven altogether, and they used to do it on six pounds of flour a week; if, at the same time you think they can do it on eight pounds of flour and not less, give them that much." Those are the kind of things that occur in the North-West; they are the result of

my own experience. I have here a letter from a gentleman who spent seven years in Kimberley and who knows as well as any one in the whole State of Western Australia the conditions which prevail there between the aborigines and their white employers. He says amongst other things—

Now the mode of working these natives is a disgrace to the Commonwealth. Nearly all the work in the pastoral industry in Kimberley is done by unpaid natives. . . . It is a common sight on the sheep stations to see a gang, consisting of men, women, and children, erecting a line of fence. When fencing, the squatter presses all available native labour into the gang, regardless of age or sex. I have seen a gang of natives of both sexes, old and young, erecting a line of fence in the heat of a tropical summer, with two white men in charge, who were paid a percentage on the work done as an incentive to goad their gang to do more work. Likewise the man who is in charge of the native shearers is also paid a bonus for work done or the number of sheep shorn. . . All the compensation the natives get is just enough of the coarsest food and clothing to enable them to do more work. If a man has a good or useful beast of burden he treats it in a manner that he calls "well," with a view to getting more work out of it; the same with the squatter and his slaves. The native shearer, who often shears well over 50 sheep per day, sometimes gets, after shearing, a suit of clothing for his labour. More often he gets nothing. . . . It must be obvious to all that a native who cannot read or write cannot have a clear or intelligent understanding of signing his name to a printed document. It is almost impossible for one of the world's most unintelligent and primitive inhabitants to thoroughly understand the duration of a year, and that in advance. . . Yet, notwithstanding that, if a native gets tired of the tyranny and harsh conditions under which he exists, and runs away, he is arrested and dragged before a magistrate, and given a term of imprisonment. I maintain, therefore, that one of the first

duties of the present Government is to insist on the carrying out of the particular section of the Act relating to the treatment of native employees, and although they intend to treat humanely those natives who are unfortunately diseased, at the same time they should not deny the justice due to those who have not, I was about to almost say the good fortune to be diseased, because they are much better off in the lock hospitals than if they were left to the tender mercies of the squatters. Some hon. members dealing with the Governor's Speech have referred to the need in agricultural districts of agricultural colleges. I fancy, as well as building agricultural colleges, something should be done in the way of teaching the farmers up-to-date methods of growing wool. Wool is one of the staple industries of the Commonwealth, but very few, even amongst the foremost woolgrowers, know anything about it. It is not an uncommon thing to see in a farmer's flock of from 500 to 1,000 sheep, half-a-dozen different types of sheep each carrying different classes of wool. It has been said that the man who would make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before was a benefit to the community. The same thing applies to the wool-grower; the man who is able to make a sheep carry one pound more of wool of better quality, at no more cost of labour, and at no more cost of feeding, is just as much a benefactor to the human race as he who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, more especially in Western Australia under present conditions. I think, therefore, that the Government might take into consideration the advisableness of appointing a sheep expert, whose duty it would be to attend agricultural shows and deliver lectures in agricultural districts, and do, as it were, missionary work towards furthering the wool trade of Western Australia, and growing a better class of wool. Another thing I wish to deal with, and I hope the Government will carry it forward, is the question of passing a Shearers' Hut Accommodation Act. Such a thing does not exist in Western

Australia. All the other States of the Commonwealth have Hut Accommodation Acts. In Western Australia the conditions that prevail are simply vile. I have seen on up-to-date stations, nice homesteads, pleasant surroundings, and good wool sheds, but the huts for the shearers and shed hands were not fit for a decent dog to live in. I have seen in another place, where nearly £1,000 was spent on building a wool shed, men working in the shed having to take their meals in a bough shed and at night time having to sleep in the creek or under a convenient bush. It is necessary, therefore, that something should be done to better the conditions under which shearers are forced to live. Sometime ago one of the most up-to-date stations in the North-West, not wishing to go to the expense of building accommodation for the shearers, put up eight or ten tents. Anyone who has lived in a tent for any length of time will know that after a hard day's or a hard week's work in shearing, Sunday should be spent under comfortable conditions. Living in a tent does not, to my mind, constitute what might be considered comfortable conditions. We are also promised a repeal of the Licensing Act. I do not know whether we should be proud of the fact, but the constituency which I represent was the only one which, at the recent poll for an increase or decrease of licenses, polled strongly in favour of an increase. We are a thirsty constituency and we desire that the Licensing Act should be repealed as soon as possible. The people there cannot understand, living in a hot climate and working hard, why a man should be able to drink on six days of the week and not on the seventh. We hope that the Government in repealing this Act, or amending it, will do so in such a way as to allow a certain amount of Sunday trading to be done, so that the men need not be total abstainers on the Sabbath. I am at one with the member for Coolgardie in promising loyal support in all things, and possible criticism at times. I thank hon. members for the patient hearing which they have given me on this my first attempt in addressing the Chamber.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies): In common with other members of this Assembly before speaking on the Address-in-reply, I wish to convey to you, Mr. Speaker, my sincere congratulations upon your election to the high and responsible position which you occupy to-day. I feel sure from my personal knowledge of the present Speaker that he has the necessary ability to carry out the duties pertaining to the high office he holds with credit to himself, and, I feel confident, with satisfaction to hon. members on both sides of the House. I also wish to congratulate my friends in the Ministry upon election to their honourable and onerous positions, and I feel confident in their case also that the interests of Western Australia will be quite safe in their hands. The member for Gascoyne at the beginning of his address stated that it was a curious fact that all members in speaking to the Address-in-reply had alluded chiefly to their own constituencies and had neglected to make any reference to the North-West. I believe the hon. member must have forgotten himself later on because he confined his remarks almost absolutely to the North-West. I do not intend to touch upon all manner of subjects because I feel there are other members who have spoken on the Address-in-reply who are more capable of dealing with them than I would be, but I do intend to criticise some of the administration of the last Government, more particularly in relation to mining matters. Representing, as I do, a mining constituency, I claim while I am not at all parochial, that I shall be fair in my criticism and will vote in the best interests of both the agricultural or metropolitan areas, just as freely and conscientiously as I shall for the interests of the goldfields. At the same time I claim to have practical mining knowledge and I think I can do more good to the State generally by confining my remarks to mining matters. As the member for Coolgardie pointed out, this great gold mining industry has produced £103,000,000 worth of gold. Undoubtedly at present throughout the Eastern Goldfields there is, unfortunately, a wave of depression, but as a goldfields

resident of 16 years I have sufficient confidence in these fields to feel that they are not yet beaten, but will continue to produce gold in considerable quantities for many years to come. The best legislation we could possibly pass would be devised with a view to keeping a large population on these fields in the interests of the State as a whole, and more particularly of our farmers who, without such a market, might find themselves in difficulties. It is in the interests of the agricultural, as well as of the mining population, that the Government should see if they cannot do something to improve the conditions on the goldfields, just as it is in the interests of the mining community that we should have a prosperous farming and agricultural community in order that we may have cheap and good supplies. I was pleased to hear the member for Kimberley say that there is more fat beef in the North-West than the people down here could consume. This confirms what was said at the recent elections, namely, that it was not from a scarcity of meat that we had to pay so high a price for it. Coming from the member for Kimberley, who knows what he is talking about, the evidence he has given us is most convincing; his statement proves that there is something wrong in the distribution of the meat. Being practical men the present Ministry may be relied upon to see if they cannot do something to bring the consumer and the producer of meat in closer touch. Then there is the State battery system. As hon. members know, this system was initiated 12 years ago, and the late member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) always claimed credit for its initiation. I am quite prepared to admit that the system has done a great deal of good in the past, but I claim also, and I am speaking from personal knowledge, that the public battery system of Western Australia has not been kept up to date, but has been allowed to drift into a state of chaos. Its administration has been such as would disgrace a small private firm, to say nothing of the Government of a State. I know that public battery managers throughout my electorate cannot get sup-

plies or spare parts for their mills. They write down to the department, and what they mostly get in reply are letters asking if they cannot get on without the stores or parts asked for. Only a few weeks ago there was a parcel of 40 or 50 tons of stone sent to a battery in my electorate, and eight days were occupied in completing that small crushing. It is scarcely to be wondered at when I tell you that the manager was short of supplies, and in his own words, was sick and tired of writing to the department to get them. Among other things he was out of belt laces. He had previously sent to the departmental stores, and in response to his appeal was supplied with half a dozen of these laces, which cost, I believe, one penny each. The belt being no longer in good order, in a very short time these laces were worn out, and the manager was at his wit's end to replace them. Now it chanced that some years before this the manager had discarded an old belt lace, and used it as a throng on which to hang a bell around the neck of the domestic cow. To such ends was the manager driven on the occasion I refer to, that we had the spectacle of the whole of the battery staff chasing this old cow through the bush for the purpose of recovering that belt lace in order that the battery might proceed with its work. This, mind you, occurred in my own electorate, within the last six weeks. One of the greatest grievances we have up there is this : A considerable amount of the gold values is not recovered by amalgamation in the battery, but by subsequent cyanidation. As the residues or sands are put through the battery samples are taken and are assayed. The battery manager takes one sample and the prospector takes another ; they check the results and arrive at an agreement, and the Government eventually pay a percentage to the prospector on the gold remaining in the sands. But instead of the battery manager having the power to pay the prospector immediately on agreement of assay, he has to wait, perhaps, two or three months before the money is forthcoming. I know that sometimes it has been four or five months before a man

was able to get the money for his gold. I say this is not giving encouragement to the prospectors. Further than that, a little time ago I, as president of the Menzies branch of the Prospectors' and Leaseholders' Association, was directed to wait on the late Minister for Mines and point out these matters to him. He stated that the reason why he could not pay on agreement of assay was that there was no capital account set aside from which to carry on this battery business. I believe that is correct, but I feel confident that the present Government will make an endeavour to establish a fund in order that the prospector may get his money immediately on agreement of assay. We have tried repeatedly to have this done, and some six months ago a regulation was brought into force giving a so-called concession to the customers of public batteries. The concession amounted to this : if the prospector desires he can, upon paying two per cent. to the associated banks, get his money in about one week's time. He has to get his voucher from the battery manager, and this is sent to the department, and checked as correct, whereupon it is sent back, and then the man can obtain his money by paying the two per cent. That is not fair treatment. The department have to pay the bank in two months' time, so the banks can turn their money over six times in the year ; therefore the prospector is paying 12 per cent. per annum for the use of his own money. Just contrast these conditions with those of the settler in the agricultural areas. I have no wish to say or do anything to hamper the settlement of agricultural areas, but whereas in the case of a settler going on the land we make great efforts to lend him cheap money, under this regulation the prospectors are asked to pay 12 per cent. per annum for the use of their own money. I also find that although the public battery system was initiated to break down extortionate profits private enterprise was said to have made out of crushing on the goldfields, the position in Menzies to-day is that you can get stone treated at a private mill at the same price as at the public battery. Further than

that, immediately on agreement of assay you can get your cheque from the private battery, and cash it without trouble. Unfortunately, the grade of ore in the district is not as high as it has been, and in many cases all the margin the prospector gets is in the sands or the residues; the whole of the gold recovered by amalgamation is swallowed up in expenses of breaking out, carting and crushing, and in many instances the unfortunate customer of the public battery has to wait three months, always two months, before he can get the slightest return for his labour. It is our duty to keep the population on these fields, yet this is one of the conditions which are fast driving the people away. I believe that as a result of the mining experience he has had Mr. Collier will remedy this particular grievance on the goldfields, and see that a sum of money is provided to place the battery system on a better footing than it has been in the past. The member for Coolgardie referred to the goldfields' water scheme. I agree with him that it should be used strictly as a goldfields scheme. If it can be shown that we can spare the water from the goldfields, let the surplus go to the agricultural districts. But, as everyone knows, the goldfields are absolutely dependent on the water supply, and it must not be interfered with if there be any danger whatever of a possible shortage. The member for Coolgardie also referred to Ora Banda. That district almost adjoins my own electorate, in fact until quite recently it was part of it, and I can bear out what the hon. member has said, namely, that this is a district fully deserving of better treatment than it has had in the past. There have been good shows there, and there will be good payable propositions in the future, but all enterprise is hampered by the lack of water. I trust an endeavour will be made to supply these shows with this necessary commodity.

*[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]*

Mr. MULLANY: Another thing which I trust the present Ministry will continue is the system which was initiated last year by the Minister for Railways, by which reduced railway fares are granted

to women and children on the goldfields who are desirous of having a change on the coast during the summer months. Those hon. members who have ever put in a summer on the goldfields will admit that the conditions there in the summer are trying indeed, not only to the women and children but also to the men; but the men have the advantage that they are not confined to the house, but can go about their occupations, which women trying to rear a family cannot take advantage of. There are hundreds of children on those goldfields of from eight to ten years of age who have never yet seen the sea. The railway fares are too high in many instances to allow of the parents bringing them down to the coast. If the Government have been justified in the past in spending large sums of money in bringing immigrants to the State—and I do not say that they have not been justified—it would be a much better policy to my mind to spend a sum of money in doing something to conserve the health of the best immigrants we can possibly get, namely, the native-born white Australians, for, although for eight or nine months in the year the goldfields climate cannot be beaten probably in the world, it is essential that young women and children should get away from those parts at least every two or three years. They cannot possibly grow up to be healthy men and women if they do not get an opportunity of coming to the coast during the summer months. I am pleased indeed to see that it is proposed to introduce a Bill to amend the Arbitration and Workers' Compensation Acts, and I quite agree with one of the previous speakers that this will be a better way of dealing with this matter than was proposed by the late Government, viz., the abolition of the present Arbitration Act and the substitution of wages boards such as exist in the Eastern States. However, this matter has been dealt with exhaustively by other members, and there is no necessity for me to go over the ground again; but it is not my intention to sit down without expressing my appreciation of the intention of the Government to go on with the amendment of these two Acts. I trust that our labours in this new Par-

liament will result in the production of legislation which will be in the best interests of Western Australia in the future, and, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, I have every confidence in the members of the present Ministry, and believe that they are sincere, that they have the ability, and that they will put forth their best endeavours to carry through good and honest legislation for this State of Western Australia.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I desire, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to congratulate you on your election, and also to congratulate the new members who have been elected to this House. If permissible, I would also like to express my lively satisfaction that the electors of Pilbara were content to go on with the old member. I would further like to congratulate the leader of the Opposition on his assumption of that position. I am of opinion that he is competent to fill it. I have done my best to put him there, and it seems to me that I can take credit for something achieved. There are just one or two small matters that I would like to mention. The first one is in regard to the electoral system in the North-West. In my opinion it is desirable that all elections should take place on the one day, and I am sure that in this connection I have the support of the other three representatives of the northern portion of the State. The matter can easily be arranged. It is only a question of giving us some longer time between nomination and election day, and it will be necessary to abolish that system of preferential voting, and allow postal voters to record their votes after the issue of the writ. I trust that before the next election comes round the Government will have introduced and carried through another electoral Bill, and in that Bill they will provide that the whole of the elections shall take place on one day.

Mr. Male: Hear, hear.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In regard to the few remarks that have been made during this debate, I am sure that the present Government are very thankful to the member for Kimberley for his good advice, but one almost regrets that he did not endeavour to give effect to it when

he was a Minister himself. However, we will bear it in mind, and I can assure that hon. member that the people of the North-West have a long way better chance of being attended to now than when the previous Government were in office. The hon. member for Kimberley made some statements in regard to pastoral lands in the North-West, with which I agree to an extent. He made the assertion that there are millions of acres of land up there unleased; I agree that there is a good deal of land, particularly south of Wallal, but the difficulty is that so far they have been unable to find water. I agree with the hon. member that it is the duty of the Government to send out a boring or well-sinking party into that portion of the State, and, if water can be found in that belt of country there are undoubtedly millions of acres of good sheep country which will then be leased. So far, however, private enterprise has failed to find water south of Wallal. It is not my intention to deal at any great length with the question of the imprisonment of aborigines, but I would like to point out to the member for Kimberley that some years ago the State expended some thousands or tens of thousands of pounds in arresting natives and imprisoning them, and cattle-killing did not decrease. The hon. member points out now that we have ceased to imprison the natives and they still kill cattle, but the fact remains that they killed them when we did imprison them, and it is a matter for consideration whether imprisonment was worth what it cost the State. I have every sympathy with the cattle men of the Kimberleys, but at the same time I am of opinion that the imprisonment of natives indiscriminately, as they were imprisoned in the past, was not an effective remedy. We may possibly find out some better remedy in future. There is just one word I would like to say with regard to the remarks made by members representing the eastern goldfields constituencies as to the desirability of having special railway fares to bring people from those goldfields down to the coast. My experience of the eastern goldfields climate is that we should have special trains to take people from Perth to that portion of the



State. To my mind, it has the best climate in the world, and the man who is looking for fresh air cannot do better than go to Kalgoorlie or Coolgardie.

