

their constituents and ask permission to take office in the Ministry; and it is well known that in South Australia the constant changing from one side of the House to the other in successive Ministries was the reason why, for a long time, no Parliament existed in South Australia for more than 12 months. [HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is so.] And that state of affairs should, I think, be deprecated. It is a most unwholesome principle, for it has a tendency to encourage unhealthy ambition in hon. members, and party strife, and results in the business of the country being interrupted for the sake of the emoluments of office. I trust such a condition of affairs will never prevail in this State. I think it is undoubtedly for the benefit of the country that members should realise that, in accepting office, they will have the responsibility of meeting their constituents and justifying their action, giving reasons why they have taken office.

HON. W. MALEY: I move the adjournment of the debate.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I second that.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—DISCUSSION.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move that this House do now adjourn.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: We adjourn very early to-night. Is it probable that the debate will be finished to-morrow? It is well if hon. members can be prepared to finish to-morrow evening, so as to meet the views of country members who wish to get away.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: So far, we have had only two speeches. At this rate, the debate on the Address will take two months.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (HON. C. SOMMERS): Of course, I desire that the debate should terminate as early as possible, so that we may adjourn for a fortnight.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Hear, hear. Adjourn to-morrow night.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Do we not want the Supply Bill first?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That will not be down for a fortnight.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I should like to refer to a small matter which has evidently

escaped the attention of other members, in reference to our present accommodation in this House and its precincts. I know, sir, that you have worked very hard in this matter, and the thanks of the House are certainly due to you for the trouble you have taken.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is out of order.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I may not be in order, but I think there is nothing wrong in expressing the opinion which I know is entertained by all hon. members. During our absence you, sir, have done your best to make us comfortable, and it would show a great want of appreciation on our part if we did not express our thanks. I should like to place on record our high appreciation of the comforts we, as representatives of the people, now enjoy; and I know that in so doing I am echoing the feelings of every member of this House.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 8:45 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 2nd July, 1901.*

Members Sworn, additional—Questions to Ministers, Procedure—Question, Strike at Fremantle—Questions, W.A. Bushmen (Contingent), Bonus, Furlough—Question or Motion—Address-in-reply, second day of debate—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### MEMBERS SWORN, ADDITIONAL.

The Clerk (Mr. C. Lee Steere) having produced returns to writs showing that Mr. Robert David Hutchinson had been elected for Geraldton, Mr. Albert Young Hassell for Plantagenet, and Mr. Patrick Stone for Greenough, those members took the oath and subscribed the roll.

# QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS— PROCEDURE.

Dr. Hicks having given notice of a question referring to Crown lands:

The SPEAKER said: I think it would be advisable if the Premier would tell us to whom questions should be directed with reference to Crown lands. The member for Roebourne gave notice of a question he intended putting to the Minister for Lands; but as the Minister for Lands does not sit in this House, it seems rather nonsense that the notice should appear in our Minutes.

The PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): I would suggest that the notice be amended, and that I be asked the question.

DR. HICKS: I will ask the Premier to answer the question.

## QUESTION—STRIKE AT FREMANTLE.

MR. J. GARDINER: I would like to ask, without notice, what steps the Commissioner of Railways has taken to settle the impending strike at Fremantle.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. J. Holmes): I can only say it was proposed this morning to overcome the difficulty by appointing a board, consisting of one of the heads of the Railway Department, a similar officer from the Public Works Department, an employee from each department, and a chairman to be mutually agreed upon. The Western Australian Railway Employees' Association, however, has refused to nominate an employee to act upon that board; consequently the attempts to settle the matter have failed, and to my mind the responsibility rests with the Western Australian Railway Employees' Association.

## QUESTION—W.A. BUSHMEN (CONTINGENT), BONUS.

MR. W. J. GEORGE asked the Premier if it was a fact that the 5s. per day provided by the Chartered Company of Rhodesia as a bonus to be paid to the W.A. Bushmen had been used by the Department to pay the rates of pay gazetted on the formation of the corps.

THE PREMIER replied: No bonus was provided by the Chartered Company.

MR. GEORGE: If I may, without notice, I would ask whether any funds at

all have been received from the Chartered Company?

THE PREMIER: I believe not.

## QUESTION—W.A. BUSHMEN (CONTINGENT), FURLOUGH.

MR. GEORGE asked the Premier why the Bushmen's Corps were not placed on equal terms with the other Contingents, and allowed 90 days' furlough on their discharge.

THE PREMIER replied: It was considered inexpedient, owing to the want of funds.

## QUESTION OR MOTION.

MR. F. C. MONGER had given notice of the following question to the Premier:

1, What works were referred to in his speech of 11th June, which were underestimated to the extent of £8,000,000. 2, To what extent has the reappropriation from rolling-stock of £200,000 been recouped by further grants. 3, To what extent the amount of reappropriation from the Fremantle Dock has been made available for the Fremantle Harbour Works.

THE SPEAKER: I wish to draw the attention of the member for York to the question of which he has given notice; and to ask if he will put it in the form of a motion. Members wanting information requiring figures should always endeavour to obtain it by means of a motion for a return, so that the House may have an opportunity of saying whether they think such a return should be made or not.

MR. MONGER: I beg to give notice that to-morrow I shall move the question which now stands in my name, in the shape of a motion.

THE SPEAKER: You had better consult with the Clerk as to the form of the motion.

MR. MONGER: I will, sir.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### SECOND DAY OF DEBATE.

The Address-in-reply having been moved and seconded at the previous sitting,

HON. F. H. PLESSE (Williams) said: Before dealing with the various matters which it is my intention to deal with, in regard to the Speech which has been delivered to us by His Excellency, I

would like to say, as one of the members so long associated with the late member for West Kimberley, that I feel I am voicing the opinion of most of the members of the House in expressing my sincere regret at the loss which the country has sustained by the death of that member. I am sure that all those who have been associated with him, both in this House and outside of it, will agree that not only have we lost a good friend and a useful citizen, and also one who has been of great service to the State, but that the loss which this country has sustained in many other directions is almost irreparable. I feel that in making these few remarks I should allude to the services of this gentleman in the cause of politics. Since 1887 he has held a seat—in this House since the introduction of responsible government. The seat which he held prior to that time was one in the old Legislative Council. Therefore, he has been long associated with the politics of this country, as well as with its development in many directions; first as an explorer, and later as one who has taken a keen interest in it from financial, agricultural, and pastoral points of view: indeed, in so many directions that it would be quite impossible to draw attention to all the avenues in which he had interests. I would like to say on this the first occasion I have had an opportunity of addressing the House from the position I now occupy, that I am situated similarly to those who now fill a position on the Government benches; that is to say, my position is a novelty to me, as theirs is to those who have held seats on the opposite side of the House for so many years. We have held the position on the opposite side of the House for a very long time, during the past 10 years I may say; but we are now called upon to take up a position on this side of the House. Notwithstanding the fact that our positions have been changed in regard to seats, I take it that our object will be—and I am sure that mine will be—to deal with all matters with the same interest and regard to the country's welfare as they have been dealt with in the past. As for the expressions of regret for the death of Her Majesty which are embodied in the Speech, I also would like to state that I join in those expressions of regret, and feel that in losing

Her Majesty we have lost a reigning head who has done very much in the interests of the greatness of this Empire. The accession of His Majesty King Edward to the Throne is an event which we, of course, may congratulate ourselves upon, and we only hope that he may be long spared to continue his reign, and that this may be one as beneficent as that of his predecessor. In regard to the consummation of the Commonwealth, I may say, as one who took a very great interest in this matter, and one who in this House opposed very strongly its inauguration, that now the Commonwealth has become an accomplished fact throughout Australia, and we have joined with the other States to make Australia that nation which we all hope to see it become, it is time for those who took a part in opposing the introduction of the Commonwealth to do our best to assist those others who, probably more sanguine of its success, assisted in bringing it about. Notwithstanding the fact that I felt at the time there were strong objections to the introduction of the Commonwealth as regards this State and to our joining in with the other States, I hope that the future will prove that the doubts which we felt were such as were not, perhaps, well founded. Now with regard to the Speech generally, I may say it is not my intention to follow it line by line, nor to take it in the rotation as it has been given to us, but to take the points from time to time as they occur to me, and I shall deal with them in the order in which I think they ought to be dealt with for the purpose of placing before the House my opinion on the matters which it contains. The Premier, when speaking at the Queen's Hall during last month, stated, and I will use his own words:—

I can promise you that I realize the responsibility of my position, and that I have henceforth to justify the confidence of the people.