Mr. Mullaney: Could you put in twelve months there?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I could put in twelve years there and probably be better than I am now.

Mr. Green: But they do require a change every twelve months.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I desire to congratulate the past Government on their having achieved a surplus, but at the same time it is my duty to point out that the £13,000 which they had as a surplus—and they can add another £13,000 to it—was practically taken from the works that should have been done along the north-west coast. The whole of the Government services from Geraldton northwards have been starved, and, if a similar course was adopted in the south, it is no wonder that the Government had a surplus. I trust that the present Government will not endeavour to get a surplus by starving the services and neglecting necessary repairs to Government works. We have heard a great deal during the present debate as to the cost of living, and it is stated that with the rise of wages the cost of living necessarily increases. I heard that statement made many years ago. It started first, so far as I know, in New Zealand. Ramsay Macdonald came along, and he pushed it right across this continent; the Press got hold of it, and chortled it from Albany to Thursday Island. Then it struck the hon. member for Northam, and he immediately imparted his fallacy to this expectant House.

Mr. Mitchell: What was that?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In regard to the cost of living. The hon. member stated that the increase of wages necessarily brings about an increase in the cost of living. I propose, for a moment or two, to project a few rays from the light of facts on this fog of theory. The hon. member stated that if we increase the wages for making boots we will increase the price of boots. I understand something in regard to the boot trade, and what are the circumstances? Twelve or

fourteen years ago I worked at the boot trade, and I can say that I never worked a full week in which I did not earn over £3; at the present time the wages are, I think, £2 15s. Further than that, during the last 15 years there has been much machinery introduced into that trade, and that has reduced the number of hands by at least 33 per cent. There has been a slight increase of wages during the last year or two, but at the same time we have had machinery introduced which has displaced at least one-third of the men employed in the trade. If wages had risen 33 per cent.—and they have not risen 5 per cent.—then boots should be sold at the same price they were sold at 15 years ago. We have in every industry improved methods, improved machinery and better organisation; and, as a matter of positive, indisputable fact, the amount of produce turned out by each workman is greater to-day than ever it was, and greater in proportion than the wages paid. It is not only in the boot trade. We have, for instance, the printing trade; and the *Daily News* and other literary journals and political economists come forward with a proposition backing up the member for Northam in his statement that a rise of wages means a rise in the cost of living. In the printing trade, as they know well, the introduction of the Hoe machine displaced hundreds of men, and after that they had the linotype machine. The man on the linotype machine can do about four times as much work as was done previously by the ordinary hand-setting. The *Daily News* proprietors and all others know perfectly well that they can run their establishments to-day, notwithstanding a slight increase in wages, at from 30 to 50 per cent. less cost than they could ten years ago. Yet they tell us that a rise in wages means a rise in the cost of living. We have again agriculture, and I am sure the member for Northam will agree with my assertion that there have been great strides made in the method of working a farm during the last few years. I can remember quite recently when we had reaping machines, and it took about eight men to run behind a machine to bind a crop as it was cut.

To-day we have a reaper and binder and we do away with those eight men and do away with the wages of eight men. We have innumerable other improvements in the agricultural industry. It is only a few years ago when a man used to walk behind a one-furrow plough; to-day he sits on top of the plough and uses up to a dozen furrows. Yet they say that an increase of wages means an increase in the cost of living. As a matter of fact it is well known to the member for Northam and other political economists that a man working on a farm to-day under present methods can do ten times the work done 20 years ago, and if the wages of farm labourers had risen 100 per cent. or 1,000 per cent. the farmer would still be producing cheaper to-day than he was 20 years ago.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In almost every industry we find we have improved methods and that a man to-day can do anything from 50 to 500 per cent. more than a man could do 20 years ago. In the engineering trade we have pneumatic drills whereby a man can do as much in an hour as previously he could do in a week. We have innumerable improvements. Even in the pastoral industry we have improvements in the shape of windmills. It is not so long ago that a number of natives and others used to be employed pulling water with windlasses or whips. Now we simply have windmills, and there are still further improvements going on in the way of motor pumps to act as auxiliaries to the windmills. We have to look to some other cause for the rise in the cost of living than a rise in the cost of wages. The position is this, that as there is a rise in wages there is a rise in rent. Every time there is prosperity in any of the industries we find that the landlords increase their rents. They are increasing them in Perth at the present time. Further, in the agricultural country we find that, as improvements are made in the way of productiveness, as improvements are made in the working of the industry, so land values increase; and practically all these inventions which should be for

the benefit of the whole of the community go to build up the profits of the landlord. It is only a few years ago that the Bank of Western Australia was paying, I think, 5 or 6 per cent.; to-day it is paying 20 to 25 per cent.

Mr. Mitchell: It has never paid much less, you know.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I beg to differ from the hon. member. This is the position. All these improvements in production practically mean higher rents and higher dividends to bank shareholders. Now the Government propose to take a hand and endeavour, if possible, to bring about a better method of distribution of this wealth; and one of the first things they should do, in my opinion, is to attend to those landlords who are at the present time setting their rents up to the last possible penny and provide the people with houses to live in at a reasonable cost. Again, as I have pointed out, as production increases land values on the agricultural areas increase; therefore the Government propose to stop selling the land and give a man only the land which he can work and not allow him to enslave his fellows by means of rack rents. The member for Northam smiles, but I am of opinion that before the Government are finished he will smile the other side of his face.

Mr. Mitchell: I believe you; I am expecting to.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In fact, after the Government have got in full swing the hon. member will never smile again. There is another cause which tends to increase the cost of living, that is, monopolies of facilities. One of the greatest monopolies that has struck Australia has a firm grip on the whole of the North-West of this State. We have been asked is there a meat ring, and I see there is a man writing—at least, I think it is a man—stating there is no meat ring. I have just come down from the North, and I am convinced it is only a rumour! It is wonderful how these rumours get about! I just wish to say that in the Pilbara district there are tens of thousands of head of cattle, and it is almost impossible to give them away. One cannot sell a bullock

in the Pilbara district for much more than the value of the hide, yet meat is 1s. a pound in Perth, and then people say there is no meat ring. I want to speak for a moment or two in regard to this combine. This is not only a combination of the butchers here but there is in combination with it Holt's line of steamships. They are doing enormous damage; they are preventing to a very great extent the progress of Western Australia, and particularly the progress of the north-west portion of it. Holt's Company are possessors not of millions but of tens of millions of reserve money. They have the power to crush out any opposition, that comes against them. The Adelaide Steamship Company is a little lizard when it comes up against Holt's line, and finds it has practically to do what Holt's Company tells it to do in so far as the trade on the north-west coast is concerned. I wish to give one or two instances of the treatment meted out to the citizens of the North-West by this cormorant combine. They will not call in at the various ports coming south for the reason that the boats are acting as feeders for Holt's line at Singapore, and they want to drive the produce along the north-west coast of Australia to find cargo for Holt's line from Singapore to London, so that they will not take any stuff on the south trip. I have just pointed out the Adelaide Steamship Company is absolutely under their control, and has just to take what it can get. We have the position to-day that thousands, I believe tens of thousands of bales of wool are lying on the various jetties along the coast. The member for Kimberley will bear this out. At Port Hedland jetty there is no room to move for wool lying there, yet these ships pass and pass again, and it is impossible to get the wool shifted because Holt and his company have a monopoly on that coast and can defy all competitors. For instance, it is only just ordinary for cargo to be carried past Carnarvon, Point Sampson, or other ports, right on to Singapore, and dropped on the back trip. The member for Kimberley, I know, will bear this out. I have seen a waybill where a shipper complained that he had a certain number

of pieces of timber short. They admitted there was short delivery, but claimed they were not responsible for any timber under 4 x 4. As it happened the timber was 3 x 3 that the man wanted, but I am of opinion that if he had wanted 6 x 6 they would have told him they were not responsible for anything under 2ft. That is a position which in my opinion is intolerable. It is impossible for any other company to attempt to compete against Holt's, therefore it is the duty of the Government to put steamships on that coast, and I want to say if they do that they should make no mistake about it, and they should see that they get the freights and cargo. We have to bear in mind that we own the wharves along the north-west coast and it is possible to get the freights by increased wharfage charges, and if Holt tries to cut us out we can increase the wharfage charges and reduce the freights to practically nil. The sooner the Government take in hand a scheme whereby they will put Holt's ships right off this coast altogether, the better it will be for that portion of the State and the whole of Western Australia. With regard to the meat ring, I would like to refer to a few facts. We have at Port Hedland a man who is shipping about 400 sheep and a few goats each trip to Java and Singapore. That went on for a month or two, but suddenly Holt's line made freights prohibitive and went to Derby and got sheep there from one of the meat ring. The small man at Port Hedland was shut out of the trade for the benefit of the big man at Derby. This is an absolute and positive fact and it is now impossible to ship a bullock, a sheep or a goat at Port Hedland or anywhere northward. The meat ring has combined with Holt's shipping ring beyond all doubt, and any man outside of that ring—Connor and Doherty, the Copleys, and Emanuel and Company—cannot possibly ship to those places which the member for Kimberley has been telling us about. I have here a letter from a man who has thousands of bullocks in the Pilbara district and I would like to read a paragraph from it to show that it is not the increase in

wages which has been responsible for the increase in the price of meat, but the combination of the meat ring and the shipping ring—

There are about 50,000 head of cattle in this district not counting Roebourne or Broome, and their price would be increased if there was a market. At the present moment we cannot give cattle away. We are willing to deliver 500 head of store bullocks at Mingenew or any other part of the Eastern Goldfields at £4 5s. a head, but cannot get an offer. The same bullocks we will deliver in Port Hedland at £3 5s. Forty per cent. of them will be fats, the rest of them will be fit for canning.

There is the position. I know the station and I know that the bullocks are there. They have had fat bullocks there for years.

Mr. Maie : Would you advocate a State steamer going to Java and Singapore to market the stock ?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : I certainly would advocate a State steamer to begin with, and we could see where we could send it to afterwards. I want to see the people of Perth and the goldfields get cheaper meat than they are getting to-day, and so far as I am concerned I am not going to worry my head about sending bullocks or sheep to other places until there has been at least 50 per cent. taken off the price of meat in Perth. It seems to me from absolute experience that there is no remedy for this condition of affairs except State owned steamships. I am certain that it is impossible for any private enterprise to come into competition with Holt's line. Holt has too many millions in reserve to permit of anyone beating him and there is no private enterprise game enough to tackle him ; therefore it is the duty of the State to push Holt off this coast, and the sooner that is done and his black crews with him, the better for Western Australia. I have no intention of speaking at any great length and there is only one other subject I would like to say a few words upon ; that is with regard to the pearling industry. As the member for Kimberley has pointed out, the

Federal Government have given notice that in January, 1913, or just about about 14 months hence they intend to bring about a very great change in the labour employed there.

Mr. Maie : It has been extended for another twelve months.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : I was not aware of that. I want to point out that it will be necessary in my opinion to give some assistance to those at present in the pearling industry in the North-West of the State. The position is that there are quite a number of small owners and I believe in this respect they are in an entirely different position from that occupied by the pearlers on the North-East coast of Australia. So far as I can learn—I have only hearsay evidence, but I believe it to be fairly correct—at Thursday Island practically all the boats are owned by Japanese, and the white men there are merely dummies for the Asiatics. In the North-West of this State, however, we have quite a number of small men who own their own boats, quite a number of Australians. I know a number of these men and I have worked with them. They are men who have worked hard, got together a few hundred pounds and invested it in pearling boats, and that is practically all they have to-day. To bring in suddenly the conditions proposed by the Federal Government would mean that these men would practically lose their boats. I give way not one jot on the position that that should be a white industry, and if it is not possible to work it with white men. I say close it down. At the same time I hold it is the duty of the Government to do the best they possibly can for these men. They should not be asked to sacrifice their investments and to a certain extent their living for the benefit of Western Australia. I trust that the Premier will consider this question and endeavour to get a thorough inquiry as to the best method of introducing white labour into the pearling industry. The position is that there are something like 350 or 400 boats on the North-West coast and the proposal is that they shall have a white diver and a white tender, which means that there must be 700 white men intro-

duced into that industry, and allowing for the time they are ashore, the men shifting from boat to boat, we practically want 1,000 white men there. From the state of the labour market to-day I am convinced that of their own volition we would not get anything near the required number in the time allowed; therefore I hold that the Government should endeavour by every possible means to get white men into that industry, and it should not matter whether it cost a few thousand pounds. The pearlers in my opinion are as much entitled to consideration as the sugar growers were and possibly more so, and I trust that the Premier will do his utmost to induce the Federal Government to have a thorough inquiry made into the industry and endeavour to secure some provision for putting white men on these boats when the time comes for the Asiatics to leave.

The Premier: A Federal Commission has been suggested.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am aware of that. I have before me a copy of the Federal *Hansard* showing that a motion has been moved by a private member but so far the Federal Government have not given any indication of their position on the question. I thought it might be advisable to speak during this debate with regard to the question and that we might be able to induce the Federal Government to give the fullest possible consideration to the matter. I have no more to say at the present time, but I trust that the Government will be in power for 15 or 20 years and I feel convinced absolutely that if they have time to become familiar with their work they will show the people of Western Australia the way to run a country and what legislation is.

Mr. PRICE (Albany): I desire at the outset to join with the many other members who have preceded me in complimenting you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to the high and honourable position you now occupy. It has been stated that you are young in years for the position you now hold, but it is pleasant to realise that that objection must disappear with the break of every succeeding day. May I also say that the election

of one so young in years to the high and important position you occupy is an object lesson that may well be taken to heart by the youth of Australia, as showing the possibilities for those who work earnestly and faithfully in the interests of their country. I regret exceedingly that the leader of the Opposition is not present in the Chamber this evening, first, because I understand he is absent through ill health, and second because I never care to refer to or criticise remarks made by a member, during his absence. However, much that was said by the leader of the Opposition with regard to the recent election campaign was repeated later on by the member for Northam. We are told that hon. members on this (Government) side indulged in a crusade of misrepresentation. Misrepresentation, we are told, emanated from members on this side of the House. I see a thin glimmering smile hovering over the countenance of the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson). Misrepresentation! Could there be any more vile misrepresentation than that indulged in by members who are now in their proper places on the Opposition benches? They started this crusade of misrepresentation; and, not only did we find them misrepresenting, but we found them using the funds of the country to aid them in that tirade and crusade of misrepresentation. We found the leader of the Opposition using the funds of the State.

The Premier: Not me?

Mr. PRICE: No. I mean the present leader of the Opposition. I trust I shall never have to accuse the present Premier of converting the funds of the State to the use of his party. The present leader of the Opposition incurred an expenditure of £167 3s. 4d. for a special train from Perth to Albany, to indulge in that very thing which he himself rises in this Chamber and condemns, a crusade of misrepresentation. The then Premier told the people of Albany that if I were returned I would assist the Government to take away the people's freehold. Is that not misrepresentation? No one knew better than the hon. member for Sussex and his colleagues that no such project was intended by the present Government.

The Minister for Works: Do you call that misrepresentation?

Mr. PRICE: Yes, what else is it?

The Minister for Works: I should have thought you could get a better word.

Mr. PRICE: There are many more emphatic words, but I refrain from using them, out of respect for the feelings of my friends opposite. Their feelings have been sufficiently lacerated during the past six weeks without my using strong words to make them feel more deeply the depths of political degradation to which they have fallen. Let me refer to the leader of the Opposition; because when I drew attention to this expenditure of public money for electioneering purposes it was stated in answer that the train used by the then Premier was availed of for freighting purposes also. I regret that the Minister for Railways did not find out exactly what was meant when that little paragraph was tacked on to the answer he supplied to my question. For at the time this train was used by the then Premier, at the time it was available for the haulage of freight, two engines were attached to it, the engine required by the special and the engine which otherwise would have been used for the haulage of freight.

The Minister for Works: That was in order that they could have two trains on one section.

Mr. PRICE: That is the exact reason for both the engine taking the special, and the engine which should have been engaged in hauling goods, being attached to the one train; consequently the drawing of attention to the fact of the train being engaged for hauling purposes is misleading to the public. The train came into Albany with two engines, one of which should have been used for haulage.

The Premier: We will have to consider making a surcharge.

Mr. PRICE: Yes, if you can get it. But not only is there reason for the change which has taken place in the fact that the late Government spent the funds of the State for electioneering purposes, but we find there are other little matters as well. I may say, in passing, that since the opening of Parliament I have asked two questions, the answer to either one of which

should be sufficient to condemn any Government and call down upon them the wrath of the people of the State. In the one case I received an answer saying that the leader of the Opposition had caused an expenditure of £167 3s. 4d., in order that he might address a single meeting. The other question was in connection with a firm of contractors, who, according to the answer given, have been using something like £800 or £1,000 worth of Government property for the past four months, and that, apparently, without the knowledge of those in authority. I say "apparently," because we have no proof that the authorities were aware of the fact that the contractors, Messrs. Vincent Brothers, were using the material to which I refer. But does it not clearly indicate that there was very urgent need for an alteration in the Government when those who were entrusted with the administration of the affairs of the State allowed large contractors to use hundreds of pounds worth of Government material for months at a stretch, while, apparently, the Government knew nothing whatever about it. I mentioned a few moments ago that attention had been drawn to an alleged misrepresentation during the election campaign. Anticipating me the hon. member for Northam has left the Chamber. I have here a little document to which I intend to refer. During the election campaign I had occasion to draw attention to the extraordinary interest charges which the late Government were imposing on the settlers in our agricultural areas. The then Minister for Lands wired and wrote to certain electors in my electorate stating that my remarks regarding these interest charges were untrue. Later on he stated that if I had possession of any document such as I professed to have, either the document was not what it purported to be, or a misstatement had been made. I now bring that document along here so that the late Minister for Lands, the member for Northam, may, if he chooses, peruse it, and see if any mistake has been made; because if a mistake has been made with regard to this document it is a peculiar coincidence that six others also have been inspected by me,

and they contain similar mistakes. We find here that the late Government, who were continually telling the people of their desire to assist the settlers—and it was on that cry that they went to the country; that and their crusade of misrepresentation regarding the land policy of the present Government—they told the settlers they were the people to assist them, and that if they were returned to power everything would go along booming and blooming, as it had done in the past. This is the kind of boom and bloom they were imposing on the unfortunate settlers in the Denmark district: In November, 1909, an amending Land Act was passed and became law. It provided that for two years after taking up land, for the first three years, rather, although the purchase price of the land might exceed 10s. an acre, the selector should only pay 6d. per acre per annum, the balance being allowed to accumulate in the form of deferred payment extended over the following 17 years, in equal annual instalments. The whole of the Denmark area was brought under the operation of this amending Act, and one settler down there sent his lease instrument along to have the altered conditions endorsed upon it. That settler, as holder of 118 acres, was paying £36 13s. 2d. per annum rent. Under the amended conditions he was called upon to pay £2 19s. 2d., allowing him in the form of deferred payments a total sum of £101 2s., which amount had to be paid by the subsequent 17 yearly instalments. If you divide £101 2s. by 17 you will find it amounts to a fraction under £5 19s. per annum. Therefore it is evident that if on the original purchase price the rent was £36 13s. 2d., after paying £2 19s. 2d. for the first three years, this selector's subsequent payment should be £36 13s. 2d., plus £5 19s., or a total of £42 12s. 2d. Yet when the lease instrument is sent along to the department we find that instead of having to pay £42 12s. 2d. for the 17 years he is called upon to pay £46 13s. 4d. In other words, this settler who brings his land under the operation of the Act, which was framed to assist the settler, finds himself called upon to pay, in the shape of accrued capital, £5 19s.

per annum, and, in a form of interest, £4 1s. 2d. per annum. And this is what was authorised and brought into existence by a Government who were continually bragging of their desire to assist the settler. They assist a man by charging him £4 1s. 2d. interest and £5 19s. on his capital. Let me draw attention to the fact that these deferred payments mean no cost to the Crown, or to the State. The State is losing nothing by allowing the payment to be deferred, any more than we are losing anything—except for the immediate present—by deferring the payment of rents due by those unfortunate settlers who are suffering the effects of the recent partial drought. All that we are to lose is the immediate use of that money, and yet these settlers in the Denmark area, an area in which there is undoubted need for development, an area which has been put forward by the member for Northam as an example of his marvellous administrative ability—

Mr. O'Loughlen: The goat experiment was not a success.

Mr. PRICE: There are some things which it is well should be buried in oblivion, and just as the term of the late Minister for Lands is a thing of the past, then, for his sake, let the goats also be a thing of the past. I did not intend to refer to them. The goats have had a bad time, but the late Minister has had a worse one. However, we find the late Government charging this extortionate rate of interest to men who are struggling to make a living for themselves upon the Denmark areas, and, might I respectfully submit to the members of the present Government that whilst they are quite rightly solicitous for the welfare of the settlers in the drought-stricken areas, they should not forget that there are a large number of settlers in the southern portions of the State who are suffering equally with the settlers in the dry districts. The settlers in the southern portion of the State are being forced from their holdings through the extortionate demands made upon them by the past Government. They find it absolutely impossible to make their holdings pay the rent which is demanded from them. The

land which in the Denmark area was repurchased at a cost of £1 per acre the Government are charging as much as £4, £5, and £6 per acre for, unimproved, and, on top of that, we find them charging up that huge sum of money in connection with those so-called relief works started some years ago. On the top of that again there is the original cost, and the interest on the original cost, the cost of the relief works and the interest on that, and, over, and above that, the interest on the deferred payments.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: To say nothing of the cost of the goats.

Mr. PRICE: Let us be just; the goats were not charged up; they were the only things that were not charged up. Some of these people have not even roads. I have pleaded, time after time, with members of the late Government, to provide these people with roads, whereby they might be able to get to Albany, but I was met all the time by the statement that they have a railway—a railway with one train a week! One may get to Denmark in the winter season or during about six months in the year by boat, but to get there by any other means except the railway is impossible. I sincerely trust that the present Government, while considering the need for assistance for farmers in the dry areas, will, at the earliest possible moment, take into consideration the need for a revision and re-classification of the charges which are now being imposed upon the unfortunate settlers in the Denmark area and the southern portion of the State. I may point out that the settlers in the southern portion have to struggle against almost insurmountable difficulties. A settler in the wheat-growing area knows nothing of the difficulties which beset the settler in the south; he has to contend with scrub and timber, and heavy rainfall, and, whilst we have in that district an area of land the possibilities of which are almost incalculable, at the same time the settler who goes there is deserving of every consideration rather than that he should be overburdened with costs. For my part, I think that the State would benefit if it allowed them to hold this land absolutely free, because they would be opening it up

and making it reproductive, and indirectly adding to the revenue and the prosperity of the State generally. Attention was drawn by one member to the fact that the present Minister for Lands has extended the area over which imported potatoes may be scattered—if I may so term it. Whilst I realise the necessity for taking every possible step in the direction of providing a cheap supply of food-potatoes for the people, at the same time I would raise my voice against any proposal which would tend to jeopardise the clean area we at present possess in the southern portion of the State. I wish to draw the attention of hon. members, who may not be aware of the fact, to this point; that we possess here in Western Australia the only extensive area of land absolutely free from Irish blight in Australia.

Mr. O'Loughlin: You might go further than that.

Mr. PRICE: Yes, as a matter of fact, we have in the State of Western Australia a vast area of land, the only land where potatoes can be grown in large quantities in the world, so far as we can learn, which is absolutely free from Irish blight. I bring this matter forward so that those hon. members who are inclined to remove the existing restrictions in the interest of the consumer may pause and consider well before they endeavour to force the hands of the Minister in that direction, because we have only to look at Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, and South Australia to see the ravages which have been caused amongst the potato growers by the introduction of Irish blight. Whilst I realise that the recent high price of food-potatoes was certainly a temporary inconvenience to the consumers, the introduction of Irish blight into the existing clean areas would be a curse, the full extent of which we should never be able to realise. For my part, I sincerely hope, nay I feel sure, that the Minister for Agriculture will take every care that nothing is done to jeopardise the continued existence of the clean area we now possess. May I go further, and express the hope that the present Minister will do what his predecessor was continually talking of doing, and that is, popu-



late the southern portion of the State with potato growers, men who will produce potatoes, and thereby help to relieve the existing scarcity of food-potatoes. We have the land in this State to produce hundreds of thousand of tons—land that will produce a sufficient supply of potatoes, not only for the consumption of the people here, but also to provide seed for the whole of Australia.

The Minister for Lands: The trouble is that we are producing less than we did eight or nine years ago.

Mr. PRICE: That is so, because the late Ministry instead of encouraging people to go into the potato-growing districts were encouraging them to leave those districts and go into the wheat-growing areas, and to-day the Government have to pay the penalty. If instead of encouraging people to go into the drought-stricken areas, they had been encouraged to remain in the southern portions of the State, there would have been no outcry about the price of potatoes.

Mr. Heitmann: There are not many growers in that direction.

Mr. PRICE: Yes there are.

Mr. Heitmann: Well, the cultivation is in a different direction.

Mr. PRICE: I admit that, but there are hundreds of acres of land surveyed, and I asked the then Minister for Lands twelve months ago, to throw open certain lands at Lake Sadie, which contain one of the finest potato-growing stretches in the State.

Mr. Mitchell: It was not drained at that time.

Mr. PRICE: I admit that the drainage scheme was not completed, but two-thirds of it was finished, and a large portion of the land was ready for selection. That portion could have been thrown open, and the drainage completed afterwards, but the then Minister, instead of throwing it open in the dry season, when people could have inspected the land, preferred to hold it in reserve until the wet season came along, with the result that instead of getting a number of new settlers, those people already in the vicinity were the only applicants.

Mr. Mitchell: It had to be drained; you know that as well as I do.

Mr. PRICE: I do not deny the necessity of drainage, but I do deny that there was any necessity for locking up the whole of the area until the drainage was completed. If the land had been thrown open twelve months ago, we would probably have had a hundred more settlers than there are there to-day, the majority of whom would have been potato-growers.

Mr. Mitchell: A hundred settlers at Lake Sadie?

Mr. PRICE: Yes, there would have been a hundred selectors at Lake Sadie, most of them growing potatoes.

Mr. Mitchell: Then you are an optimist.

Mr. PRICE: Had the hon. member been more optimistic in years gone by, in regard to this portion of the State, instead of focussing his attention on the dry areas beyond Northam, then the present Government would not have been spending thousands of pounds to assist the settlers.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. PRICE: I was drawing attention to the possibilities of producing sufficient potatoes in the south-west of this State, not only to provide for local consumption, but also to provide what is required throughout the rest of Australasia; and I repeat, I trust the Minister for Lands will take the earliest opportunity of throwing open the lands in the southern portion of this State to those people who are desirous of going in for that branch of agriculture. Many of the immigrants now arriving in the State I am sure would make desirable settlers on the land I have indicated. If the men who come to this State from the old country were taken direct to the southern portion of the State and placed on the land there—and I am referring now to those who come to the State with agricultural experience—I am sure they would prove very desirable additions to our population. While on the question of immigration, may I say I regret the Government in framing His Excellency's Speech have not seen fit to give some in-

dication of what they propose to do in connection with this question, because we have a very large number of people, some most desirable, others again who are not so desirable, continually pouring into this State. I am one of those who strongly favour a vigorous immigration policy. I recognise at the same time, however, that we are not acting our part if, when the immigrants arrive in this State, we are not assured that employment can be found for them ; and in view of the fact that the settlers in the wheat district, or in a very large portion of the wheat-growing area, are suffering a setback this season, I can see a possibility in the near future of a dearth of employment. The development of our agricultural land will be retarded owing to the lack of funds on the part of those who have already taken up land. They will not on their part be able to employ men in clearing, fencing, and otherwise improving their holdings such as they would have done had they experienced a successful season. The result will be that they will be unable to employ the men they otherwise would have done, and with the continual influx of population there will be a serious possibility of our being faced in the near future with an unemployed difficulty. I think the time has arrived when the Government should take some steps to, at any rate for a brief period, ensure only the introduction of those immigrants who are prepared to immediately settle on the lands of the State. I recognise the last Government professed only to introduce those immigrants who were agriculturists, or desirous of settling on the land ; but while professing that principle to the public, we know to-day they were engaged in a very different project. Their project was to introduce immigrants no matter at what cost, and no matter what those immigrants proposed to do. "Above all let us have immigrants" was their cry, the policy they were carrying out, and while everything is in a prosperous state such a policy might be a desirable one; but when we see the danger of our settlers being unable to employ the number of men they otherwise would

employ, I certainly think the Government should take steps to check the introduction of those who can only help to swell the ranks of the number already here seeking work. If, however, the Government ensure the introduction only of those immigrants who will become settlers on the land, then I am sure such a policy will meet with unanimous approval right throughout the State. When I speak of settlers on the land I am not referring only to those settlers who go out on our wheat-producing areas. I have already indicated where thousands, hundreds of thousands of settlers may become an asset to the State and produce that dairy and farming produce which we have now to import from other sections of the Australian Commonwealth. One hon. member interjected earlier in the evening to the effect that to-day we are producing less potatoes than we were producing seven or eight years ago. May I point out that many of those who seven or eight years ago were producing potatoes have developed their holdings and to-day are engaged more in fruit culture than potato growing, because in nearly every instance where a settler has started by producing potatoes he has also endeavoured, usually with success, to bring into existence an orchard. Now, that brings me to another matter I desire to refer to, that is the question of the exportation of fruit from this State. In the electorate I have the honour to represent we have some of the finest fruit-growing areas in the State. Thousands and thousands of cases of fruit are exported from there annually. Only a few days ago I had occasion to interview the commissioner who has been recently appointed to deal with the fruit industry in this State, and I learned that the late Government had entered into arrangements whereby certain steamers of the Australind line could call at Western Australian ports for the purpose of taking fruit to the English markets, but I was surprised to find out that, although the bulk of the fruit for export from this State is produced within 50 or 60 miles of the port of Albany, the late Government made no arrangements whatsoever whereby the growers in that district might

ship their fruit from the nearest port. As a matter of fact I inquired and found that one private firm in Albany had already arranged for the shipment of 9,000 cases of fruit, and also arranged for the ultimate shipment during the coming season of 19,000 cases. That is one firm alone. I inquired as to what fruit would be available had those steamers, which the late Government arranged to call at Fremantle, also called at Albany. Unfortunately, the time at my disposal was limited and I could only secure an answer from one firm, but I found one agent alone had written to the department pointing out that he could ship 500 cases in February by a steamer of the Australind line calling at Albany, and 3,000 cases in March by another steamer, and 2,000 cases in April by a third steamer; yet the growers in the Mt. Barker district are compelled to send their fruit from the other end of the State down to Fremantle if they wish to utilise these steamers which have entered into a contract with the Government. It is a penalty upon these growers I do not think they should be called upon to bear. I sincerely hope the present Government will take steps to check this centralisation policy, which was such a marked feature of their predecessors in office. The member for Northam smiles.

Mr. Mitchell: Have you any objection?

Mr. PRICE: I have no objection to the hon. member smiling; all I object to is the peculiar warp of the conscience of the individual which will permit him to smile while he knows another individual is suffering an injustice. That is the only objection I have. The injustice which has been meted out to the fruit growers of Mount Barker may be cause for smiling on the part of some hon. members, but on the part of those fruit growers it is cause for considerable annoyance, and certainly one of the causes for the change we have seen take place in the Government of this State in the past six weeks.

Mr. Mitchell: Those electors did not make any change.

Mr. PRICE: No, but may I remind the hon. member a very sincere and determined effort was made to induce them to

make a change, even to the extent of spending £167 3s. 4d. of the public funds, and even then they were not able to make any change. I have drawn attention to the facts, and I feel sure that once they are brought under the notice of the present Government they will take those steps necessary to bring about an alteration and do justice to the people of the State. I do not intend to speak further upon this question because I am convinced that the members who are now entrusted with the administration of the affairs of the State will do all that is possible, not only to reform, if I may use the term, the departments under their control, but bring about in this State that period of prosperity and happiness which has not, unfortunately, existed in the past, despite the repeated assurances of our optimistic friend, the member for Northam, except in the minds of those who were the occupants of Ministerial positions.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): It is not my intention to take up much of the time of the House, but I feel it is necessary for me to make one or two observations in regard to the Governor's Speech. Before doing so, however, I wish to add to the many congratulations which have been extended to you upon your selection as Speaker of this Assembly. I also wish to congratulate Ministers upon their selection by their party to control the destinies of this State. While it is, of course, a matter for congratulation and satisfaction that we had such a record poll at the last general elections, one cannot help but regretting, sitting as we do on this side, that our numbers have been so depleted. However, we have no fault to find with the electors. They have spoken with no uncertain voice, and as one who always believes in majority rule, I am quite willing to bow to the will of the electors. They have entrusted the gentlemen opposite with the control of the affairs of the State, and I trust all their expectations will be realised. At a time like this one might be excused for making some reference to the work of the past Administration, and although a great deal of criticism has been levelled at that Administration, I think the country owes a

great deal to the efforts of the gentlemen who occupied the Treasury bench in the past.