I am sure the Premier did realise the responsibility of his position, and no doubt in making that statement he was absolutely in earnest; and I am quite confident that his intention is to do all that may be in the interest of this State; but, after all, we must not forget this—the Premier at that time was placed in a new role, and, as I take it, he found

it very irksome indeed to make himself believe that his utterances were serious. I am quite confident that many of those who had the opportunity of listening to that gentleman on that night will agree with me that his remarks, although in a measure received with acclamation by many of his hearers, were after all forced, and did not altogether prove to his hearers that he had a thorough grasp of his subject. It is all very well to take up a position such as he has taken up and to come before the country and say that he is able to do better than his predecessors. I say that it is very difficult for him to do even as well as his predecessors have done. I am sure of this fact—time will prove that it will be difficult indeed to accomplish anything like the success which has attached to the administration of his predecessors.

A MEMBER: He has not got a chest like you had.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: He can find the chest if he wants it. Now in regard to his remarks, it must be a satisfaction to the general public to know that people well versed in affairs of State occupy prominent positions in the Government ranks. That we do not disagree with; no doubt they do. And among the Ministers to-day forming the Cabinet are some who have sat for many years in this House and have had long experience of the parliamentary usages of this House, and therefore should be well able to follow all proceedings and to deal with all matters which may from time to time crop up. At the same time I may say I do not look upon the members of the Government as a happy family. If we go back to the past we shall find that they in the days gone by are men who, although together to-day, were not always on the best of terms politically; and to show this we have only to refer to some expressions used by certain of the members who are to-day filling the positions of Ministers. In the case of the member for North-East Coolgardie, we shall find that he had no confidence in the present Premier of the State. He had no reason to withhold his expression of opinion with regard to that.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Why attack the dead?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Well I may say, in regard to attacking the dead, that the

hon. member for Cue often had the opportunity here of dealing with many matters, and that he never lost an opportunity on any occasion of bringing the past Government under the lash, if necessary. Now for all I know the Ministers who have come together may perhaps be able to do as well for the country as those who have worked for it in the past; but I would like to say, for a start, that the appointment of the Commissioner of Railways is, I am sure, quite unique in Australian history, and I may also say that it is one of the most glaring instances which has come under our notice of such a course being taken as was taken by the Premier in regard to the appointment of that gentleman. The names of certain gentlemen were submitted to His Excellency, and amongst them the name of the member for East Fremantle (Hon. J. J. Holmes). Subsequently we find that this hon. gentleman refused to take up the position; but having returned to this State, he, after a great deal of persuasion, did take it up, although he had sent a wire from Melbourne assuring those whom he was joining that they were the weakest Government he could have been associated with.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Will you give your authority for these statements?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: As to some of the matters which have been brought forward, the Premier mentioned that it was his intention to bring about careful administration and to deal economically with the public finances. With that object in view, the Railway Department and the Public Works Department were divided, and that was one of the things which I myself had previously suggested. It is a step in the right direction. The division will, no doubt, enable the Government to deal with these two enormous departments; and taking into consideration the work of the past, and knowing it as well as I do, I think a very great deal will be gained by the division which has taken place. Now as to "straightening out the finances," which has been alluded to, no doubt an indiscreet utterance was made, for it was suggested that the finances needed straightening out; but I think the House will agree with me there was no justification for the statement that has been made, and

has been supported by the recent utterances of the Premier himself. Another matter touched on at that time was the Excess Bill. The Premier said it was his intention to bring down an Excess Bill of £500,000. I am confident this must be a mistake, because to bring down an Excess Bill of £500,000 is out of the question. He has not given any explanation of what that Excess Bill is. It is not an Excess Bill on the consolidated revenue, but an Excess Bill which involves an expenditure on loan items. There has been a practice to vote certain moneys in the past for the carrying out of loan works, and perhaps the money provided has not been sufficient for the carrying out of these works, with the result that we have had to resort to an Excess Bill; but that does not prove that the money may not have been available. It was only because the appropriation was not sufficient. Therefore, I take it the Excess Bill the hon. gentleman alluded to was not an Excess Bill in connection with the consolidated revenue, but one combining the consolidated revenue and the loan revenue as well. Now, with regard to the question of the loans, that has been touched upon very frequently. It has been pointed out that the late Administration had committed the country to an immense debt, and that the amount would reach the enormous sum of 17 millions sterling. If we take the words of the hon. gentleman when speaking, we find that he said:

Up to and including the Loan Act in 1896, public works were authorised to the extent of £9,324,000, and of this sum £7,600,176 has been spent. For the loan works in hand £4,647,000 was required. From that we deduct the balance, which I have just said is available, namely £1,700,000, and we find ourselves committed to £2,947,000, or in round numbers £3,000,000.

I think that when making such a statement as I have quoted, he should have borne the assertion out by facts, which he ought to have placed before the country. He has not done so, but he has really given a statement which says £3,000,000 will be required later on for the purpose of works which he asserts were authorised but under-estimated. With regard to the £1,700,000 which he says he had in hand, we find that a little earlier in his speech he stated he had no money at all, and would have to borrow £550,000. As

to this I would like to point out he goes on to say :

That is the amount of the unraised balances of existing authorisations. In addition to that we shall have to finance Treasury bills for £1,000,000 which fall due at the end of December. Thus, you see, this Government stands committed to a loan of £4,550,000.

Here the hon. gentleman is £1,000,000 out, because, as you will see, he is dealing with Treasury bills for over a million sterling that have already been provided for in the loan authorisations, which were included in the amount of the indebtedness of the country; so that million is a million in excess of the amount which it is necessary for the country to provide, and he is in error in making provision for this million as stated.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: It has to be borrowed.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: He goes on to say later that in addition to this there will be £500,000 for a water supply; and "if Parliament insists upon that work being carried out we shall then be pledged to a loan of £5,000,000." I say it is not a loan of £5,000,000. Although the country is pledged to £13,336,000, which is the amount of the authorisation, in that amount due provision has been made for this £1,000,000 of Treasury bills, so that sum will not be in addition to our present indebtedness. Therefore, if we have £3,000,000 which has been mentioned as the amount required for the extra authorisation, we shall find that this, added to £13,336,000, will give us £16,336,000, and not £17,336,000. The hon. gentleman misstated the facts to the extent of a million sterling. To that extent he misled the country by stating that £17,000,000 would be required, whereas we find that it will be £1,000,000 short, for the reason that this money, which I mentioned just now, was previously included in the indebtedness of the country. As to the works which, it is stated, are under-estimated, I would like to say that if the House will refer to the statements issued, they will find that sufficient money has been provided for the carrying out of all the works which have been authorised, with the exception of the Coolgardie Water Supply, Fremantle Harbour Works, Dock and Slip, and the Menzies-Leonora Railway, with any other work that may be

enumerated, and in these are works which have had to be undertaken since the arrangement for this Loan Act. For instance, railway stock could not be taken as an item which we could look upon as a new work, because it is an amount which has to be provided for to meet the exigencies of the time. Therefore it is not a new work which the late Government were responsible for. We must provide sufficient rolling-stock to carry on the work of our railways. Then there are many other items I could allude to—but it is unnecessary for me to touch upon them—for which provision will have to be made, and for which provision has been made in the past loan authorisations. There has been some question as to the public indebtedness of the State, and this indeed has had a most detrimental influence upon the colony in the past. Statements such as those I have alluded to go on uncontradicted, and have had more to do with any depression which may exist, or may have more to do with it in the future, than anything else which has transpired. Now, if we take the public receipts by proceeds of loan, it will be found that the total amount received was £10,232,236. Balance of loan raised of £880,900, but not taken to account, say £267,975. Then there will be Treasury bills of £1,000,000 and the local inscribed stock £961,800, making a total of liabilities of £12,461,511. Of this amount, we had, up to the 31st March last, expended £11,593,792, leaving a balance of £867,719 to meet current expenditure; but if we raise the balance of the loan authorisation available, £570,000 which the Premier mentions as the amount available and which has to be raised, that, if credited to the balance mentioned, gives us £1,437,719 available to meet obligations as enumerated in last return from Treasury, and noted in column as unexpended amounts of undertakings on schedule to Loan Act amounting to £1,706,687, showing an apparent shortage of £268,968. Of the unexpended balances there is an amount of £231,168, which is opposite the item Miscellaneous, including discounts, and should be credited against undertakings, it not being works, thus reducing that amount to £1,475,519, or an apparent shortage of £37,800; therefore it may be assumed there is sufficient money avail-