Mr. Heitmann: They paid some of it back on the 3rd of October.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: As I have pointed out, I have no fault to find with the declaration of the people. It is, of course, a disappointment to us, but at the same time we bow to the will of the people. There may be, and we hope there will be, if the gentlemen opposite are not able to carry out all the promises made at the last election, an opportunity for those on this side of the House to be in the happy position at some future date of turning the tables. I regret very much that we have been visited in a portion of our agricultural districts by what might be looked upon almost as a drought. I think the word drought has been used rather frequently, in fact too frequently. I do not wish to say that those people who are suffering, are not suffering a very great deal, but at the same time I think we can hardly use the word drought in its fullest sense, when we take into consideration the fact that no doubt a great deal of the diminution of the crop this year has been brought about to some extent by want of perhaps more up-to-date methods of farming. At the same time I heartily sympathise with those people who have been affected in the dry areas. But, after all, while a number of our settlers may be suffering to a very great extent, it may be a warning to the Administration to perhaps prevent settlers taking undue risks by going too far beyond the safe rainfall areas. I am pleased to know that the Administration of to-day are doing all they possibly can by way of assisting and encouraging those who have the misfortune to find themselves in this position; at the same time I think a little might be said in regard to the efforts put forward by the past Administration so far as the provision of water supplies for the outback areas is concerned. While I do not agree altogether with everything the late Minister for Agriculture did, I think we should give him credit where it is due, and especially in regard to this ques-

tion of water supply, and the clearing of roads in the agricultural districts, a great deal was done by the former Minister, in fact, he initiated that system of constructing dams before settlement and providing new roads for the settlers.

The Minister for Lands: Not the system of providing dams; that was initiated in Mr. Drew's time.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I may not be right in saying that the former Minister originated the system, but he brought it into good effect by providing these dams and water supplies ahead of settlement. In any case, I think this new system brought about by constructing these works was a step in the right direction. I am pleased to know that the Agricultural Department has already taken steps in the direction of giving relief to those who have had the misfortune to find that they have no crops and who wish to carry on. I understand the department are going to provide seed wheat and will give assistance in other directions, and I might here suggest to the Minister that an early opportunity should be taken by the department, if it has not already been taken, to secure suitable seed as near as possible to the affected areas, so that the settlers may have at their disposal reliable seed which will be obtainable at as low a rate as possible. The difficulty will be, unless the seed is secured at once, that it will probably be bought up and held for higher prices. Therefore, in the interests of those settlers on the drier areas, and not only them but other farmers throughout the State who may wish to obtain reliable seed, more consideration might be given to the purchase of seed by the department than has been done in the past. I am very pleased to sit here and listen to the various speeches by members upon the Address-in-reply, more particularly in regard to the optimism in those speeches by members representing goldfields constituencies. I am pleased to know that they consider there is such a good future before the mining industry, and I can only express the hope as the representative of an agricultural district, that no efforts will be spared by the present Administration to foster that industry and do everything possible

that can be done to advance it. We who live in agricultural districts realise what the mining industry has done for Western Australia. We know it gave a great impetus to settlement and it made possible the development of the agricultural districts in what, under other circumstances, might have taken probably a hundred years. At the same time I am pleased to know that the Administration of the day realise that there is an even greater and more permanent industry in agriculture. If we want permanent prosperity we must develop our agricultural resources. It must be pleasing to members on this side, taking into consideration the fact that we represent nearly the whole of the agricultural constituencies of the State, to know that the new Government realise that if we are to make this country what we all expect it to be, a great country, we must develop the agricultural resources. I am entirely with the Government, and I have always been in favour of encouraging none but bona fide selectors to take up our lands. I am in favour of the cultivation and utilisation of our lands to the fullest extent. If we are to get the best results from the development of the land we must bring it under cultivation, even if we do not all produce cereal crops. There is a good deal of misconception with regard to the stock grower in this country. This man, I am sorry to say is, by some members and by some people in the country, looked upon as an interloper, a man who ought not to be holding land. At the same time if he brings that land under cultivation and can grow five head of sheep where previously only one grew, I think members will agree with me that he is a benefactor.

Mr. Underwood: What about the man who does not bring it under cultivation?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I say that with our system of agricultural railways, and seeing that the State is going to a very great expense in this regard, we might expect that the man who does hold land should make the very best use of it. But, as I have pointed out, it is not the desire of everyone to grow wheat. One man may wish to go in for growing stud sheep, another we are importing very extensively.

I think every encouragement should be given to our settlers who wish to develop the land.

Mr. Underwood: What about the man who will not develop the land?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It all depends upon what you call development. If he will not clear his land you have a means of getting at him by taxation.

Mr. Green: The leader of the Opposition was going to throw that off.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am not here to make excuses for the leader of the Opposition. So far as I am concerned I would have preferred—and I think it would answer the purpose just as well—to see the local authorities given greater powers of taxation. Then possibly we might be able to do away with the dual cost of collection. A good deal has been said in regard to the cost of living. I think hon. members will agree that if we are to permanently reduce the cost of living we must encourage local production. We are not going to have cheaper living until we can bring our lines of production up to our requirements. I hope every encouragement will be given to our local primary industries to increase their production. We are told the present Government are going to give special attention to land settlement. I would like to have heard something more definite from the Minister in regard to the Government land policy. I think we might expect that as soon as possible the Government should take us into their confidence as to what they intend to do in regard to land policy. We know the prosperity of the country is bound up in the settlement of our lands. We have only touched upon the fringe of settlement as yet, and if we are to see our land settled we must adhere to a liberal and progressive land policy. I notice the Government have already put into operation a portion of their non-alienation policy, as far as town lands are concerned, and I think the people interested in agricultural development would like to know what further intentions the Government may have. A good deal of criticism has been levelled at the Minister for Lands on the score of the instructions issued in

respect to transfers. I believe the Minister and the Government are thoroughly in earnest in regard to this matter. I am in sympathy with them in so far as stopping any speculation in land is concerned, but I may say that there is very much less speculation going on than we are led to believe.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Yet hundreds of applicants cannot get blocks.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is an unfortunate state of affairs for those who cannot get the land, but it is only to be expected that with the great inrush we have had, and the inquiries of those within our borders for land, there would be many disappointed applicants.

Mr. Green: Why not relieve the situation by opening up the Esperance district?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I will be prepared to deal with that much vexed question when it comes before the House. It requires a great deal of looking into, and I am not prepared to discuss it until in possession of the facts. I am entirely in accord with the Minister for Lands in endeavouring to prevent any lands being held for speculative purposes, but I think the Minister went the wrong way about obtaining the desired end. It is a fact that a good deal of unrest has been caused among holders of agricultural lands by these instructions. I have lived nearly all my life in agricultural districts, and I know from experience the difficulty we had in the past in getting financial institutions to look at our conditional purchase securities. For many years the associated banks would not advance a brass farthing upon conditional purchase lands. It was not until a few years ago that the associated banks looked favourably upon these conditional purchase blocks as securities.

Mr. Price: The Agricultural Bank compelled them to do it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The reason of the establishment of the Agricultural Bank was that it was quite impossible to get any other financial institution to look at these conditional purchase securities. As the member for Albany has pointed out, the Agricultural Bank served to give to

our lands a fixed value, and afterwards this State institution was followed by the associated banks, which are now established throughout the length and breadth of the country. I do not for a moment think the Minister for Lands is going to withhold any transfer of a bona fide settler. I am satisfied that when such a transfer comes before the Minister he will not hesitate to put it through. But the mischief of the thing lies in the fact that to some extent a scare has been created amongst the financial institutions. So far as the associated banks are concerned, no doubt they have little to fear, because they see to it that the improvements are well carried out before they make advances. But there are others who are doing a very great deal towards developing the country by way of assisting the new settler. I refer to that much abused class, the country storekeepers. Let me say that if there is any individual who has done yeoman service in opening up the country it is the country storekeeper. I do not say that he has carried out his business upon philanthropic lines; but at the same time he has had to take very great risks, and he is a man who generally comes in before the Agricultural Bank.

The Premier: Did not the warehouses take the risk and charge ten per cent. for it?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not know. Very often the storekeeper has to fall back upon the financial institutions, and that is where the pinch comes in. He has been prepared to take risks in the past because he felt that the department would see his client through. I hope the Government will reconsider this phase of the question. We do not want to see any land taken up and left unimproved, while somebody else who is not entitled to it gets a premium upon that land; but I think that if the Minister dealt specially with these cases and said that in such case he would not allow a transfer to go through until the whole of the improvements had been completed, he would be better advised.

Mr. Heitmann: Where does the storekeeper hope to get his return; from the produce of the land or from the security?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: He always has the land to fall back upon.

Mr. Underwood: How many storekeepers are there in the Old Men's Home?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I would not be surprised if many of them were there, seeing that all they have gone through and having regard to the risks they take. The country owes a very great deal to those who have staked almost their very existence in trying to help the new settler through the early stages. They did not do it on philanthropic lines; I admit they had to live, but my point is that if you are going to kill out the man who has helped the settler over the initial stages, you are going to prevent any great settlement taking place in many of our agricultural districts. I have already pointed out that in 50 per cent. of these cases this individual gives assistance before the Agricultural Bank is able to help. One suggestion I would like to make to the Minister is in regard to a more effective way of learning whether the improvements have been carried out, and that is by increasing the inspection staff. I have always maintained that the proper way to find out whether these lands are being held for speculative purposes is to bring about closer inspection. As far as my experience of inspectors goes, I believe they are men who work very hard, in fact they have so much work in hand that they are not able to give the time necessary to the carrying out of this work as effectively as we would like to see it done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What would you suggest the Minister do if the improvements were not carried out?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Where the land is being held for speculative purposes and is without improvements, I should say it ought to be forfeited; but in cases where a man though trying conscientiously to develop his land is faced with overwhelmingly adverse circumstances, consideration should be given to him. We know of instances in which a certain amount of consideration has had to be given to settlers in dry districts this year,

and the same thing should apply to the Great Southern, where five or six successive wet years have kept our people back and prevented them from effecting their improvements as they would have done in better circumstances. I hope the Minister will take this phase of the case into consideration. No doubt special cases will be brought under his notice, and I hope he will deal leniently with those cases.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Has he not already told you that he will deal with each case on its merits?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: As I have already pointed out, I am satisfied that the Minister will do that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Then why try to make any scare?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am not trying to make a scare; I am just pointing out the danger of interfering and that the placing of restrictions upon these transfers is frightening the people. Numbers of cases have come under my notice where the people have become alarmed. The average man on the land, owing to his isolation, becomes suspicious and anxious, and why add to his troubles? So far as the improvements are concerned, if the Minister would, even now, say clearly that these instructions for forfeiture will only apply to those lands which he finds are not being bona fide developed, it will greatly reassure the settlers.

Mr. Underwood: If they were being bona fide developed he cannot do anything.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There are one or two other matters that I should like to refer to that come under the control of the Minister for Lands and Agriculture. One is the question of the poison and poorer lands, more particularly lying to the west of the Great Southern railway. Something has been said in regard to the poison board or board of inquiry that was appointed quite recently to go into this question, and I am hoping that the result of that inquiry will be that the Minister will be able to give relief to some of the settlers who have gone into those poison areas, and, after having to pay for the land in the first instance more than it was really worth, have had

the misfortune not to do well. As far as I am concerned, I will do my best to help the Minister to become acquainted with that district, and any assistance I can render him in showing him over that area, more particularly in the direction of Dininup, I shall be pleased to give, so that he may be able to see the difficulties under which these people are labouring. I am glad that the Government intend to go on with the policy of railway construction, and I hope that we will have some promise from the Government in regard to the construction of the railway which has been asked for to the west of Tambellup and Cranbrook on the Great Southern; also that we will hear something in regard to the proposal to build a railway from Narrogin to Armadale. This, as was pointed out by the member for Williams-Narrogin, will bring a portion of the Great Southern country into closer proximity to the port of Fremantle and the city of Perth. There is not the slightest doubt that a portion of the railway between Spencer's Brook and Narrogin will very shortly have to be duplicated, but instead of duplicating the line I think it would be very much more economical to build this line direct from Narrogin to Armadale, thus shortening the distance by some 57 miles. One of the greatest difficulties we have to contend with in that portion of the State is the loss of time in travelling to the City and Fremantle. In regard to water supply and road clearing, I hope that the Government will push on with this much-needed work, and that they will not forget that the districts to the east of the Great Southern are needing these supplies. In those localities we are pushing out into the lesser rainfall areas, and if we want to keep the people there we must see that all these facilities are provided. I hope that no time will be lost in erecting freezing works at the various ports and providing the most up-to-date facilities for the handling of produce. Another matter to which I should like to call the attention of the Minister for Railways—I shall be bringing figures before him in the course of a few days—is that of the reduction of freights upon the carriage of oats and

chaff. Up till last year oats were carried at the same rate as wheat is carried today, but owing to some adjustment of the grain rates last year oats were left out, and I say it is unfair, particularly to those people who are living a long way from the chief centres of population, that they should have to pay a higher rate for the carriage of oats on the railways than is paid for the carriage of wheat. I trust, therefore, that the Minister will look into the question of revising the rates on agricultural produce, and will also consider the reduction of the chaff rate. It simply means that the districts to which I belong would have been completely out of the chaff market had it not been for the dry season and the shortage of crops in the other districts this season.

The Minister for Mines: Somebody has been making a profit out of chaff.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In our district we have had no market until this year. I am pleased to know that the Government intend to deal with the matter of cheapening the cost of agricultural machinery, and in whatever means they may adopt to bring this about they will have my entire support. I do not know whether the Government have definitely decided upon manufacturing these machines in the State workshops, but if they do that I would suggest that they decide upon manufacturing one or two of the most important lines with a view to, at the same time, standardising the parts of such machinery. This, of course, is only an experiment and we have yet to learn that these machines can be satisfactorily manufactured by a Government department. There is, however, no getting away from the fact that we are at present paying too much for our agricultural machinery, and I will do everything I can to help the Government in adopting whatever may be considered the best means to bring about a reduction in price. I am also glad to know that medical facilities are to be provided in the out-back districts. No one realises more than I do the disabilities under which the people in these far distant parts labour. In many instances they have to travel over bad roads for distances of 40, 50,



and 60 miles to reach the nearest doctor, and in this connection, although it is a Commonwealth matter, I hope the Government will take into consideration the advisability of assisting in constructing bush telephones in scattered agricultural and mining districts. So far as the Federal authority is concerned, although the conditions under which we can obtain telephones to-day are much more liberal than they were a few years ago, they do not yet meet the needs of this State. The Federal authorities do not seem to fully realise the difficulties we have to contend with in this great country with its scattered population. I would like to see the railway telephones used more freely than they are to-day. There seems to be some regulation in regard to these telephones which prevents the people having the use of them at the smaller sidings, and it does seem absurd that we cannot make more use of the railway telephone lines, especially in agricultural districts. But if we are going to overcome this difficulty and meet the needs of the people in this direction, the State Government should, with the consent of the Federal Government, go into the question of constructing bush telephones, because, after all, in these days when time means money, and when everyone who goes far into the bush almost carries his life in his hands, every assistance should be given by the Government in the provision of these facilities. Perhaps the Minister for Agriculture will look into this matter and see if the agriculturists cannot be assisted in this way. After all, if we were to spend £10,000 or £20,000 in the erection of these telephones, what a convenience it would be in a country like this! It would decrease the appointments of medical officers to a great extent and, if we only saved one life in 12 months, we would be performing a very good work. So far as education is concerned, I am glad that the Government are going to push on with the erection of the University, and I do hope that the institution will be made available to the child of even the poorest parents in the land, so that any child showing the ability and the desire may have an opportunity of graduating from the primary schools

through the secondary schools to the University. At the same time, I hope that the back country schools will not be lost sight of, and that a little more haste will be shown in the erection and alteration of these schools by the Works Department. Many of our country schools are arriving at the stage when additions are required, and it is to be hoped that the Works Department will not delay in this matter. A number of the schools are overcrowded to-day, and I trust that the Minister for Education will remember this and get the Works Department to move a little faster than they have in the past. So far as new legislation is concerned I do not intend to take up the time of the House to-night, because when the different measures come before us we will have an opportunity of dealing with them, but a number of the measures mentioned in the Governor's Speech will receive my support. I hope before the session is concluded the Government will bring down a Bill re-enacting the Roads Act. I suppose it is their intention to do so, because I think the present measure expires at the end of this year. I hope members will be given an opportunity of looking into the Bill in ample time to suggest any amendments they may think necessary. I am sorry to have taken up so much time of the House to-night. I shall conclude by hoping that the present Government will have a prosperous career, and that the result of their administration will be even more successful than that of the last Administration and result in even greater prosperity to this country.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): At the outset I desire to add my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on the high position in which you have been placed, and also to congratulate the members of the Ministry on their positions. I feel sure they will do their duty to the State and act in accord with the requests and desires of the large majority of the electors who have placed such a strong party behind them. I consider that owing to the House meeting so late in the year it is absolutely impossible for the Ministry to do a great deal of business this session, and I would urge that