able to provide balances for all works enumerated in the schedule excepting the £37,800 I have mentioned. The additional works we have obligations for, and which I take it have to be met, amount to £2,032,000, as follow:—The Cue-Nan-nine railway, £35,000; Menzies to Mount Leonora railway, £100,000; Brown Hill loop line, £14,000; additions and improvements, £250,000; workshops, £200,000; rolling-stock, £484,000; Fremantle Harbour Works, £100,000; dock and slip, £200,000; Coolgardie Water Supply, £461,000; Boulder duplication, £36,000; relaying Southern Cross to Coolgardie railway, £150,000; or a total of £2,030,000; so I cannot see how it is possible for the Premier to assume there is a necessity for a further £3,000,000 in this direction. If we are to make provision for this, we will take the total authorisation of public debts as £13,336,000. From this we can take £69,700 for debentures redeemed, and amount of accrued sinking fund £413,747, these two sums added being £483,447, leaving a balance of £12,852,553. To this should be added the £2,032,000 obligations to be met and the £37,800 previously alluded to; so we have a total indebtedness of £14,922,353, and not of £17,000,000 as assumed by the Premier. It has been quite a mistake to put forth the statement that this State will be indebted, by the time these moneys are expended, to the extent of £17,000,000, because such statements have a most detrimental influence on the position of the country and on its progress. Then we have heard a great deal about a crisis which is said to have been brought about by the large expenditure undertaken by the late Administration, and by the tremendous requirements that are likely to come on us in the immediate future. I say there is no sign of a crisis, which lives only in the imagination of the many detractors of this country; and no doubt a section of the Press is responsible for this to a large extent, by the misrepresentations which have been made in regard to the finances, and which have had a most detrimental effect in regard to many of our undertakings. If the Press had given truthful statements instead of misrepresentations in regard to many of the actions of the past

Administration, we would have found matters work much more easily than they have done of late. Of course, there is an object in all this. A section of the Press has an object, probably in carrying out the desires of that party which the particular writers intend to support; and it may matter not to them what course they take, provided they attain the object they have in view. I will draw the attention of the House to a circumstance which occurred a few days ago. A statement has been published in one of the leading newspapers in the State, occupying a whole page, in which there appears a number of figures professing to set forth the financial condition of the country. The statement no doubt has been prepared very carefully by someone who certainly knew what he was about; with the result that a great portion of the statement is thoroughly accurate. But we find that in the statement there are figures intended to show that the public debt of the State will amount to £17,322,695, after making allowance for commitments and for certain debits which have to be allowed for. In that statement, I may say that those who have been responsible for its publication have ignored the credits which stand in the books of the Treasury in regard to Loan Account; and those credits amount to £1,259,356. So there is a misstatement which on the face of it, should have been contradicted by the Colonial Treasurer; because in a matter of this kind these things are seen and read, and they should be corrected when their effect is to mislead the public, for if a matter of this kind goes forth in a misleading form, it has a most detrimental effect on the interests of the country. Then I am assured the attention of the editor of that newspaper was drawn to certain errors in that statement; yet although he knew the statement as published was incorrect, he permitted it to continue and mislead people. I say that many of these things are done wilfully, no doubt with the intention of misleading; and some of the misleading statements published in the Press have had a most detrimental influence on the country in the past, and will continue to have in the future unless a different course is taken. Why those who are supposed to take such an interest in the

affairs of this country should adopt such tactics is difficult for me or anybody to understand. The present Premier shelters himself behind the departmental officers, and makes accusations against them by stating that certain officers who were responsible in the past for preparing estimates for the Government had given estimates in regard to certain works, which estimates were not correct. So he says; but in regard to these estimates I say that, from what I knew of them in the past, and I am speaking only of matters connected with loan expenditure, those estimates were as a rule faithfully followed; although that has not always been the case in connection with works undertaken out of consolidated revenue. I did myself take exception to that method in regard to those works, and I think it was a practice which should not be followed; but in regard to loan expenditure I say that, as a rule and almost on every occasion, the estimates prepared by the officers for the Cabinet were adhered to. In regard to the extent of shortage in the railway rolling-stock, which has been alluded to so frequently, the Premier has said :

I am advised we have in stock 228 locomotives, 4,818 wagons, not including passenger carriages and other vehicles.

Then he goes on to say :

We require, before the existing lines can be considered properly equipped, another 95 engines, besides other vehicles.

The Premier would thus lead the people to believe that the present Government are taking steps to provide this additional rolling-stock; whereas most of this rolling-stock had been ordered previously to the present Government coming into office, the provision made by the late Administration amounting to something like £600,000. No doubt that is a necessary provision, and one which the country should make; but I would like to point out that while there is a credit of about £110,000 for rolling-stock, yet most of the rolling-stock which will arrive during the twelve months referred to by the Premier is rolling-stock which has been purchased by his predecessors, and therefore is rolling-stock which the hon. gentleman cannot take the credit of having been instrumental in providing. One might be led to believe, by the Premier's speech, that the Premier and those

associated with him had seen the necessity for obtaining all this additional rolling-stock, and had taken time by the forelock by immediately sending forward the order. I hope that when we obtain some information which we may look for in a return to be laid before us, we will find that the rolling-stock mentioned by the hon. gentleman was ordered by the late Government, and that the present Government have had nothing to do with it.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS :** We shall have to honour the bill.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE :** The fact that £600,000 worth of additional rolling-stock is required for the railways should be a proof that the country must be advancing. I remember that in 1897 and 1898, there was no stronger opponent to the purchase of additional rolling stock than the present Premier, who on one or two occasions cautioned the Government about their rolling-stock purchases, and said the country would be put to an enormous expense, and he preached caution in every direction. The present Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Illingworth) also, about the same period, interjected on one occasion that he hoped I, as Minister controlling the department, would not follow the same course which had been followed in Victoria, and have all the railway sidings standing full of rolling-stock which could not be used.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER :** I would say the same again.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE :** Those were the cautions uttered in 1897; and while the present Premier and the present Treasurer are now the strongest advocates for the equipment of the railways with additional rolling-stock, yet in the period I have mentioned they were the very men who did their best to prevent the proper equipment of the railways with rolling-stock. Referring to that period in particular, I say that no one in this House or out of it could have spoken of the future in regard to the requirements of a great concern such as the railways with anything like reliability, because in 1897 there was a depression coming on the colony, and many people spoke words of caution in regard to the equipment of the railways. In 1898 the depression still continued, though showing signs of abatement;

until in 1899 matters began to assume a better aspect. The Government at that time were only too anxious to thoroughly equip the railways, and even the departmental officers who have been alluded to by the present Premier, were rather cautious at that time in regard to the recommendations they made. If the files of papers in the office were turned up, there would be found expressions of opinion showing that there was no necessity for ordering further rolling-stock at the end of 1897 or in 1898; but as improvement followed, orders were sent forward. The country does not expect such statements to be made as those I have alluded to, and I think credit should be given to those Ministers who, during the last six or eight months of the late Administration, took the opportunity of ordering the large quantity of additional rolling-stock that is now coming forward. I was not in the department at that time, but I think that in ordering the additional rolling-stock the Ministers then in office were fully justified, as has been proved by later events. There have been great complaints in regard to the want of rolling-stock, we know; but I say those persons who have complained would probably have acted in the same way as did the Ministers against whom the complaints have been directed.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER :** What about the debits as well as the credits?

**HON. F. H. PIESSE :** In regard to the establishment of a Public Works Board, which has been alluded to in the Speech, I may say this is only carrying out the idea previously expressed by many members who are now on the Opposition side of the House. This, no doubt, is a step in the right direction, and should ultimately prove of great service to the country; but from my experience and from inquiries made, I find that the Public Works Board elsewhere has not proved altogether the blessing that many people expected, even in the Eastern States, where there have been great difficulties in regard to these questions. Referring next to a Harbour Trust, which is mentioned in the Speech, I think the appointment of such a trust is the right course to take; and this again is taking a leaf out of the book of the late Administration, who intended to place these harbours under a



trust as soon as the works in progress were completed. In regard to the construction of new railways, I would like to say there is a matter here alluded to by the Premier when he said he recognised the necessity for roads throughout the State, and he believed that the cheapest road was the railroad. This expression of opinion, however, is not in accordance with the Governor's Speech, for the references there made are not in favour of the advance of railways. The Speech says that surveys will be made and information placed before the members of this House. It is necessary that surveys should be made, and I have advocated that course before; but when I did advocate it in this House some years ago, one of the strongest opponents of survey before construction was decided on was the present Premier. This again points to his inconsistency in matters of public concern. Then in regard to immigration, mention is made in the Speech that it is intended to bring in a desirable class of farm labourers and orchardists for farm and garden work. But we remember also that only a short time ago a deputation waited on the hon. gentleman in regard to the prohibition of undesirable immigrants, and we remember too the reply he gave at that time, that it was intended to prohibit these people from coming into the country. Italian immigrants were then alluded to, and one cannot but infer from the newspaper report of what was said at that deputation, that it was then the intention of the Government to strictly adhere to the course stated, that they would prohibit Italian and other classes of labourers they considered undesirable from coming here. But we find the hon. gentleman has changed his tactics, for by the time he met the people in the election hall he there said:—

The Labour people, however, do not fear competition, and I am not going to favour them to the extent of saying that they shall not have competition. . . . But there is such a thing as unfair competition, in which the assistance of the law has to be obtained, as in this Act.

If that is the way the hon. gentleman looks at it, that this kind of labour is unfair competition, then I say it is not the proper way to look at the question. It seems to me we are doing that which a young country should not do, in taking the course stated by the hon. gentleman;

for what we require here is labour; we require people to help us to develop the country. Assistance should be given to those who are anxious to come here and help us in developing the lands of this State. I take it that in regard to the hon. gentleman's attitude on this question, this is one of the instances of "climbing down," because it shows that the Government saw they were likely to be in trouble in regard to this matter. Then we come to the question of removing the prohibition on imported fruit; and in regard to this matter, as one of the largest growers of fruit and speaking for many smaller growers who have written to me on the subject, I say the growers in this country do not dread competition, that they are ready to face it; but what they do dread is the introduction of diseases which may interfere with the industries in which they are interested, and in which smaller men are engaged. Notwithstanding the fact that the most stringent regulations may be in operation, it will be difficult indeed to so control the importation of fruit into this State that there will be a possibility, and I may say also a probability, of disease getting into the country. I have had an instance placed before me recently of the same kind of thing occurring in Queensland. Prohibition was removed; and five years afterwards, although proper measures were taken to deal with the importation, the disease had nevertheless become rampant. There are in this country several fruit-growers who were engaged in the cultivation of fruit in that State, and they have come over for the purpose of carrying on their business here, and now they find that the same thing which they have come away from is following them. Therefore the industry is likely to suffer. Now I take it that it would have been in the interest of the State to continue the present prohibition at any rate until the end of the year, and meanwhile the matter could have been dealt with by a select committee of this House. If inquiries had been made, no doubt information would have been elicited which would have given such statistics in regard to the culture of fruit as would, I think, have set at rest any doubts as to its being produced in sufficient quantities at an early date. We have been many times accused

of having made this statement before, and that for some years. About four or five years ago statements were made that it was hoped the country would soon be able to produce sufficient fruit for the consumption of the people; but we must not forget that the population has continued to grow, and that although the areas under cultivation have been enlarged, there is the fact that it is difficult to produce this fruit at a much quicker rate. As you know, from five to six years are required to bring a tree to maturity, and therefore it is a slow process, taking considerable time, for these orchards to come into bearing. Now I say we should encourage such an industry as this, which in time must become one of the utmost importance to the country; and there are ample proofs to show that we have already under cultivation an area more than sufficient to supply the needs of the population of this country for some years to come. Those who have gone in for large orchards planted them long before the discovery of gold, with the one object of exporting fruit to the old country. We are much nearer, owing to our geographical position, to the European markets than any of the other States—nearer by from seven to ten days; and therefore it is to the advantage of this country, with its wonderful climate and its soil which is so suited for the purpose of fruit-growing, to encourage in every way the cultivation of the apple and the pear. Of course in regard to some fruits the demand has been met by the supply last year; and in a very short time the other classes of fruit will be as cheap here as in any part of Australia; and it will not be long before we shall see an abundance of both apples and pears in this country and shall commence an exporting trade. Now I consider the course which the Government has taken a most dangerous one. I did hope that in view of the lateness of the season they would have fallen in with the wishes of a great many growers and deferred the removal of the prohibition at least until some time about December. If it is then decided that the prohibition should be removed, after all the information that I say could have been furnished had been received by the select committee of the House, then all that is fair would have been done. If it had been found that

we could by any means make such provision as would enable us to withstand the pest, and if it had been proved that the area under crop was not sufficient to provide abundance of fruit for the people within a short period, most of those concerned in fruit-growing would have been satisfied. The Government took another course. Just for the purpose, no doubt, of making themselves popular, they say the prohibition shall be removed. Considering the facts, I think any true statesman, any conscientious statesman, taking such a decision as that without first having looked into the question, is not studying the interests of the country over whose destinies he intends to preside. Now, in regard to the improvements in connection with asylums, which have been alluded to, we are led to believe that the present Government had secured that site at Whitby Falls. But the site had been secured long ago, and provision had been made for the introduction of the cottage system which has been alluded to. Therefore, I think in that instance, too, some credit must be given to those who had to do with this matter in the past. Now, in regard to the state of parties, which has been alluded to, the Premier stated that I knew he represented the country—that his Government represented 24,000 of the people, and that the Opposition represented only 12,000. I say that is a statement which perhaps should not be allowed to go uncontradicted. Of course, so far as mere numbers are concerned, no doubt the Opposition do represent a smaller number, but we must not forget that the electors who have returned these members to the House are men who are settled upon the land and engaged in other industries, and who are attached to the land; and although I do not wish to disparage the gold miners or those engaged on goldfields, still I am quite confident of this, that if at any time the industries on the fields were found to be played out, it would devolve on those who are in the minority as regards numbers to carry on the affairs of this State.

A MEMBER: And the burdens of this State.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: And the burdens of this State. The minority will be saddled with these burdens, whereas

those included in the greater number are most of them travelling from place to place, and will thus escape the burdens. We have no better evidence of this than the rolls on the eastern fields. Take the roll at Kanowna. We found something like 5,000 people on that roll at one time, and when it was revised no less than 2,500 were struck off, or quite half the number who had previously registered; thus proving that the people are of a nomadic disposition, travelling from place to place, and not likely to become permanent settlers for some time to come.