every facility be granted to them in passing what business is necessary this session so that they can get into recess and get a thorough grasp of their departments, and so that they may carry out the work it will be absolutely necessary for them to do in the next year or two. We know full well the Estimates must be passed, and that some necessary legislation must be put through this session, but I would like to see every possible effort made to get the business of the session done as soon as possible this year so as to give the Ministry every opportunity to come down next session with a good programme. There is one matter I desire to take exception to, and that is the appointment of Mr. Jull to the position to which he has been appointed. I object not so much to the appointment of Mr. Jull to the position, because I realise that there may have been matters taking place that rendered it absolutely necessary for some appointment to be made, but I strongly condemn the appointment being made and kept absolutely secret as it was. There was no possible excuse for the secrecy. Whatever grounds there may have been for re-appointing Mr. Jull there was absolutely no necessity for the past Government to keep the appointment secret in the way it was. It only leads people to think there was more in the matter than there may have been. One matter that must be grappled with is the question of the dry season in the eastern districts. It is, no doubt, doing a great deal to retard the progress of the State. People have gone as far as they possibly can, have spent the whole of their money, have borrowed as much money as they could, and have sacrificed everything they had in their effort to open up the country and get in a little bit during the forthcoming season in all probability, but they have lost all they had, and I maintain every possible effort should be made to give these people all the assistance they may require now. It will be well repaid in the future. Another matter we will have to devote attention to is the question of the mining industry. We have heard a great many optimistic remarks lately and during the last few years in connection with the

mining industry, but we must realise it is in a worse position to-day than it has been in the past ten years. I intend to put forward a few ideas in regard to this industry that, I hope, will be of some assistance in furthering its progress. It could not be expected in the brief period since the general elections that any important matters could be brought down, but in looking through the Speech we find a few things that are of some importance. In all probability the most important programme ever introduced into any Parliament of Western Australia will be brought down early next year, and I hope to see the House meet early, in June at the very latest, instead of delaying business until the end of the year. We can get through a great deal more business in greater comfort and with more advantage to the State by meeting earlier. Almost every session we have discussed our Estimates in December, and that is an absolute absurdity. They should be brought down to the House not later than the end of July or early in August so as to give members the opportunity of criticising the expenditure of public money. There are one or two matters in the Governor's Speech I do not altogether agree with to the fullest extent. There is one, the reduction of Ministerial and other salaries. During my experience, which has been as varied, perhaps, and as hard in some instances as most people's, I have never yet known any great deal of good to be done by a reduction of wages or salaries; and from my knowledge of Ministerial positions, I maintain the amount the Ministers receive now is no more than is commensurate with the amount of work they will have to do and the number of calls they will have on their pockets. The only objection that could be taken to the increase in Ministerial salaries was the method in which it was brought about. I do not agree with that, but there were very few of us who knew when the proposal was brought down what it meant. If a straightforward proposition were brought forward to increase Ministerial salaries I would vote for it. I would have done it last session. In regard to the various small matters dealt with in the

Governor's Speech we will have an opportunity of dealing with them when the measures come before the House. There are one or two vital amendments, I understand, to be brought down in connection with industrial legislation; but there is one matter that has not been touched on during this debate. I do not intend to deal with matters that have been touched on by other speakers to a great extent; it would be using matter over again that has already been used; but there is one matter of great importance, the question of our fire brigades in Western Australia. The total cost of our brigades in this State is just about half of the total cost of the brigades in Victoria. The Government will have an opportunity in the near future of appointing a board here to undertake the control of our fire brigades, and I hope they will have a board differently constituted from that now in existence. We must either do that or it will be absolutely necessary to repeal or amend the Fire Brigades Act. I maintain it will be absolute ruination to all fire brigades working here if we allow the present state of affairs to continue. What do we find? The cost of fire brigades here for the last year or so, since the formation of the present board, has practically doubled itself. In many instances where they had a good fire brigade, quite sufficient to cope with outbreaks of fire that might take place, in all probability for £100 a year, the cost is now from £200 to £300. The total cost of our fire brigades in Western Australia is somewhere about £30,000 a year, and we have some 400 firemen and 30 brigades. Now, under the volunteer system in Victoria, embracing the whole of the State—and I am sure there is no better system of fire brigades in the world than there is in Victoria—there are 115 country brigades with 2,250 firemen, and the total cost is only about £13,000 or £14,000, while the metropolitan brigades comprise about 50 brigades in Melbourne and suburbs, with about 500 firemen, nearly 100 horses, and a great deal of equipment, the total cost being only £56,000. In other words, in the whole of Victoria the cost of brigades with nearly 3,000 firemen and

160 brigades is only £70,000, yet here in Western Australia, with a system not nearly so good as they have in Victoria, we have to pay about £30,000. I am satisfied the State cannot stand that charge. We must have a better system. I hope the Minister who has this matter under his control will see that we have a differently constituted board from what we have at present, and I hope the volunteer system that was being brought into almost as efficient a position as in Victoria will be reverted to, for then we will have more volunteers than now. We had 14 or 15 volunteer brigades in the metropolitan area, but there are only about three left now. The increased cost is going to run the Government into a great deal more than they are paying now. A few years ago the cost of the brigades to the Government was about £3,000; to-day it amounts to over £6,000. The increase in this direction may appear to be only a small item, but it is one of the grandest works that can be undertaken, the salvation of human lives and the protection of property from fire by a brigade of disinterested firemen. I would like to see more encouragement given to them, but if the present system is going to continue in the near future we will have no volunteer firemen in the State. I hope this matter will receive the attention of the Minister who has charge of it. Another matter I wish to touch on is the question of hospitals in goldfields and country districts. Only a year or so ago from the Opposition benches we made bitter complaints as to the reduction of the subsidies to our hospitals. I can speak now from an intimate knowledge that the need of hospitals for increased subsidies is just as strong to-day as it was a year or two ago. I hope this matter will also receive the attention of the Colonial Secretary in whose department it is. The position to-day is far from being satisfactory. The sick and needy in the outback districts, goldfields as well as agricultural, should get every consideration; and our subsidised hospitals should receive better attention than they have received in the past. It is necessary to take immediate action in this regard. Another matter that

should be taken into consideration is the formation of a Labour Department. In every civilised country in the world we find great progress is being made in this direction. The Labour Department should be the most important in the State, and should comprise men of experience, men prepared to cope with any industrial matter, prepared to go out and, perhaps, prevent industrial disputes, prepared to suggest means whereby grievances can be rectified and whereby labour can receive better treatment, and also prepared to see that no injustice is done. In the past in other departments we have had men of experience, practical men, engineers to see where bridges were necessary, surveyors to see where railways were necessary, and inspectors to see where other works were necessary; but it is a remarkable thing that where the workers themselves were concerned very little effort has been made to grant them the necessary protection. I maintain we should educate men of experience to the position, and give them every possible protection. We find in the mines that very little protection is given to those who work there. A number of accidents occur, and as a matter of fact they have increased lately at the rate of over 100 per cent. The same thing has occurred in the timber districts. At the present time we find that accidents happen there almost every day, and that men are being killed or maimed, and no protection is given to them. I contend that as well as having check inspectors on the mines, and as well as amending the Mines Regulation Act, we should also see that the timber workers have a regulation Act whereby the work at the mills could be regulated and inspectors appointed. I am speaking with a knowledge of what has been going on during the past few years. For many years I have been a miner, but in more recent years I have been taking an active interest in the timber industry, and from practical knowledge of the two industries the number of accidents, fatal and otherwise, is much greater among the timber workers than among the miners. I hope the Government will bear that matter in mind, and do more towards making provision for the

protection and the safety of these men than has been done in connection with the miners in the past. We should have an amendment of the Mines Regulation Act, but before that amendment is brought about I should like to see the present Act properly administered, and also a little more time given to the Minister in charge of the department to bring forward a proper amending measure next session, a measure which will give the necessary protection to those engaged in the industry. Then again, we have the Workers' Compensation Act, which sadly needs to be amended. In New Zealand they are further advanced than we are, and in the old country also. I contend that we should amend this legislation on the lines of the New Zealand Act, and increase the amount of compensation and make it date back to the period of the accident, and also provide a schedule of injuries. There are many other industrial measures that require to be amended. I know it is impossible to do all this during the present session, but I throw out the suggestion, and hope that the Government will see that the amendments are brought down in the next session. Although we have a Factories Act in existence, we find that sweating is still carried on, and that Asiatic labour is increasing. Even though the Act is not all it should be, we know that it has not been administered, and the sooner we have a better system of administration in connection not only with this but other industrial statutes the better it will be for all concerned. I might mention that during the past few weeks there has been a slight improvement in the administration of the Factories Act. I believe the inspectors have got a greater hustle on now than was the case during the whole time the former Government were in office, and I think if we give the inspectors a little more latitude I feel sure that some good will follow. There are other statutes; the trade unions, the workmen's wages, the Early Closing and the Truck Act, all of which pertain to industrial matters, which will require a department for their proper administration, and I hope the Government will see that there is a department established for the

control and administration of all those Acts. Perhaps the most important matter we have to deal with at the present time is the position of the State. It may be said that the principal factor responsible for the prosperity of Western Australia is the mining industry. I have always approached the subject from a non-party point of view, and I wish to do the same to-night. If matters do not go satisfactorily, I shall criticise the administration in the future as I have criticised other administrations in the past, and criticism from this side of the House, if the necessity arises to criticise—and I do not think it will—will, I think, do a great deal of good. One hears a lot about the present condition of the mining industry, and I may say that at the present time it is far from being satisfactory; at the same time the possibilities of this industry might be regarded as being second to none. Up to the present, however, the industry has been practically strangled. During the past few years, or it might be said during the last eight or ten years, the output of gold has been steadily decreasing. In 1900 it was worth somewhere about £8,000,000, and this year it will be about £5,500,000. We must ask ourselves what has been the cause of this reduction. The industry is practically in its infancy, and a great deal remains to be done. Many thousands of acres of gold-bearing land remain to be opened up, and many out-back fields which have been discovered long since have been worked only in a haphazard manner. These must again come to the front and assist to increase the gold output. One of the greatest defects in connection with mining administration has been the lack of encouragement given to prospectors. The big men have had every advantage, whereas the small men have had little or no assistance. Nearly all our old prospectors, after having spent, and perhaps ruined, their lives in mining, have been practically thrown on one side, and the department, in the past, has not given any great encouragement to those who liked to go out and do prospecting. Many of the old hands, one, for instance, in the person of

Dick Greaves, has received very little assistance for the work he did in the old days, and there are many others in the same position.

The Minister for Mines: Greaves is not by any means the worst off.

Mr. HOLMAN: He must be badly off when his wife is compelled to do a great deal of work.

The Minister for Mines: He gets £3 a week for the position he is filling.

Mr. HOLMAN: This man ruined his health in the industry. It is true that he is caretaker of a school just now, but I maintain that the man is forced to get his wife to assist him, and he is under no obligation for that position. I know of another case, that of the man who is known as Paddy the Flat. This man is 93 years of age, and has been working on the mines in this State since 1886. During the whole of that time he has done a great deal of work, and at one time he kept an hotel on the goldfields, and always rendered great aid to the sick. I remember getting for him a pension of 10s. per week some seven or eight years ago from the State Government, but when the Commonwealth pensions were provided I found that the State took away his pension, and ever since this old man has been forced to live on the 10s. a week which he receives from the Commonwealth. That man has spent many years of his life in this State, and on one occasion, 18 years ago, when he was between 70 and 80 years of age, he travelled from Geraldton to Kimberley, a distance of 3,000 miles, carrying his swag. And this is the man whose pension we find has been taken away from him by the State Government simply because he is in receipt of an old age pension from the Commonwealth. Seeing that this old man cannot have much longer to live, I would like something to be done for him, and for other identities who have been responsible for making this place fit to live in. I have no hesitation in declaring that we want a well-defined policy in connection with the mining industry. Seeing that so much depends upon prospecting in this State we should have a prospecting branch in the Mines Depart-

ment. At the present time there is no branch there that can deal with prospecting. Every matter goes through one source. I have advocated the introduction of mining boards in this State, to deal with local matters, but we require a special branch of the service to deal with prospecting, embracing country which mining boards would not have the opportunity of doing much in. Another matter I would like to touch upon is the question of water supplies for our prospectors. A great deal has been done in this country, but we find that at many of the Government wells men who are out prospecting have to pay in order to obtain a drink for themselves or their horses. When men go out on prospecting expeditions most of them have not much more of that wherewithal than will keep them for at the most five or six months, and instead of taking every penny they possibly can from these unfortunate people the Government should not hesitate to give them water free. I consider also that the State should send out prospectors who are practical men to report on the real prospects of the country. It is all very well for us to read the reports of the officers of the department at the present time, reports containing so many names which are foreign to us; what we want is information which we can understand; we want reports from the officers of the department in language that will appeal to the prospectors. If this is done, better progress will be made in that particular branch of the industry. Special encouragement and assistance should be given to the prospectors. In every new district where prospectors have opened up new country, and where it has been found necessary to sink wells, the prospectors in the localities should be given the opportunity of sinking these wells instead of sending men say from Day Dawn to Wiluna to carry out this work. The prospectors on the spot should be given the opportunity to earn a little money, which they would very readily spend again in furthering their work of prospecting. If the department were to do this, they would save a considerable amount of money. Another matter that I should like to refer to is

the granting of leases free of all charges, say for twelve months, providing, of course, certain conditions were carried out. We should also have a proper system of geological surveys. I have brought the matter forward on more than one occasion, and urged that instead of having haphazard geological surveys, as at present, we should pick out a good place for a base, say, for instance, a promising district, and extend the field of operations and get a long trend of lode discovered, and the makes and breaks, and give the opportunity to the leaseholders to follow in the wake of the geologists. We are given to understand that in almost every field in Western Australia the line of lode travels for many miles, with considerable breaks, and we require men of knowledge to go out and show the prospector where to do the work preliminary to opening up new properties. Then, take the survey fees: owing to the fact that the labour conditions provide for 6, 12, 18 or 24-acre blocks, almost every lease comprises one of these areas; but our scale of survey fees makes provision for 5, 10, 15 and 20-acre blocks, and so in practice the prospector has to pay additional fees. Instead of this, we should make provision to have areas surveyed according to the lower scale. It is only a small detail, but it means a considerable amount amongst all the prospectors in a year, and it is one of those things which cause a great deal of irritation. One matter urgently requiring attention is the State battery system. From an intimate knowledge of mining I say that our State battery system is a disgrace to the industry. It has been allowed to drift during the past eight or ten years, almost since its inception, and to-day it is well-nigh a scandal. We have very little up-to-date machinery in any of our batteries, and very little encouragement is given to the prospectors. In many instances they are carting stone past a State battery to a private mill in order to have it treated. As far back as 1906 I advocated the introduction of gas producer plants into our State batteries. It is only to-day that the Mines Department are seeing fit to instal these plants. If this had been done when first I brought

the matter forward the State battery system would have been in a very different position to-day. The saving of 1s. or 2s. per ton in treatment charges is of the utmost importance, and a great deal can be done, in our new batteries at all events, by having proper equipment so as to do away with as much handling as possible. It would mean a great deal to the opening up of low-grade shows. Then, again, the cost of cyaniding is far too high, and the question of the treatment of our slimes is another matter calling for attention. There are several State batteries in my own electorate. Some of them have done good work. That at Meekatharra, although obsolete when erected, has been of excellent service; yet men in my district are carting stone all the way down to the Great Fingall. Meekatharra is a mining centre second to none in the State; it is worthy of the utmost consideration, and I am glad to learn that the Minister for Mines has now given instructions for the installation of a gas producer plant at the battery. Mt. Egerton is another promising centre. A battery was promised for that place 12 months ago, but unfortunately they have not got it yet, although I believe it is now on its way. That centre will amply repay the expenditure in connection with the battery, and I hope that at the same time they will be provided with an efficient water supply.

The Minister for Mines: I have approved of two batteries already.