**THE PREMIER:** That is only one instance.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE:** There are many instances. I am not going to set one section of the people against another, but I say when the course is adopted—it has been adopted by many—of placing the two numbers side by side and stating that the Government represent a greater number of people than the Opposition, an explanation is needed to show that there are in the lesser number people who are as much concerned in the interests of the country as those who have been mentioned as the greater number, and probably more so. In fact, those people on the fields who have been alluded to—good people no doubt they are, and they have done a great deal towards helping this country forward—are moving, as I have said just now, from place to place. In regard to the Public Service Board alluded to in the Speech, I may say that I was under the impression that instead of introducing a Public Service Act and the amendment thereto, the Government intended to deal with this matter in a different way, namely by creating a Public Service Board, and of course empowering such a board after it has been established. That seems to me the only course by which this matter could be properly dealt with, and if that course had been adopted in place of the introduction of an amending Bill, I am sure it would have given very much greater satisfaction to the country. I have previously expressed my opinion that there is a great necessity for the board; and I am confident, too, that Ministers would be only too glad to be relieved of the trouble which is entailed by the appointments which have to be made from time to time, and would pre-

fer that such appointments should be left to the consideration of a board properly constituted. I did hope that something might be done in this direction, instead of the present Act, which I do not consider quite suitable for the good working of the public service, being amended. Now, in regard to the Speech generally, I consider the positive legislation which it is proposed to place before this House far too meagre. We have been promised so many reforms, and yet these reforms do not appear to engage the attention of the present Government. Of course, I know that the Premier has stated that it is his intention to deal with matters of administration in preference to legislation. I quite agree that it is very necessary to make administration thoroughly perfect, and to attend to it; but at the same time we have been promised so much in regard to these other matters, that I have no doubt the country was looking forward to the introduction of the reforms which the members of the Government from time to time indicated. Now, we see there is no room for these reforms. Everything has been done, pretty well, that could be done in regard to domestic legislation. The old Government have done their best in introducing many measures which have met with the approval of the country. It seems to me that all these promises were merely cries to try and catch popularity. There also seems to be an absence of detail in the Speech which, of course is one of brevity in a sense, and perhaps is none the worse for that, but yet, after all, contains nothing which may be looked upon as definite. We find that in preparing this Speech the Government have, so far as they can, avoided giving what may be termed a policy. There has been a promise of a policy to be set forth by the Premier, and this promise has not been kept. The policy which we have to-day is almost a borrowed policy. It is one which has been the policy of the past, and it is one which has been satisfactorily carried out during the past; but yet, for some reason, it does not appear to have pleased a great many people, since they have asked for a change. That change has now come, and the question is whether we are to derive any benefit from it, even under the new Administration. When hon. members on the other side of the House filled positions on this side

of the Chamber, there were threats to unearth pigeon-holes and make statements which would astonish the country, and show that the past action of the late Government, in regard to administration, was not what it should have been. If the hon. gentleman was able to place his hands upon any of these instances, or if any members were able to do so, they should have brought them before the country at once, and these instances should have been mentioned at the time the hon. gentleman was speaking. The Premier has introduced into that speech of his many things against which he talked himself hoarse from time to time; and now the tables are turned, it appears he is ready to take up many of these matters which had previously been objected to by himself. He was in the past in favour of private enterprise, and, as I said just now, he was against the trial survey of railways; but we find that he now occupies quite a different position from that which he took at that time.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS: The population has increased.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It seems that what he has done is to renovate many ideas of the old party, and to bring them just dished up again to this House as his own.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The ideas of what?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The ideas of the late Government?

HON. W. H. JAMES: The ideas of the late Government!

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Those who knew the Premier in the past must have a lot of sympathy for him, for the restraint he has had to practise since he has taken up this new rôle. Of course we all knew him here to be one of those who played his part as an "actor" in a way amusing to this House, which at times caused a little digression from the ordinary dry routine of parliamentary discussion. But now notwithstanding all this, we find the hon. gentleman has told his hearers from time to time that now it is his intention to deal seriously with all matters connected with the State. Those who know the hon. gentleman recognise that this means a great effort of self-restraint. No doubt we shall shortly witness a change in that condition, and see him revert to his old method. Doubt-

less the hon. gentleman will tell this House and the country that the State is in a prosperous condition—he has already said so—that the gold output is excellent, showing a substantial increase; that the timber trade is doing well; that the population is increasing; and that the agricultural and pastoral industries have never appeared better. He will say that all this is to be attributed to the foresight and good management of the present Government. For the life of me I cannot see what difference is to be brought about by the course the present Government intend to take. They are really coming in to do the work which was done well, and I may say better done in the past than it will be done in the future; and why a change of this kind should be made at the present time is difficult to understand. Of course the only thing that can be done now is to allow those gentlemen who have taken up the running to continue the running, and see if they are able to go on as well as those who have preceded them. Then we find that Mr. Gardiner, the member for Albany, mentioned in his speech that the past policy was a policy of borrow and spend, and that we had left posterity to foot the bill. I was surprised to hear such a remark from such an astute gentleman as the member for Albany, because he must understand that to make any country succeed, it is necessary to develop it, and the only way to develop a new country such as this is to adopt the policy which has been adopted in the past—the policy of raising money for the purpose of carrying out public works. As to whether posterity is to foot the bill, that is a matter which should not concern us so much, because the great capabilities of the country justify the expenditure which has been incurred in the past. Then, in alluding to the importation of food supplies, the hon. gentleman disparaged the past efforts of producers, stating that the production of food supplies had not increased as it should have done, and he gave as reasons that he had obtained information with regard to the importation, which went to show there had been no falling off in the imports, but an increase. In taking the figures which are given by the Customs, it has been the rule in the past to take the value, and

that is still the rule. I consider that to take the value is not the proper way to judge as to what has been done with regard to importation. We should take the quantities, and by these means we should be better able to arrive at a conclusion. For instance, at one season of the year, probably all articles that are to be imported are higher in price than at another, and probably they are dearer in one year than in another; consequently, there is always a difficulty in arriving at a correct understanding with regard to the increase or decrease of importation, unless you take up a report and go into it thoroughly to ascertain yourself, by comparing weights, whether there has been any increase.

**MR. F. W. MOORHEAD:** Has the wheat raised in the State been increasing?

**HON. F. H. PIESSE:** The hon gentleman did not mention this, but it has been pointed out by some that there has been a falling off of 11,000 acres in regard to cultivation in the State. That may be mainly attributed to the season which we had last year. Owing to the heavy weather in some places, and the rains coming as they did during the month of June, it was impossible to get on the land, the result being that lands which had previously been cropped were not then cropped; but this season is one of the best on record, and no doubt we shall see a great improvement in regard to the acreage which will come under crop. In my own district a very small area was brought under my notice, where the falling off was equal to 50 per cent., and it has been the same in many districts, but I am glad to see there is now an improvement. In regard to the question of the Governor's Speech, it has not been decided to take the course which, perhaps, many members of the House thought might be taken, and therefore it is not my intention at this stage to deal fully with most of the items of the Speech, preferring to leave them until another occasion. I have taken the course of just dealing generally with a few points which have come to me, and all we hope is that the Government who have taken the place of the old Government will, as they have promised, carry on the affairs of this country in a way in which the country wishes them to be carried on. If they are

successful in doing all they promise, then I take it that is what they are there for. There have been so many promises, that it is not well to spoil the good intentions of the Government, but rather to let them continue in the position in which they are now placed, and see whether they are able to clear up those pigeon-holes, to show the delinquencies of the past Government, to deal with all matters which they say the past Government were guilty of, and to see whether they can, in the interests of the country, serve the State better than the people have been served by those who have had the control of affairs in the past.

**MR. R. SPEIGHT (North Perth):** When I was before my constituents, I was asked many times which way I would vote, and which side I would take; and I said I would take no side until I saw the composition of the House, and knew the measures to be submitted by the responsible Ministers of the day. They accepted that view; I followed it from start to finish; and it is only within the last few days I have seen a programme put forward enunciating the intentions of the present Ministry. That programme agrees entirely with my view of progressive legislation which is necessary for this country. Mr. Piesse has very properly put it that he does not want to challenge the other side, but he says: "Let them continue the work they are going to do, and if they do it well they will get the support of the House, but if they do not do it well they will be put out." My intention is to follow that course. We have heard in the discussion up to now certain diversities in regard to figures. I suppose this will not be the last time we shall hear discussions on that ground. It is, therefore, well that an opportunity should be given to a new team to ascertain the conditions for themselves as to what they are told reflecting upon the last Administration. If they find, with these opportunities of investigation, that something is open to reflection, it will be their duty to bring that before the House and get the opinion of the House upon it. If they do not do that, they must take the responsibility of not doing it, and I for one would not support them under such conditions. Ministers who were in office when the present Parliament was returned practically, to use

a slang term, "threw up the sponge." They said, "Evidently we cannot form a Ministry of our own, and we will advise the Governor to send for somebody to form a Ministry." The result was the sending for someone, and a Ministry has been formed. It is right that the House should give a fair and considerate opportunity to the Ministry now formed under those circumstances to do their duty, and to accomplish the best they can for the people among whom we live. As I said before, the programme they have submitted is in my judgment good, and it is my intention to have no lukewarm disposition to support it, but to support the Government "at the back," with the intention of helping them to carry out their programme, and not sit on a rail passing from one side to the other. I do not know it is of much importance as far as my individuality is concerned, but that is my idea of good administration and my idea of supporting it, and I believe from what our friend Mr. Piesse has said, his idea at the present time is that the Ministry should have a "show." There is a further advantage in having a change of Ministry. You want a few more apprentices to learn the work, and you put the business in the hands of a few of the most capable gentlemen. I would be the last to reflect upon the administration of the past Government, because as far as I know they have endeavoured to do the best they could for the country; and whilst they did endeavour to do so, and no doubt did a great deal of good, yet somebody who did not get as much out of them as expected turned round and abused them. It will be the same with your Ministry here, for if they do not give everything to everybody, they will get into trouble and may expect to be abused. Well, I say let them go on and show their capacity for doing the work, and they may rely on getting honest assistance from both sides of the House. Referring now to railway business, I have had experience as to deficient supplies of rolling-stock, and excessive supplies of rolling-stock. Responsible men have to determine these questions at the moment they arise; and no men can foresee what is going to occur three years hence in railway business, but can see only what is going on or is likely to occur in the midst of them. It is the

want of money that prevents the political head from acting on the advice of the administrative head. When the necessity arises, it may create no friction at the moment; but so soon as there are no trucks available and the traffic is found to be more than the available trucks can carry, or so soon as there are more trucks than the traffic requires, then there arises a charge of want of foresight or of bloated expenditure. These things should be taken into proper consideration, and we should bear in mind that a trade property like the railways, the biggest trade property in the State, should be considered from a trading standpoint, and not from a political point of view. Anything I can do to assist in that direction I shall be most happy to do; and I hope sincerely that this difficulty in the railways will be overcome. It ought to be overcome. We ought not to be put into the position of having the whole of our carrying industry locked up and the whole of our sources of supply broken down, simply because of a dispute between A and B. Such a question ought to be dealt with in a proper manner, and these conflicts should not occur if they are properly managed. They ought not to occur. It is no use saying to men, "You are wrong, and you will have to wait a certain time before you can get what you want." I do not think that will settle the question. We ought to look into it and determine it; and if I had been a leader of those men I would have said, "A month is nothing to me, and I will take it." A proper feeling must be inculcated by this House, by the men we employ, and by the people we serve; and if that is not kept in view, we shall get into serious difficulties. In regard to the political platform of the present Ministry, I do not go into it in detail, but I say that, on the whole, I am satisfied with it. I know there was a general desire on the part of constituents—I do not say on the part of everyone, but a general desire—that it would be better for them, without any reflection on the past Administration, that there should be a change for a time. Having seen what I have seen, having read what I have read, and heard what I have heard, I have made up my mind to give full and reasonable support to the present Ministry, until they show they are not entitled to confidence.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I wish at the outset to express my concurrence in the regret which has been expressed by other speakers at the untimely death of Mr. Alexander Forrest. The Labour party, with which I am associated, was not associated nor in sympathy with the party to which Mr. Forrest belonged; but we feel the loss which the community has sustained, and especially those who were more intimately associated with him, in the death of the late member. I beg to congratulate the Ministry on their accession to office, because that accession is due to the deliberate voice of the people, uttered for the first time at the general election. I believe the present Administration is the first that has been placed in power by the people as a body, most of them having for the first time had an opportunity of exercising the franchise at the last election; and I take the opportunity also of congratulating the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) on his position as leader of the Opposition; one that he has fairly won, and I trust he will long continue to enjoy it. In regard to the programme of the Government, there is one departure I regret to see they have taken, and that is the appointment of honorary Ministers. While congratulating them on obtaining the services of the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), I think the principle of appointing honorary Ministers is bad, and I am sorry it is being introduced into this State, even for the first time. There may be some justification or reason why it should be adopted in the Upper House, so as to give some degree of assistance to the Minister for Lands as being the only Minister representing the Government in that House, and that must be a difficult task when it devolves on only one Minister. But in this House the principle is capable of abuse; and although so far as it has been carried by the present Administration there is little or no harm in it, yet I look with some degree of fear because of the danger that the principle may be extended, and that some future Government may seek to increase its voting power in this House by increasing the number of honorary Ministers, who may be invited to take office without having administrative duties to perform. I differ from one hon. member who said there is no policy in the Speech. I have

risen now to support as a whole the policy in the Speech; and I did feel some degree of fear when I learnt for the first time that there was no policy in it. A little later, however, I learnt that the policy in the Speech was the policy of the past; and I find that during the past ten years there has been no policy, if it be the case that there is no policy in the Speech now before us. There are in it, however, some striking points I have not been able to find in the policy of the past; such as the introduction of a Bill to abolish plural voting, which is a new departure of the present Government, and one on which I congratulate the Government sincerely, because it is undoubtedly a proposal that has been demanded by the people, and has the support of the people behind it. Then we are promised electoral reform; and here again, if this has been the policy of the past, that policy has been kept thoroughly in the background; but I rejoice that in the new *régime* there is some chance of this policy being brought into the forefront; and I can promise, as far as I am concerned, that I will do all I can, no matter how early electoral reform may come, to assist in putting it through. I would like to urge on the Ministry the consideration whether it may not be wise to depart from the usual parliamentary procedure of amending the Constitution Act and the Electoral Act at the close of a Parliament, and whether it may not be desirable to amend those Acts in the first session of the Parliament; because it may perchance happen that in the future there may arise a Ministry, even in the course of this Parliament, that knows not the will of the people, and these men may refuse to carry out the measures now in the programme laid before us. Should that happen before these measures are passed, we will be confronted by the fact that when the next general election comes there will be no means of getting a thorough expression of the will of the people because of the want of a proper redistribution of seats. I would urge that in view of the passing of these measures, and of having a dissolution of this Parliament in six, eight, or twelve months time, the inconvenience of members of this House should be borne, because we should consider first the needs of the people before we consult our own

convenience; and I would willingly see an election brought about early, if it were necessary, in order that the voice of the people might be heard to its fullest extent in this Chamber. I am glad to learn it is proposed to reorganise the civil service; and I can assure members that it is time this reorganisation was attempted. Things in the civil service have simply been allowed to drift. I believe that as a body public servants have as good an intelligence, have as much zeal, and have fully as much capacity, as have persons in any other service. In many departments we will find the wrong man at the head of the business. In many of the departments we will find a large number of servants doing the main portion of the work and drawing very little pay, and we will find a small body of the higher men drawing very large pay and doing very little work. I was inclined to take exception to one remark made by the member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner), when he spoke of the attendance of civil servants at functions and their neglecting to attend at their offices. I think the hon. member argued from the particular to the general, and was guilty of unfairness to a great number of public servants. As a body they really do attend to their duties and their offices; and as far as my experience goes, members of the public service in the main do not attend public functions, and have neither the opportunity nor the desire to do so. If the remarks that were made could be applied to a few individuals, it might be worth while for the Ministry to follow the advice that was given. For instance, when we hear of a prominent member of the public service expressing his intention to resign if a certain politician were appointed as Ministerial head of a certain department, I contend that member of the service is taking up a position that should not be tolerated, and is actually insulting Parliament and the people by limiting the choice in making a Ministerial appointment. When we find the same public servant giving a public testimonial to a Minister on his retiring from office, testifying to the good work that Minister had done, I contend there is need that Parliament should insist that this sort of thing shall not be tolerated, and that neither censure nor praise in regard to the action of Ministers is expected from