Mr. HOLMAN: I hope the Minister will remember that they must have an efficient water supply ready when the battery starts. There is no water supply at Mt. Egerton at present. I mention these two places because I have intimate knowledge of both. I desire to touch upon the different treatment meted out to places such as these, which are really good districts, as against that accorded to the Bullfinch and Phillips River districts, where there were very few prospectors, and the properties were held by syndicates, and perhaps by men with money behind them. In those places they could get railways and everything else projected in a few

weeks' time, and completed within a few months. That has been the ruination of our mining industry during the past few years—too much assistance to those with money behind them, the rich speculator and the hoodler, who have come into the country, not for the purpose of developing the mining industry, but rather to make as much money as they can and to get away as quickly as possible. Instead of assisting these people it is far better to turn our energies towards assisting the bona fide prospector. Again, I would like to see a sliding scale introduced in respect to charges on our batteries, with special rates for big parcels from low-grade mines. That would do a great deal towards opening up poorer mining fields. I remember when Meekatharra was absolutely languishing. In 1902 and 1903 I worked hard to get the time system of crushing established. The fact that by the introduction of that system they were able to have their stone treated at less than one-half the old charge was the means of opening up and developing that district, which at the present time is turning out more gold than any other area outside of Kalgoorlie. The same thing will obtain in other centres if we give special treatment to low-grade propositions. Further discoveries will be made and perhaps give many languishing centres new leases of life, which would mean a great increase in activity. I hope to see the output of gold yet exceed all past records. Another matter to be taken in hand by the present Minister is the number of exemptions granted in different mining districts. Properties are held idle year by year, exemptions are granted, if not on the fields then in the office at Perth. I know of many of these exemptions being extended by fortnightly protections, in one case running to about two years. I hope the Minister will not grant exemptions unless absolutely necessary. If these people will not work their properties the Minister should declare them forfeited, and allow others an opportunity of working them. Then I believe the system of amalgamation and concentration should be altered very considerably. The system has been abused, and the sooner we do

away with the holding of large areas by a few big companies who will not work the properties, and the sooner we give honest workmen an opportunity of acquiring those properties, the better for the industry. The present tenure is quite sufficient, and the conditions of labour on mines are quite good enough for any person who desires to work a property in a proper manner. I hope these matters will be given attention, and that the labour conditions will be strictly enforced on our mining properties. I am speaking mostly in connection with properties in my own district, where thousands of acres are held without being worked, held for the purpose of speculation only. I am sorry to say that the system has been allowed to grow, until at present it has reached a stage highly detrimental to the mining industry. I have been in other districts where I have seen whole towns practically idle because the mines were held under exemption, and were not being worked. Any leaseholder who desires exemption simply because he is sick, and has no funds to go on with, should receive every consideration; but the system has been abused in the past and it is necessary that the matter should be dealt with in a vigorous manner by the Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: I have had one or two weeping on my doorstep already.

Mr. HOLMAN: I hope the Minister will send them to their leases, and make them do a bit of sweating there. One other matter which every member must view with feelings not quite satisfactory is the financial position of the State. Despite all we heard about the surplus at the end of last June, despite the fact that we were told how prosperous the State was, it does not require a financial genius to understand the position. Combined with the fact that we are not having too successful a season in the agricultural districts, and that the mining industry is not to-day at its highest level, come other signs to show that the financial position is far from being satisfactory. In all probability the present Government will be criticised by members of the Opposition, who will say, "See what we did. We

showed a surplus after only seven years' work." But I am satisfied that if the present Government carry on their work as they should do it will be absolutely impossible to show any surplus for a year or two, at any rate. The position is serious and must be faced. In the past when we had any amount of money the expenditure was allowed to go on in a haphazard fashion, and I maintain that even at the present time in questions of detail, small sums of £10, £20, £50, or £100 are expended without consideration. The revenue is going out through a lot of small holes like unto the bottom of a sieve. There are so many of these little holes that as soon as the revenue comes in it goes out again. The present Ministry must look to matters of detail, see in what directions they can curtail expenditure, and see that no money is frittered away, whether the sums are small or large. Again, we know that the recent Rason-Moore-Wilson Government, by a manipulation of the funds of the State, transferred to loan account a great deal of expenditure which properly belonged to revenue. In the big spending departments such as Railways, the Works Department, and the Mines Department, the expenditure which in 1904-5 was taken from revenue and was transferred by the late Government to loan, amounts to hundreds of thousands of pounds. The present Government cannot, of course, bring that lump sum back at once, but they must bring back to revenue by degrees those items of expenditure which belong to revenue, and so we shall get back to the old system of paying for much of this transferred expenditure from revenue, to which it properly belongs. A couple of the items I can mention, viz., new works and equipment, and the replacement of obsolete rolling-stock. The replacement of obsolete stock alone must run into £30,000 or £40,000 a year. I maintain that a sum of £5,000 of this expenditure should be replaced in revenue expenditure on the next Estimates, and that we should keep on increasing that amount from year to year until it is all returned to revenue account and we get back to the sound position that we occu-



pied years ago. If we continue the present rate of loan expenditure and do so little from revenue, we will land ourselves in a very bad position in a short period. I hope the present Administration will take this into consideration and endeavour to place many of these items of expenditure in the place they should properly occupy, and not continue to bolster up revenue at the expense of loan funds. The same thing applies to the Works and Mines Departments, in both of which a great deal of money has been expended from loan which should have been charged to revenue. I hope that at the earliest possible date a departure will be made in the direction I have indicated. It is not my intention to speak any further to-night, except to say that at the earliest possible date the Ministry should get into recess, attend to the work of their departments, and take the opportunity of coming down early next year with a good programme embracing the main planks of the platform of the party to which we belong, and of bringing forward legislation that will be in the interests of the State. A great deal can be done by administration and I am satisfied that the Ministers are anxious to do everything possible in the interests of the State. If they do that, I am confident that when members opposite begin to criticise they will not have much to complain of. Doubtless they will criticise, but after the expression of opinion given by the people of the State on 3rd October they ought to feel that the country is satisfied to trust its affairs to this party and that they have not got much justification for criticism.

Mr. Mitchell: When you were here with 13 you criticised.

Mr. HOLMAN: But look at the difference in the calibre of the men. We could do some good by criticising the then Ministry. Doubtless some of the members who are on the Opposition side of the House will bring forward some of the arguments we used when we were there, in order to show, if possible, what is not being done. However, they were not capable of doing much when they were on the Ministerial benches, except to run

the State into the condition it is in at the present time, and take credit for things which they did not do. I want to repeat again that I hope the session will be brief. Ministers have had no opportunity of going into the departments, and it is better for them to look through the departments and find out the true position, and then come down next year with a proper programme of work, which I feel sure will meet with the approval of the majority of members in this Chamber. So far as I am personally concerned, if I see anything that is not going right I will take the stand I have always taken in the past; at the same time, I shall take every opportunity of pushing forward any good work for the benefit of the State, and I hope that the efforts of members on this side and of members on the other side also, for we have had a good many promises, will result in more years of prosperity and a better condition of affairs throughout the whole of the State than we have had in the past.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): The few observations I have to make will be very brief, firstly because I think members on these benches have given their opinions to the House in a greater measure than any other members in the Chamber, and secondly because I recognise that in a debate of this kind it is necessary to bovrilise our opinions as much as possible. We have heard from the leader of the Opposition and others sitting on that side of the House reasons advanced for the extraordinary revulsion of feeling which was manifested on the 3rd of October, and we have also heard charges on the Opposition side that the Labour party gained this victory by misrepresentation. But if we were to look into the records of that campaign we could come to no other conclusion than that, if there was misrepresentation in the field, those on the other side were guilty of most of it. The fact is that the Wilson Government had outlived their usefulness and the people took the first opportunity to turn them down. I was reading in a report of a social tendered to the late member for Swan that the chairman had stated that Mr. Jacoby was personally popular but owed his de-

feat to having to carry the Wilson Government on his back. All of us will, I think, agree that he had such a load that it was enough to weigh him down. We have had much talk of misrepresentation, but the most glaring instances that came under my notice at any rate were those that came from the Nelson and Pingelly electorates. I believe that every member in this Chamber will give credit to the leader of the Opposition for the strenuous fight he put up. I recognise that he did not spare an ounce of effort in his endeavour to achieve victory, but I realised also that owing to the forces being against that party they were going to suffer defeat. If there is one member of the last Parliament whose absence I regret it is the late member for Williams, and while I welcome my young friend Mr. Johnston—and I spent a fortnight in his electorate helping him—I think most members are sorry to lose such a good personal friend as Mr. Cowcher proved to be. In connection with the fight in the Nelson electorate, I have in my possession a circular issued on the eve of the election in which Mr. Layman stated that if the people of the Nelson electorate wanted Irish blight introduced into their district, they should support Mr. William Johnston, the Labour candidate. That I think is playing it low down, and may be that gentleman himself on reflection will admit it. Positively, however, the most glaring instance of misrepresentation during the campaign was the manifesto and extraordinary document published by the member for Pingelly during his campaign. I have had occasion previously to refer to that manifesto.

Mr. Heitmann: Guess who wrote it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not think the member for Pingelly wrote it, but he subscribed his name to it. During the campaign in that constituency, which was fought with much vigour and earnestness on both sides, we found the present member spending most of his time in giving afternoon teas to the ladies, buying refreshments for the male electors, and patting the children on their heads and giving them messages to carry home to their fathers to vote for Mr. Harper. But

what I wish to draw attention to is the extraordinary appeal he made to the electors. He stated that his opponent stood for—

An absolute contradiction of this demand to open the way to prosperity. He has bound himself body and soul and mind to a written printed agreement, which if he transgresses in one iota he will be listed among the politically damned.

I do not know that members on this side are shackled to that extent, and I am surprised at the intelligent electors of Pingelly taking notice of a matter of this kind, but he states further on—

We are beginning to feel the effects of prosperity.

Judging by this remarkable document the hon. member was beginning to feel the effects of something else when he published it.

Shall this continue, or are we going to swap horses and take up the "Mark Time" policy which stagnated the country when the party supported by my opponent held office? We want practical progressive work, not promises and programmes, talk and theory. What has the Opposition done to justify its existence?

The very fact that we have every seat on this side is a towering tribute to the intelligence of the electors and a fitting reply to the hon. member's question as to what the then Opposition had done during the last few years. Then again the manifesto stated—

Let the party supported by my opponent be returned, and what chaos will result. Land Settlement will be stopped, Values will be decreased by order of the Legislation stopping the issue of Titles, and everything will have to wait pending the deliberations of the City and Goldfields Trades Union Bosses, who are solely wage-earning representatives, with little or no stake in the country.

This "stake in the country" gag is just about worn out, and rightly so, but this just shows the straits to which the hon. member was pushed when he had to resort to statements of this kind. Is there any

evidence of this chaos? Is it to be seen in Western Australia to-day owing to the fact that the Labour party hold power with an enormous majority? Is there any evidence that settlement has ceased or been curtailed, or that financial aid is being refused? Further on the writer of this election appeal stated—

My opponent stands for a party who would bring the incipient influence of their hide-bound, Trades Hall governed principles and unions into your very homes, forcing even your own flesh and blood to become slaves of their organisation; and unless your lads bow down and worship at their shrine they must give way to the stranger within your gates which bear the union stamp and label.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

Mr. Price: Was that the speech of the member for Beverley?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He was never capable of putting phrases like that together, but some other gentleman has written this extraordinary document, and prompted him to put his signature to it. In the concluding part of this manifesto published in the *West Australian*, he states—

This should urge you to at the very outset do your utmost to see that at least your sons may continue to work untrammelled for you and on this own homestead—

an appeal to the farmers to rise up in their night and prevent the Labour party getting into power, because they would prevent the sons of the farmers from working on their fathers' farms.

See that the family life is maintained. This appeal to maintain the family life comes strangely from the member for Pingelly, but he went on to state—

Shortly your daughters may be driven for like reasons out of their homes.

Fancy the member for Pingelly uttering such an appeal to the people, and using the astounding threat that of the Labour party were returned the farmers' daughters would be driven out of their homes. I would be ashamed to put such a document before the people, and I am confident that no other member of this Cham-

ber, no matter on which side he sits, would transgress the bounds of decency and fair play to the extent of charging this party with driving daughters from their fathers' roofs. The member for Beverley should be the last to rise up and talk of driving daughters out of their homes.

Mr. Heitmann: Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member went on to urge the electors—

By breaking up the home my opponent's party would strike at the very root of all social life.

Again this man who is out to purify politics! I trust that never will it be found necessary for a Labour candidate to win his way into this Parliament, this deliberate Assembly, by such tactics as these. I trust never will it be necessary for a member of the party I associate with, or for members of the other side of the House to make this appeal to the electors and try to insult their intelligence in the way evidently this manifesto intended. However, we find it had the effect. We find that the hon. member who put his signature to that document has a seat in this Chamber, and will have it for the next three years at any rate; but I believe that what actuated the electors in that district was not so much this appeal from this apostle of purity, but was the railway policy which was placed before the district by the Government, and also divergent opinions on the question of routes of different lines. The people wanted railways and they thought the late member and the late Government would be prepared to give them a better deal than we would be prepared to give them, and it is unfortunate in some respects they were disappointed. They thought they were returning a member to support a strong Government, instead of which they returned a weak member to a weak and discredited Opposition. I am pleased with that portion of the Governor's Speech which states that an amendment to the Agricultural Bank Act is on the stocks. In mingling to a great extent with the farmers in the eastern districts which are effected so much to-day, I have real-

ised that one of the first steps the Government should take is to liberalise the functions of the Agricultural Bank and take away some of the shackles which appear to tie down the trustees of the bank in making advances. In the South-West where the settlers are taking the heart-breaking task of carving out a home for themselves, they have been refused advances by the Agricultural Bank trustees, mainly, I think, because a slight prejudice exists against advancing money in that part of the State. I hope they will overcome this in the future, and I trust the bank will be the means of giving the necessary relief to a large number of settlers urgently in need of relief at the present time. We are told by some members of the Opposition, and by some members of another place, that the very fact of proclaiming that a dry season exists has a bad effect, and that it should not have been proclaimed. But we must recognise that the past policy has been to send selectors out beyond the safe rainfall belt. People have not been guided by the experience of South Australia, where in the early days settlers rushed out beyond Goyder's line of rainfall with unfortunate results. We have in this State, to some extent, the same thing taking place; and while the late Minister for Lands was prepared to settle people 30 or 40 miles away from a railway in the Mount Marshall district, he was not prepared to look with a favourable eye on some parts of the South-West which he never ceases to praise. I brought under the notice of the late Minister that when inspectors were reporting on estates for repurchase, they should consider the Pallingup estate at Broomehill, an estate of 22,000 acres, that was offered for 12s. 6d. an acre originally and for £2 an acre 12 months ago. It was recommended by the advisory board, but the Minister for some reason or other failed to give a stimulus to that district and failed to acquire that property at £2 an acre within a safe rainfall, that would have been the means of placing several selectors on the land, and let a private man step in and secure it at £4 an acre and turn it to account.

I trust, in future, that if any opportunity comes along for the Government to repurchase estates they will do it in districts where there is a sufficient rainfall. It is difficult for a man to succeed in the heavy rainfall belt in the South-West, but I believe that by a system such as was placed before Ministers recently, a system of sound irrigation, a great deal of relief would be brought about when the season proves dry in the eastern districts. Provision should be made to conserve the water now allowed to run to waste in the winter, to provide for irrigation and the development of the dairying industry to a greater extent than has been done in the past. I am pleased the Government propose to do something in the direction of amending the Workers Compensation Act. We pleaded during the last three years that the late Government should amend that Act to give greater consideration and protection to the men engaged in different industries. The rock on which both parties split in the last Parliament was when we tried to give the Minister power to bring in by proclamation certain diseases to secure compensation for miners. If we do no more this session than to amend the Act so that workers who receive injuries can receive compensation from the day they receive the injury, we will at least give belated assistance to unfortunate workers. All people now recognise the benefits of workers' compensation, and the justice of it. It has been laid down for a considerable time that every industry should look after its maimed and injured.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: As an executive officer of the second largest organisation in the State, I am absolutely astounded at the alarming frequency of accidents in our different big industries. Some steps are absolutely necessary to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, so that there will be some consideration given in place of the human toll that has been going on year by year. We have in the timber industry accidents occurring day by day, and week by week, and very little consideration is paid to it. I

think that when powerful companies can pay 10 per cent., they should be called upon by the Government to pay a little more consideration to the women and children bereft of their bread winners, who have met their deaths while carrying on that particular industry. There should be more inspection and registration of accidents occurring. I trust the Government will do something in this direction. It has been suggested in connection with this industry in the South-West I know most about that a tax should be levied to build up a fund that could be utilised to give relief to the dependents of those who meet death or injury in following their occupation, but I believe the best way to overcome the difficulty would be to amend the Workers' Compensation Act and include all classes of employees, making the industry pay for the victims it brings about year after year. Unless some other steps are taken I propose, during this session if possible, to introduce a short measure compelling private companies to carry freight and passengers on their private lines at Government rates. Large areas of Western Australia have been given away to private companies to exploit, and they enjoy practically a principality. The Government are powerless under the present laws to regulate how the traffic should be carried on over these companies' lines, or even to say that any freight should be carried at all. I trust some action will be taken, and possibly it may not be necessary to introduce such a Bill. With regard to the policy of establishing homes for the people, I am pleased at the promised introduction of a measure with this object. Six years ago I was a delegate at the conference of the first miners' conference of the Federated Miners' Union, at which 8,000 or 9,000 men were represented. I brought forward a motion for the establishment of workers' homes and it was carried; and since then I have returned to the question once or twice. I believe there is no country on God's earth offers better opportunities than Western Australia for carrying out a scheme of this character, because here we have land comparatively cheap, and also a timber industry within