members of the public service, whether high or low in position. I think likewise the practice which is referred to in one newspaper to-day, that of members of the civil service praising this or that Minister on his retirement from office, and speaking of his good qualities as an administrator, is a practice which this House should deprecate; for if public servants can give praise to Ministers and tell of their good deeds publicly, then undoubtedly civil servants have an equal right to express publicly their opinions of the wrong deeds of Ministers. I contend that neither one nor the other is satisfactory, and that neither one nor the other should be tolerated; and I trust that in the reorganisation of the service Ministers will take the opportunity of putting a stop to these little things which have occasionally created such a lot of interest in a way, but which at the same time do not conduce to the good of the public service or to the advantage of the public or of Ministers themselves. I am glad to learn that a great deal of attention is to be given to the adjustment of the finances, because though I cannot pose as an expert in public finance, I have seen quite enough to satisfy me that the circumstances fully warrant attention. I heard it implied recently that there was not at the present time in the Treasurer's chair a great financial expert. While not admitting for a minute this to be either right or wrong, I wish to express my belief that we do not need any great financial expert in order to deal with the affairs of our Treasury. What we do want is a Treasurer who is fully seized of the fact that two and two make four, and make four only, and who is seized of the farther fact that if we have 20 shillings income we have only 20 shillings available to be spent, and we must not for a minute entertain a proposal to spend 21 shillings. We want a Treasurer, farther, who is not labouring under the impression that "kite-flying" represents the acme of public financing. That belief has apparently been held in the past by some gentlemen who have been our financial experts; and it is because of this circumstance that at the present time, in a year which has given us our biggest revenue, we are faced nevertheless with a deficit. I trust that with the painstaking Treasurer I believe the country now has the advant-



age of possessing, this sort of thing will be rendered impossible for the future, at any rate during the present Administration's term of office. I am glad to see that it is proposed to establish a Public Works Board, because there can be no question that if the board be rightly constituted its functions will result in a great deal of public good, by preventing the waste of public money which has occurred in the past on a great many occasions. There is no doubt that the large deficit of to-day is due simply to the fact that public funds have been squandered, and have been squandered in a way which is certainly not creditable to those who have allowed the squandering to take place without any word of protest. I am glad to learn that economy is to be exercised in all directions, but I trust the economy will not be merely an economy applied to wages of persons working for the Government. I trust it will be recognised that it is possible for this State to pay a fair wage for all work done for it—nothing more than a fair wage, certainly, but in no case less. I trust that in the Railway Department due consideration will be given to the requirements of the men in this respect. I know that work of a laborious character has been done for the Railway Department at a rate which, when I was a councillor at Subiaco, the council would not allow to be paid for similarly laborious work done out there. I trust that there will be a recognition of the fact that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and that this State is not yet so poor as not to be able to afford a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. That should be the first consideration, and I trust economy will never go in the direction of starvation wages. In regard to the shortage of rolling-stock, I am not going to enter into the point in dispute between the Ministry and the leader of the Opposition ; but I wish to point out that it seems to me regrettable that the Government have not yet made any effort to have rolling-stock manufactured in this State. It seems to me, as an amateur in that sort of thing, that it should be possible with a country which possesses the amount of timber there is here, to have the rolling-stock made locally ; and I should certainly like to see some effort made in that direction, not

only because of the amount of employment it would give to workers, but also because of the fact that it would enable us to have the requirements of our Railway Department met much more quickly than they can be under the present system, when it is necessary to await the convenience of the firms who supply the rolling-stock in addition to waiting during the unduly long time it takes for the orders to pass to the old land and for the rolling-stock to come out here. I should like to see the Ministry give some attention to the matter and see whether it will not be possible to encourage this new industry in our midst. In regard to the incursion of rabbits, I suppose that it will not be expected that a metropolitan member should have much to say. However, I have seen something of the evils resulting from the incursion of rabbits in Victoria, and I can therefore appreciate the fears of the farmers. What I cannot appreciate is the inactivity which has in the past characterised the Government of this State in regard to this very matter, especially during the time that we had a friend of the farmers at the head of the Lands Department. For years past the rabbits have been known to be in West Australia ; for years past it has been the custom periodically to get reports in regard to the rabbits ; but members who have studied the nature of the rabbit will know that a report does no good and no harm whatever to him. There was, however, no other effort made to deal with the rabbit, except sending an inspector to report on him. I must also except the one occasion when the Government were guilty of the cruelty to animals exhibited in turning loose a lot of cats in order that they might eat the rabbits. It is not on record yet whether the rabbits ate the cats, or the cats the rabbits ; but we know that the cats have disappeared while the rabbits are still in our country. I should like to say that I think there has been a certain amount of inefficiency amongst the officers who have been intrusted with the work of reporting on the rabbit incursion. I know that the officers who have rendered most assistance in furnishing particulars as to how far the rabbits had reached, have been the police. I remember one occasion, not very long since, when one of the respon-

sible officers of the Agricultural Department simply ridiculed the statement of the police that the rabbits were in any number in a certain spot near the south-eastern corner of the goldfields. Recent events have amply proved that the rabbits were there, and that the statement of the police was right and that of the expert wrong. In connection with this subject, I should like just in passing to allude to what I think was a mistake of an unpleasant nature, though perhaps not a big mistake. It was made in connection with the rabbit recently brought down from Lake Lefroy. I saw a statement in the paper, immediately after the rabbit was brought down, that it could be seen at Messrs. Bickford's shop in Hay street. I consider that it is a great mistake for the Government to afford to any firm an advertising advantage of that or any other description. I think that if there is any advantage to be got from an advertising dodge of that sort, it should simply be open to public competition. Hon. members may laugh at the subject, but everyone knows that Messrs. Bickford's reason for exhibiting the rabbit was solely to advertise their premises—to get the advantage of attracting the attention of the public to their show windows; and it is not a reasonable thing that one firm should be helped against another in this fashion. It may seem a small thing only, but the principle is there, and we should carry the principle to its logical extremity in cases of this description, where the action of the Government officials is involved. I welcome the proposal for the introduction of fruit. The only thing I have any doubt about is as to whether the Government are not going too far in regard to the inspection at Fremantle—whether this will not make the fruit so dear as to be practically out of the reach of ordinary citizens by the time it is retailed in our shops. As a matter of fact, I think that when the fruit is inspected, and certified to as clean by the State from which it is exported, we can reasonably take that inspection and that certificate as satisfactory. I do not at all sympathise with those who object to the removal of the prohibition on pears and apples, because I think that even if it were certain that we were going to introduce disease by remov-

ing that prohibition—a contention that I do not admit for a moment—it is far less evil that we should introduce disease in fruit into this community than that we should perpetuate disease in human beings; and I contend that there are in our midst men, and women, and children, and especially children, who do not thrive as they ought to thrive, who do not enjoy the health that they ought to possess, simply because they have no means of getting access to the fruit acids they require in order to build up sound and healthy bodies. I contend that when it comes to a question of maintaining and building up human beings, it is far more important to do that than to build up any industry whatsoever in this State. I would therefore say that under the circumstances I have a great deal of pleasure in supporting the proposal of the Ministry to remove this fruit prohibition. I note also with satisfaction that the Ministry propose to introduce a measure to provide a proper supply of water for the metropolitan districts. I should like to urge that when this measure is introduced it should provide for an elective board, to be elected by the ratepayers in the various metropolitan and suburban municipalities in proportion to their respective numbers. I should like farther to urge that, instead of any money required for the purpose of making adequate the water supply of the metropolis and suburbs being borrowed by the Government, the board be empowered to borrow it, so that the loan may not become a portion of the State debt, even though it may be necessary to borrow the money on slightly less advantageous terms than those on which it could be obtained if the State took the matter into its own hands. I think that the cost of this water supply should fall on the ratepayers, and that the board can carry out the scheme efficiently in the same way as the Metropolitan Board of Works in Victoria has carried, or is carrying out its water works and sewerage works—although these are perhaps not being done as efficiently as they would be if that board were elective. I trust we shall be delivered not only from the existing Water Works Board, but from any other irresponsible board of the same description. I know that the people in

the district which I represent are simply ignored by the Metropolitan Board. Men have been penalised in amounts ranging from £10 to £20 for the privilege of having water laid on to their premises—that is, before they drew a drop of water from the pipes, and independently altogether of the annual charge for meter and the annual rate charge. It has been laid down by the chairman of the board as a principle on which his board went, that it was determined to get the biggest pound of flesh it could from the ratepayers of Subiaco; and I contend that no public body should be managed on such a system as that. I should therefore like to see a body responsible to the ratepayers of the various districts, and I trust that when the measure is before the House this is the line upon which it will go. In regard to the encouragement of immigration of persons skilled in farm labour and so on, I cannot altogether congratulate the Ministry upon that phase of the Governor's Speech; because I should like to know a little more about it and about the lines on which the Government propose to assist immigration. If their proposal include only encouragement of immigration, then I am quite with them; but if it be to assist immigration, then I am entirely opposed to their position. If it be encouragement of British immigrants, I shall have very much pleasure in giving support to the proposal; but if it is to immigration of foreigners, then I am altogether opposed to it.