a few miles of the metropolis, and State-owned railways to carry the timber. I believe we can carry it out in this country with a far greater degree of success than would be possible in any other country, and I trust our jarrah timber will be utilised in the construction of these buildings. I trust also that the present Government will pay more attention to this industry than past Governments. I need not enlarge to-night on the necessity for going in for a more vigorous and up-to-date policy in connection with forestry or reforestation. I have pleaded in this Chamber for hours at a time, not for replanting timber, which I do not think is necessary, but for the proper policing of the timber we have. I pleaded with the late Minister for Lands to so classify our timber areas as to protect the State in the future. I shall be able to quote figures to prove that the State itself, which should be the most powerful combination, needs protecting at the present time. I hope the Government will bring under the notice of the Federal authorities the necessity for advertising our timbers. At the Royal Show I saw an exhibit by Mr. Malraison, which not only reflected credit on the man that was responsible for turning it out, but also on the State for having such a magnificent asset in the shape of the mines of wealth on the fringe of our south-western seaboard. I have noticed splendid exhibits in Robertson and Moffat's of work of local production, and I trust the Minister for Lands, who is enthusiastic in this direction, will be able to spare a little time—though I have sympathy for him in the great amount of work placed on his shoulders that I fear will overwhelm him—to reorganise the Forestry Department and put the industry on a better footing. Though not the most important industry in the State, yet it is practically responsible for the whole of the prosperity in the South-West. The Government require 400,000 sleepers each year and the Trans-Australian railway, shortly to be started, will absorb a considerable quantity. We have areas of jarrah forests where matured timber is awaiting the fellers. We have a declaration from the

late Minister for Lands that he has reserved three-quarters of a million acres, though when I have pinned him down he has never been able to tell me where this area exists, or what quantity of marketable timber it is likely to produce. As a matter of fact we have to go on imaginary lines drawn across the State, and to trust to officers, who have never been over the locality, as to the figures of what timber we may make use of. We have practically given away the bulk of our timber lands to private companies, who have exploited the industry and built up agencies in different parts of the world, and worked up an export trade which runs into millions. These companies to-day, owing to the buoyancy of trade and the multiplicity of orders, are not prepared to tender for State supplies. We have two railways in the course of construction that are hung up for want of sleepers. We have offers to supply sleepers forward at three-pence per stick advance; and when I quote the advances that have been made during the past few years, it will perhaps establish my claim better than anything else. In 1908 for the standard sleeper required for railway construction, the price was 1s. 1d.; in 1909 it was 1s. 2½d.; to-day, in 1911, for the Southern Cross-Bullfinch railway, it has reached 2s. 1d., an advance in that short space of time of £1 4s. 6½d. per load. I would not object to that advance being brought about if I knew that the men producing the wealth were getting one fraction of it; but they are not. That £1 4s. 6½d. is going into the pockets of private individuals, owing to the fact that private companies, having orders for as much as they can supply, are holding a pistol at the head of the Minister for Works, and demanding their own prices. I shall endeavour by this increase to prove that the State should protect itself even at this late hour. It should have protected itself years ago. The price for hewn sleepers is 1s. 5½d. off the State's own land, when two years ago it was 1s. 3½d. That means an increase of 5s. 2d. per load. The price for sawn sleepers is 2s. 2d., it was 1s. 7d. to 2s. 2d. eighteen months ago, or up to 18s. 1d. per

load increase, and not one farthing is going into the pockets of the men who produce them. It is time the Government adopted a different attitude, so as to be free from the exactions of these companies who have no consideration for their employees in the matter of increased prices, but who are demanding these increases from the Government because they have got the Government in a fix. I pleaded three years ago for the erection of a State saw mill, but Sir Newton Moore ridiculed the idea, and it received scant support from the other side of the House. The contractors, however, put the screw on by raising the price of sleepers 4d. a stick for the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway, and it was only then that the position was realised, and it was recognised that after all there was some merit in a State saw mill. One eventually was established 16 months ago, but we find now that the mill was bungled by the engineers who had no knowledge of building saw-mills. It was quite an obsolete affair, it was just thrown together, and the management was not given any opportunity of showing what could be done, yet in 16 months' time they turned out 5,000 loads of timber at an average rate of £1 12s. a load and showed a profit for that period of £3,000. The State mill at Dwellingup has in the past three months shown a profit of £884, and the wages which have been paid to the men engaged there show the State to be a model employer; they have gone over the minimum to the extent in some cases of 2s. a day; they have good men and they pay them well, and I hope that the position will continue. That shows the success of State enterprise, and if such enterprise brings those results I say the more public servants we have the better. At the present time the demand for sleepers is so great from two departments, the railways and works, that this Government are building another saw-mill. It is within five miles of the existing mill and will have a capacity of 70 loads a day; even then it will be only sufficient for the requirements of the Railway Department and Existing Lines, and I am going to plead with the Minister for Rail-

ways to build another mill near the karri country below Bridgetown. If we are to have a fair deal so far as the State departments are concerned, it will be only by erecting State mills and by paying good wages and attracting the best workmen. It is an intolerable position for the State to have to give away all those magnificent areas at a peppercorn rental. It is intolerable that such fine areas should be given to those companies to enable them to build up a huge export trade, show that they are prospering, and then hold the pistol over the heads of the Works Department and demand increased prices. I am going to give the Government every assistance I possibly can, and I hope that some action will be taken so that the workers may reap direct benefit from any increase which may follow. It would not be so bad if these companies were only cutting from the concession they got from the Governments in times gone by, but they have been operating on every acre of Crown land and reserving their own concessions for future time. We could to-morrow issue an order that no more cutting should be carried on on Crown lands, and this would have the effect of driving them back to their own holdings, and I believe by doing that we may be able to get men to work for the Government to produce our own requirements, and thus enable us to have a reserve stock for the Transcontinental railway. If the Forestry Department were organised on proper lines, and if we had a better system operating, it would prevent matters going through half a dozen channels, as is the case in the Lands Department, before being dealt with and the position would be much better. There has been no confidence shown in the staff of the Forestry Department, and I trust that at the earliest opportunity it will be put on a proper basis and that we will be able to instruct the conservator, knowing that that conservator will have a knowledge of the country and the Crown lands that can be operated on, and by this means orders could be placed with the conservator by the departments. This officer would also be the means of saving a sufficient sum of money, which could

be laid aside in order to bring back to a reproductive state all the cut-out areas. I could speak for hours on this question but I do not think it is right to inflict too much of the subject upon hon. members at this early stage of the session. With regard to the question of State enterprise, I trust the Government will immediately consider the erection of a third State mill in, as I have stated, the karri district, and by that means, although we may be increasing the number of public servants, we will be able to show better results, and we would not be placing ourselves in the humiliating position of having to bow the knee to the companies who have in the past obtained concessions and have done as they pleased without interference. I trust that the Minister for Lands, when he has a little time, will look into this matter—I do not think he will have much time, because I consider it is too much to place on the shoulders of one man the administration of the Lands, the Forestry, and the Agricultural Departments, and it has been pointed out time and again that the Lands Department has 50,000 clients, and if the Minister for Lands is going to give his personal attention to almost every matter I am afraid he is likely to wreck his health if he attempts too much—I repeat if he has a little time, I hope he will re-organise the Forestry Department in the manner I have suggested and go in for planting other woods from which good will result. I would also urge on the Minister for Lands to obtain a report on the 170,000 acres of alleged pine forests in the Kimberley district. We have obtained no information about that further than that this belt of timber is supposed to exist in the Kimberleys. This area was granted to three companies some little time back, and I would like to know what progress, if any, has been made by the companies in exploiting the timber, what sort of timber it is, and what protection the State has brought about for itself in regard to the future of this part of the State.

The Minister for Lands: I can tell you that right off. The concessions are on our hands.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The late Minister

got them off his hands pretty quickly. There is an element of doubt as to what there really is in that part of the country. The member for Kimberley comes from that part of the State, but I suppose it would be difficult for even him to know what the country is like.

Mr. Male: I have never seen that part of the State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The only reliable evidence we have is that of Inspector Halle, who has reported that the timber is equal to that of Queensland and impervious to white ants, but we have never obtained any further information and we cannot get it from the Forestry Department while it remains in its present cramped and shackled condition. It is a good policy for the Government to go in for the planting of pine forests in various parts of the State. In the Albany district we have an immense area of country suitable for the growing of pines, and we should turn our attention to this very important matter, and try and produce forests where the least expense will be incurred.

Mr. Price: There are 2,000 acres reserved there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We should have more. It has been demonstrated in other countries that pine growing is a profitable venture. This can only be done by State enterprise; no private individual can wait for the trees to come to maturity. I was in South Australia a little while ago and I watched the State saw-mill there working on one order, turning out for local orchardists 20,000 fruit cases made from pine trees. The pine forests in South Australia are, on the evidence of the local conservator, earning a profit of £200 an acre. They were planted a good many years after I was born, but they come to maturity very much earlier than the pine forests do in Germany. If our State went in for this system of planting pine forests they would reap a big reward and make provision for posterity's interests. If we do not do something in the near future to protect our forests, which we are denuding very rapidly, it follows, as night follows day, that in a few years' time our exports will dwindle away, and the

experience of America will be forced upon us. We should remember the advice of Messrs. Jefford, Pinchot, and Belloc and other foresters, who have put it on record in America that in 16 years, unless some provision is made, the timber famine will be so disastrous that it will blight every home in the land. All other countries tell us the same tale, and history shows us that other nations, who neglected to provide for their future timber supplies, suffered to a great extent. I trust in Western Australia, before it is too late, this democratic Government will, at least, make some provision for the future, and see that we are not placed in the same unfortunate position as other States of Australia, which have now to resort to the use of steel sleepers. Another matter which might engage the attention of the Government in the future is the question of reducing the cost of living. I am not going over the same ground as other members, namely, the price of meat and other commodities, but I believe by the system of workmen's homes the Government will be able to reduce the rents, which will be a big factor. It is no use giving a man an increase in wages of 5s. if the landlord is going around on Monday to collect 3s. 6d. and the butcher takes the rest on Tuesday. Rents have gone up to an enormous extent in Perth, and I believe the Government should go further than this proposal of building workmen's homes, and that is to establish a State brick yard. In 1905 bricks averaged from 30s. to 38s. a thousand at the kiln; in 1906 they averaged from 35s. to 40s.; in 1910 they averaged from 40s. to 45s., and in 1911 from 45s. to 52s. 6d.; the other class of picked and moulded bricks average up to 85s. a thousand at the present time. Mr. McGowan, the Premier of New South Wales, when faced with a similar position acquired brick works where the plant was obsolete and only primitive methods were employed. At this place they were turning out bricks at a cost of 25s. a thousand, and Mr. McGowan in a few weeks hopes to be able to make them at 19s. 4d. a thousand. If they can do that in New South Wales I think it is a little bit over the odds for holders and



people acquiring their own homes in this State to be called upon to pay 52s. 6d. I trust some sort of action will be taken. People have been going into the question, and on investigation they see that we could as a State acquire a plant, pay 5 per cent. interest and 5 per cent. depreciation, and turn out bricks at 30s. a thousand. The cost of building has increased far beyond its proper proportions, and I trust the Government will take some steps towards reducing it. Timber took an increase last Friday, when all the timber merchants notified the contractors that they were going to force the price up. What is the reason for that?

Mr. Heitmann: They tell us such things come from the law of supply and demand.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The price has gone up to nearly every individual in the State requiring timber, and I trust the Government will look into this matter also, and so earn the lasting gratitude, not only of the worker trying to acquire his own home, but of the great bulk of the people in the State who are opposed to those others who think we have reached the stage when by "honourable understandings" prices can be forced up.

The Premier: They can foresee what is coming, and want to get in while they can.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope their chance will not last much longer. I do not think it is necessary to appeal to the Government to bring about these requirements. Like the rest of us, they have a knowledge of the evils that exist, and I believe they will do their utmost to bring about a change. I have here a lot of figures in connection with different departments, and more particularly in respect to the timber industry, but I am not going to weary you with them to-night. I congratulate the Government on the first step they took, namely the raising of the minimum rate of wage of the railway employees. It has been said that this action may bring about a lot of trouble, and it has created a number of anomalies; but it is easier for men of higher rank to get an improvement of their minimum than it is for the men receiving 7s. a day. I believe that under ordinary conditions a country that can show a good wages'

sheet is on the highroad to success. The wages' sheet is generally accepted as a reliable barometer of a country's prosperity. I trust the Government will receive every assistance, not only from this side but from the opposite side of the House also, in their efforts to improve the conditions of those most in need of improvement, and that they will not be harassed by being asked to concede impossible demands. I recognise that the men are entitled to increases, but I say that under present circumstances, when the State is faced with a season somewhat below the average, people should be patient, and those expecting big things of the Government should recognise that no Government can do more than the financial position will admit of. I hope the Government will try and improve the condition of the school teacher in the country districts. It is the biggest scandal ever known in the history of Western Australia that married men down in my electorate, and in other electorates, should be teaching schools of 30 children strong at a fraction over £2 a week. The present Government should not condone that policy. No matter who goes short in the near future the teachers who are doing so much should receive that recognition which they deserve. For the past five years the Minister for Education has gone along to the annual conference of teachers and told them year after year that they were engaged in an undoubtedly noble work, and that if they persevered in it they would get their reward in the next world. We want the thing improved, for we have married men on a wage that is a disgrace to the department to pay. I trust something will be done in this respect. I want to say in conclusion that although the Labour party has been returned with an enormous majority—

Mr. Heitmann: People still have their homes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: And I hope more will have homes in the near future. What I was about to say was that the tide in our favour is not yet ebbing but, rather, is increasing in volume. The other day when an election was held for that Chamber which some describe—I know they

have no right to so describe it—as an old men's home—I beg pardon, Mr. Speaker, I shall say that when an election was held for another place we found two Labour men, up against powerful opponents, on a roll anything but satisfactory, returned by large majorities. It is an indication that the people require a change in our institutions, and that some radical reform is necessary in that Chamber, which is described as a check on hasty legislation, but it could be better described as the death chamber of democratic hope, and of all progressive legislation. Now a few words in regard to a letter I have just come across. I claim that there is no cause for alarm at the advent of the Labour Government, although some people, it would seem, are trembling at the threatened results. This letter was written to a lady who had a couple of patches of sand to sell. No tax that could be imagined was likely to affect that land; yet when this lady placed her two blocks in the hands of a candidate unsuccessfully running in the liberal interests at the recent election, a Mr. Mitchell—not the member for Northam, but a Mr. Wilford Mitchell—he wrote to this effect—

Dear Madam, I am in receipt of yours of 17th instant and must express regret for my apparent negligence in not replying sooner, the delay having been occasioned by the illness of my typist and congestion of work. It would be impossible for me to put a fixed price on your two lots, the position being that if a person requires a block he generally ascertains what is on the market and picks the cheapest. The advent of the Labour Government into power will not facilitate the sale, as the land tax is going to be reimposed without any exemption and, consequently, the unearned increment is all eaten up by the taxation, therefore speculators are chary of buying except for purposes of utility.

No land tax would be likely to affect those two blocks located at Welshpool.

The land market is decidedly quieter and I can hold out no immediate hope of finding a buyer. Had you expressed

a wish to sell a few months ago I could easily have disposed of the lot. However, please let me know what you are prepared to take, and rest assured I will do by best to carry out your wishes.

Mr. Heitmann : You are not surprised at his being beaten.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : No, but I am surprised that anyone should try to mislead and scare the people like that. This gentleman in the land agency business replies to the effect that he is unable to place the blocks, that speculators will not buy them owing to the advent of this Labour Government, and that it is impossible to get rid of a holding. Yet I have been informed by Mr. McCallum, secretary of the Trades Hall, who owns a block of land at Subiaco and has never yet tried to sell it, that since the change of Government he has received three written applications from would-be buyers. I think if Mr. Wilford Mitchell perseveres in the strain in which he wrote that letter some of the congestion in his office will be relieved, and he will have a little more time to inquire into the state of the market than he then had. I desire to conclude by expressing the hope that the Government will show an earnest desire in the near future to carry into effect the policy they have brought down to the House. It might have been a more comprehensive policy if we had contemplated sitting a few weeks in the summer, but on past experience I do not think we would be likely to get good results if we kept members here until February or March. Next session, however, it is to be hoped the Government will come down with a far-reaching policy which will be duly carried into effect, and as a result of which the party will be spurred into greater efforts in the cause of humanity, efforts which will lead to the lasting good of every taxpayer in the community.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly) : Although opposed to members on the Government side of the House I have to congratulate you, Sir, on the very high and honourable position in which you have been placed, and I hope your

will fill that position in a manner deserving of it. I have not much doubt in that respect. I congratulate the Premier on the great majority he obtained at the last election. I do not see very much difference in opinion at the present time between members on the Government side and those on this side of the House. I have heard a good deal about the platform of the Labour party, and I have heard from members of the Legislative Council that they are a non-party House. I am inclined to think also that this is a non-party House at the present time. Everyone hopes for the future prosperity of Western Australia. I for one will congratulate the Premier and his party if the prosperity of Western Australia is maintained and continued, as I sincerely hope it will be. I do not care whether a Government be branded Labour or Liberal as long as the ship of State is kept merrily moving along. This is of far more importance to me than anything like party politics. The Government have been returned with a large majority, but the same thing applied to the Liberal Government about six years ago, when the state of parties was something like 36 to 14. Still they did not maintain that position, and I would like to point out to members of the Government that this is a very difficult State to administer, and that if Ministers do only one-half of what their supporters are expecting of them, they will have done well. I am rather afraid they have very hard task masters. If the Minister for Mines can do all that is expected of him he is nothing less than a wonder. As I have said, this is a very difficult State to administer, owing to its vast area and its great distances from centres. We are one-third of the continent of Australia, with only about one-fifteenth of population. So it means long distances, and great areas of undeveloped country. For that reason we have a very difficult task to perform, and I for one did think, honestly and sincerely, that the Wilson Government did marvellously good work for Western Australia. I appreciated their efforts and will continue to do so, until I see that I have made a mistake, and I think that day will be a long while coming. Western Australia

has never been so prosperous, as far as employment is concerned. There are no unemployed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There are, I am sorry to say.

Mr. HARPER: Then I am equally sorry to hear it; at all events there are none in the agricultural districts. I for one have been waiting for labour for a long time, and for want of it I have had to make arrangements with my neighbours.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Send to the Labour Bureau.

Mr. HARPER: I have tried the Labour Bureau and could not get suitable men.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: What are you prepared to pay them?

Mr. HARPER: I am paying the usual rate of wages. I am paying one man £3 per week and I am paying another man with his harvester £1 per day. That, in my opinion, shows the prosperity of Western Australia. I hope that prosperity will be maintained, and if it is maintained I do not think that anyone will have any reason to grumble. The Government were returned by a very large majority, and I wonder for what reason the late Government were thrust out in such a fashion. I think it was more than the vote of the Labour party; many liberals must have voted for the Labour Government on that occasion. But I want to say that the Government have a desperate position to fill, and all the Ministers will have my cordial support if they continue the prosperity of the State. With regard to the votes recorded in the last election, no one can gainsay that it was a well-contested election; about 75 per cent. of the people recorded their votes throughout the State, and 72 per cent. of the electors voted in the Pingelly electorate, which was a record. But a large number of people in that district were disfranchised, particularly the people out in the far eastern portion of the constituency, and there were a number of people on the boundaries of the Beverley and Pingelly electorates who could not record their votes. Something ought to be done to correct that state of

affairs, because the people should not be disfranchised through no fault of their own.

Mr. Price: It was the fault of your Government.

Mr. HARPER: I do not know about that, but it is a rather difficult thing to get the votes in the right place. It is difficult to deal with voters who are living just on the boundary of two electorates, and I do not blame the past Government. I am very glad indeed that the Government have decided to reduce the Ministerial salaries. I was against the increased payment to members, and I am sorry that the Government are not going a bit further and proposing to reduce the salaries of members of the Legislative Council. I say that a reduction and retrenchment in that direction would meet with the approval of the people of Western Australia. I noticed in the paper this morning that the Government are accused of not carrying out a plank of the fighting platform.

The Minister for Mines: Who accused them?

Mr. HARPER: A writer in the *West Australian*. I am glad that the Government are not going in for carrying out the fighting platform, and that they are dealing with the matter with deliberation.

Mr. Heitmann: What part of it do you object to?

Mr. HARPER: The plank referring to eight hours per day. It is impossible to carry out farming and harvest work by working eight hours a day.

The Minister for Mines: That is on no platform.

Mr. HARPER: That is part of the general platform of the party.

Mr. Heitmann: Did you not tell the farmers that they could not possibly vote for labour because in the midst of harvesting the workers would be going out on strike?

Mr. HARPER: No, I did not. Everyone knows that it is impossible to farm on the eight hours system. Farming already has to bear all the load that it can carry.

The Minister for Mines: The eight hours system is possible in New Zealand.

Mr. HARPER: New Zealand is different from Western Australia. The land and climate there are much better than they are on the average in Western Australia. At any rate, the present conditions are quite severe enough for the farmer.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: There are successful farms in this State worked on the eight hours principle.

Mr. HARPER: I have not come in contact with them or heard of them.

Mr. Green: Your objection has been offered to eight hours in the case of every industry.

Mr. HARPER: No, it is a very different thing to adopt an eight hours day on a mine, or in other laborious occupations. I recognise that eight hours per day is quite sufficient; in fact, seven hours is enough if one works well in a mine.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: It is only 6½ hours in the north of England.

Mr. HARPER: That is because they work continuously and have no lunch time I suppose. I have worked six hours in a mine, but that was because we never stopped owing to the great quantity of water. I repeat that the present hours on the farms are short enough. I am glad that the Government are going on with the construction of railways in the agricultural area and I am pleased to see in the Speech a reference to the Transcontinental railway. In this regard I would like the Government to consider the advisability of taking that line through Armadale and Norseman and connecting it with the present surveyed route about 250 miles east of Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Mines: And incidentally through Pingelly.

Mr. HARPER: Well, if the Government approved of that it would meet with the approval of the people of Western Australia. The reason for the suggested alteration of route is that the present line to Kalgoorlie is doing very good work. It will cost at the very least 1½ million pounds to construct a line such as we have from Perth to Kalgoorlie, and to take that up and put down another in its place would be a waste of money. I am informed that there is a very good route through the goldfields water catchment.

area, whereby a grade of one in 80 could be obtained instead of the one in 50 grade which exists on the present railway to the goldfields. By this proposed new route we would be opening up good country from 80 to 100 miles south of the eastern line, and this land would be a valuable asset to the State. I hope this line will commend itself to the Government and people of Western Australia and to the Commonwealth authorities.

Mr. Price: Where is that good country?

Mr. HARPER: It is claimed that there is good agricultural land at Norseman, and I am sure if it is good there it ought to continue good westward to the Great Southern railway. At any rate, the land must improve as we go south and the rainfall increases. By running the line further south we would have a better chance of getting more rain than by keeping to the present route. This State has passed an enabling Bill, and we should have two lines by this proposed alteration instead of one if the Transcontinental railway were to replace the present goldfields line. I hope the Government will see their way clear to continue the railway up the Hotham Valley and give railway facilities to other parts of the State. There have been pioneers in the Wandering district, who have lived there for 50 years and who have been very badly served in the matter of railways.

Mr. Heitmann: Some of them said that they did not want a railway to burn down their crops.

Mr. HARPER: That may be so, but if they did that the hon. member must excuse them for not knowing better. If I had heard them express that opinion I would have given them my deepest sympathy.

The Minister for Mines: Did not the late Government promise 12 months ago to send the advisory board to Wandering to report, and they have not done so?

Mr. HARPER: I think they have done so, and I think that the board have recommended a railway in that direction.

The Minister for Mines: No, not to Wandering.

Mr. HARPER: But very near to it. I should be pleased to see that railway built, as well as the Yilliminning-Kulin line and also other lines in those areas. A great deal has been said about the cost of living, and I would be glad to see something done to reduce it. However, I very much doubt if we will have any chance of reducing the cost of living very much in this State. We imported last year from the Eastern States £3,500,000 worth of produce, and our exports are infinitesimally small. It is true that we are exporting a large quantity of gold, but that is a different matter from importing products such as butter, cheese, eggs, and manufactured implements of all descriptions. I want to point out also that the difference in wages between Victoria and Western Australia is exactly £50 per annum per employee; that is, the average amount of salaries and wages paid to employes during 1908 shows a difference of £50 per annum per employee.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That has been altered a good deal since then. There is very little difference now.

Mr. HARPER: Then all the better for Western Australia. I would like to see the wages in Victoria as high as in Western Australia, and then this State would have a chance of competing in these various industries.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Not unless we wiped out some of the rings in Western Australia.

Mr. HARPER: I do not know that there are any more rings in Western Australia than there are in the Eastern States. But I want to make it clear that we are paying in wages per annum £50 per head more than they are in Victoria. Not long ago tenders were invited for certain printing work, and the tender in Victoria was £50 and in Western Australia £90, with the result that the printing went to the Eastern States. That is why we are so harshly treated in Western Australia. According to the imports this State must employ some 50,000 people in the Eastern States. That is where we suffered so much by joining Federation and by the wages in the Eastern States being so much lower than those we pay here. It is that

which makes it so difficult for the Government of Western Australia to control the affairs of State successfully, and I only hope that the Government can do half as much as the members on that side expect of them. If they do all that I do not think they will have done very wrong. I do not think a reduction can take place in the cost of living. There is not likely to be any reduction in the cost of meat for a year or two owing to the drought existing in the North and North-West, and I do not think, owing to the scarcity of products and necessities of life, the cost of living can be brought down in any way.

Mr. Green: The member for Kimberley has told us there are more cattle in Kimberley than can be used.

Mr. HARPER: There is a great sacrifice in weight in bringing down cattle, and they are reduced something like 1 cwt. on the trip; and as it costs about £3 a head to bring them down, it does not give much for growing the cattle. I have heard many optimistic remarks from members on both sides of the House with reference to the mining industry. I only hope they will be realised in the future. I agree with the member for Murchison that mining is not so flourishing as some would like. I would like to know how this resuscitation of the mining industry or increased prosperity is to be brought about.

The Minister for Mines: Who promised it?

Mr. HARPER: I am not saying the Minister for Mines had promised it, but there were certainly a great many on both sides of the House optimistic in regard to the mining industry, and I would like to know how they can bring this prosperity about. No doubt there have been mines mismanaged as members have said, but who is to know whether they have been mismanaged or not? I have heard a great deal about mines being closed down, but I do not know of any mine that has been closed down that is a payable proposition. It would be the last thing a company or anyone concerned in mining would do to close down a mine making a profit. Even if it is not making a profit, if it only makes ends meet, the mine is

kept going in the hope that some day there will be a new development. It is difficult to say whether the public batteries have been all that was desired. I thought they were going to play a very important part in mining in Western Australia, and they have to some extent, but there is this about it, that it has nearly always followed that the owners have not done much development ahead and that, when the ore was taken out and there was nothing but dead ends to look forward to, there was little for anyone to start on. There must be some inducement for people to take up mining. It is a very risky game and I do not know how this great question is to be remedied.

Mr. Heitmann: Booms like the Bullfinch will not do any good.

Mr. HARPER: I agree with the hon. member. We all regret the Bullfinch boom. I voted for the Bullfinch railway. I could not understand that so many large flotations of companies could take place and the result be so different. I hope the mine will turn out well so as to warrant the railway. Again the people were so anxious to buy blocks of town land at such high prices it made others think that people who were buying the land knew what they were doing and that they were not putting money into a wild scheme. I do not know what amendments are to be made to the Arbitration Act, but I am still in favour of the wages boards system as in existence in Victoria, because the people connected with a wages board would be more practical, would understand local requirements better than a Supreme Court Judge or any one advocate in a large country like Western Australia.

Mr. Heitmann: It sometimes takes twelve months in Victoria to apply for a board.

Mr. HARPER: If the hon. member had a local board in Cue, surely it would be sufficient. It could be easily arranged for five or six practical men to sit on each side. That would be a far better way to settle disputes than to have the decision of a Supreme Court Judge who lives five or six hundred miles away from the spot.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Under the wages-board system there is an independent

chairman who knows nothing about the industry.

Mr. HARPER: I understand the two sides select a chairman and he can be got in the district. I should think that would be a more practical way of dealing with a difficult problem.

Mr. Heitmann: What is wrong with the Arbitration Act?

Mr. HARPER: Very often awards are given and little notice is taken of them.

Mr. Heitmann: When?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARPER: There are plenty of cases where they do not comply with the conditions of the award.

Mr. Underwood: Would you state one case?

Mr. HARPER: I know of several, but I do not remember them at the present time. I am pleased that the powers of the Agricultural Bank are to be enlarged. The bank has done great work in the development of the land in Western Australia, but it has not done all the development. I gather from information I have had from the Associated Banks, insurance companies and private concerns, that there is something like four or five millions of money in the agricultural areas from these institutions.

Mr. Underwood: Do they get any interest on it?

Mr. HARPER: Of course; and the Agricultural Bank gets interest. I know several cases where people have left the Agricultural Bank and gone to the associated banks rather than stick to the former.

Mr. Heitmann: Rather than put up with the humbug of the past administration.

Mr. HARPER: I hope if there is any humbug it can be remedied. No doubt people gain by experience. I hope to see improvements in this direction. A great deal has been said about immigration. No doubt a large number of immigrants who come out here are not suited to the conditions, but people have to be patient with them, and they themselves will have to be somewhat patient, but in time they will become good citizens. It is useless for the people of Australia and more par-

ticularly Western Australia to go in for a great scheme of defence if we have not the population.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What good is population unless we can feed them?

Mr. HARPER: I think we have plenty of resources in Western Australia to feed a large population.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There are hundreds of men in Perth out of work.

Mr. HARPER: It all depends upon how they apply themselves and tackle what is to be done. There is plenty to do and with remuneration and prospects for the future. I have travelled a great deal, and I think the prospects for the immigrants here are certainly equal to those in any other part of the world. It is impossible to go in for a great scheme of defence without population. Mr. Chamberlain has said, "Get population and all other things will be added to you." I quite agree with Mr. Chamberlain; we want more population in Western Australia. I will not detain the House much longer, but I would like to reply to the wild vituperations of the member for Forrest who was disappointed because he was not successful in getting his man returned. Everyone is not so fortunate as the hon. member in being unopposed. He was at liberty to roam the country and vilify anyone far and wide.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You never heard me vilify anyone.

Mr. HARPER: No; I did not, but I heard it said—

Mr. O'Loughlen: I did not go about the country vilifying people. The hon. member should prove it or withdraw.

Mr. HARPER: I will withdraw. But certainly the hon. member did so to-night under the privileges of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: No member can vilify anyone under the privileges of this House. The hon. member must withdraw that as it is a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. HARPER: I do not wish to cast a reflection on the Chair so I withdraw. I do not want to be drawn into saying anything about my opponents. The hon. member, of course, stands in a more

favoured position because he has a pocket borough in Forrest; everyone is not privileged to the same extent. I will not say anything further in that direction, I will treat the matter with the contempt it deserves. I have again to congratulate the Government on their great victory, I believe they are sincere and I hope they will keep a firm check on the finances of the State, and that they will not tax those who have anything out of existence. The Government will not have a great deal of revenue to handle and for that reason I would suggest that they should be very economical with what will be at their disposal, and, being sincere in their work, as I believe they are, I trust they will be able to carry this country through to a successful issue.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

*House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 15th November, 1911.*

	Page
Questions: Timber lands .....	272
Liquor Trade, hawking amongst camps .....	272
Police Force retirements .....	272
Papers presented .....	272
Papers: Licensing Courts, Cue and Kalgoorlie .....	273
Royal Commission Miners' Lung Diseases .....	274
Mining Forfeiture, Mikalo .....	277
Railway Construction, Tambellup-Ongerup .....	277
Arbitration Act Breaches .....	277
Woodline, Nallen .....	277
Doodlakine land sale .....	281
Returns: Salaries to State servants .....	277
Railway construction, contract and day labour .....	278
Bills: Divorce Amendment, 2a. ....	281
Criminal Code Amendment, 2a. ....	283
Local Courts Act Amendment, 2a. ....	288

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION—TIMBER LANDS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON (for Mr. O'Loughlen) asked the Minister for Lands:—1, What is the approximate area of timber lands still in the possession of the Crown, apart from concessions and permits? 2,

What is the approximate area of Crown lands now being operated on by different companies?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:—1, The area of jarrah and karri country within the State was estimated by the late Ednie Brown at approximately 9,200,000 acres; the area held under concessions, timber leases, and sawmilling permits on the 30th June last was 1,304,282 acres, leaving an approximate area of 7,896,718 acres still in the possession of the Crown. 2, The information is not at present available, but will be obtained.

### QUESTION — LIQUOR TRADE, HAWKING AMONGST CAMPS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON (for Mr. O'Loughlen) asked the Premier:—1, Is he aware that large quantities of liquor are being hawked amongst the timber camps of the South-West? 2, Will he take steps to get a better control of such trade?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied:—1, No, except by publicans who send liquor to the mills under orders from the mill hands. 2, Under above conditions there is no law to prevent such action.

### QUESTION—POLICE FORCE RETIREMENTS.

Mr. DWYER asked the Premier:—1, Is there any age fixed for the retirement of members and officers of the Police Force? 2, If not, is it the intention of the Government to fix same by regulation in accordance with the request of the recent deputation to the Colonial Secretary.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied:—1, No. 2, The question is now receiving the consideration of the Government.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, By-laws of the Leederville Municipality. 2, By-laws of the Victoria Park Local Board of Health.