HON. F. H. PIESSE : The British nation was built up by foreigners.

MR. DAGLISH : I am in sympathy with those who desire to see here a British State, and nothing but a British State; and while we do not desire to exclude any persons of other nationalities coming here of their own free will to settle with us and help us to build up the State, at the same time the British Isles themselves, I contend, offer a large area for recruiting purposes, and until that area shall have been exhausted there is no need whatever to go outside the British Isles to get additional population for this State. I am rather surprised that those people whose jingoism and imperialism are strongest, should be always the first to propose and should always be the most anxious for the introduction of foreign

labour, simply because it is cheaper labour than the British.

A MEMBER : Not cheaper.

At 6-30 o'clock, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. H. DAGLISH (continuing) : When this House rose an hour ago, I was referring to immigration, and I urged that British immigration should be encouraged; but I would like to point out that under any circumstances it seems to me unwise for the State to allow the introduction of any class of labour whatever under contract, because persons living abroad, even if they are living in English-speaking communities, cannot possibly know the conditions which obtain in this State. They cannot understand the rates of wages which rule here, and in entering into a contract they are signing they know not what, and may be committing themselves to an agreement which, if they really understood it, would not meet with their approval at all. The member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) said labour was required in any quantity on the farms, and I can assure the hon. member that labour can be obtained in any quantity on the farms, assuming that reasonable pay is given for the work. As a matter of fact, there are many men at the present time in different parts of this State who are in need of employment. There are many men on the goldfields and many in Perth who need employment and are willing to go to a distance in order to obtain it, but they require to be adequately remunerated, and also to have fairly good conditions to live under; and I contend that a large number of farmers who complain of the scarcity of labourers are those responsible for that scarcity so far as they are concerned, because they do not pay a reasonable wage, and do not provide proper food and proper accommodation for the workers whom they employ. However, I would like to point out a farther consideration as against contract labour and as against introducing cheap labour, namely that if labour were introduced and if the worker found out he could command a better wage in the cities

and could live under happier conditions, he would rapidly leave the farm as soon as his contract had expired, and would simply become a new competitor on the labour market in the cities and on the goldfields. Under these circumstances I think, therefore, the Government should hesitate and ponder very carefully before they resolve on taking any decisive action with regard to this immigration question. I welcome the proposal to introduce a Factories Bill, always supposing that it is a fairly comprehensive measure, and that it will not only include the Truck Act and Early Closing Act, but will deal with our various industries on the lines of the Victorian Act at present in force, in the direction of establishing a wages board to assess wages, of limiting the hours of labour for the worker, and of seeing that proper sanitary conditions are observed in the various factories. If a Factories Bill be introduced, I shall have a great deal of pleasure in supporting it, and I believe, from the composition of the Ministry, we have reasonably good ground for expecting a good measure, whereas if we have a measure like what I remember was the first Factories Act in Victoria—and which the Colonial Treasurer will also remember—I shall feel it my duty to oppose it, because a measure called a Factory Act and not comprehensive would be simply the means of blocking legislation on the same subject by providing excuses for those who wished to vote against it on the plea that a Factories Act already existed on the statute book, and that would suffice for all requirements. I have already referred to the question of electoral reform. It astonished me to learn that because miners were nomadic, they were not entitled to the same consideration and representation as other classes of the community. It strikes me that the miner, by his nomadic habits, does far more for this State than he would do if he were too much inclined to settle early, and to stay in one particular spot.

MR. C. HARPER: It was not said disparagingly.

MR. H. DAGLISH: I understand it was not said disparagingly, but I take it objection was raised to giving them representation on the basis of population on account of their nomadic habits. I do

not urge that specially with regard to Kanowna, but I say that if the miner had not been nomadic Western Australia would not have been anything like what it is, but would have been dragging along with its 20,000, 30,000, or 40,000 of population instead of over 180,000. I believe West Australia has very great cause to thank the miner for the fact that he is nomadic, and should give him extra consideration on that ground. Miners, however, do not ask for extra consideration, but only that they shall get a reasonable representation in proportion to their numbers; and I would add that the nomadic habits of the miner at present, day by day and month by month, are adding considerably to the wealth of Western Australia, because the miner goes prospecting farther and farther from the first centre of settlement, and he continually makes new discoveries which add immensely to the wealth and importance of the State. In his habits therefore he is day by day and year by year adding to the possessions and to the population of this State. They are habits like that which have done so much for the State in the past and will do so much for it in the future, and therefore should not be a reason for refusing to the miner the same representation as is given to other classes of the community. I am glad to learn we are to have the Conciliation and Arbitration Act amended, and I trust it will be amended so as to make it in reality compulsory conciliation and arbitration. I should like, farther, if it were possible, for the Ministry to take the opportunity, after Supply has been granted and before the House adjourns for the visit of their royal highnesses, to pass that amendment. I should like to see it passed at once, because we have seen in the last few days what evil may arise from having a law in an imperfect state in that respect, and we do not know what it may bring forth. Therefore, I should like to see the Act amended at the earliest possible moment. I trust that when the Act is amended, it will be so amended that we shall have the ability to not only deprecate strikes, but absolutely prevent them. I can assure the Premier that as far as I am concerned I shall give my earnest support in making the measure as comprehensive and effective as possible in that direction. Whilst dealing with that point, I should like to

urge that the time has arrived when we in this State should follow the example of some of the Eastern States, and establish a department of labour, which would control such measures as the factories law, and control the administration of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the Truck Act, the Early Closing Act, and any Act which may exist on our statute book affecting the status and condition of labour. It might also deal with the efficiency of the Government Labour Bureau. That institution can be made of far more value than it is at present, if proper attention be given to it. When I say this, I want it to be distinctly understood I am not in any way reflecting upon Mr. Longmore, the gentleman who is at present administering that bureau, because I know he is not only a conscientious but a thoroughly capable officer, and I think means should be given to him to extend the operations of the office. I may, in passing, say I am surprised it should recently have been discovered that the Government officials had passed over the Government Bureau and had gone to a private registry for the purpose of obtaining labour. I do not believe any Minister was directly responsible for this; but I would like to know who the official was who took that action, and on what authority he did so. It is a farce to have this Government establishment, if we are to use private establishments; and it seems to me an improper thing that a man out of employment, who obviously has no means, or not much means, available to pay those who carry on private establishments, should be mulcted in the sum of 15s., before he is allowed to obtain work. It is to obviate this that the Bureau was established, and it is a very regrettable fact that the Government, or a Government official, should have gone outside that Bureau to subsidise private offices. I hope that this session will see a Public Service Bill of a comprehensive character passed. The measure passed by the last Parliament was simply an excuse for not dealing with the public service question. There was absolutely nothing in it that made it worth while to introduce it or to carry it through. It might just as well have been burnt as soon as it was printed, because it is utterly valueless, and has done nothing whatever and can do

nothing whatever in the direction of reform and reorganisation of the public service. I hope that when we get a measure from the Government we shall obtain a Bill that will be thoroughly comprehensive, and will deal with all departments in a businesslike fashion. I think I have dealt with most of the points in the Governor's Speech that I wish to refer to, and now I should like to just briefly refer to one or two omissions from that Speech. First of all, I am sorry the Minister did not take this opportunity of proposing a measure to abolish the indenture system amongst the aborigines, because from my own observation I am quite satisfied that system savours very strongly of slavery, and as early as I can get an opportunity I shall have pleasure in voting for its abolition. I am also surprised there is not a proposal brought forward to amend the licensing law, because if there be any law on the statute book that needs amendment, it is the law relating to the sale of liquor. Here in Perth we have not seen the evils of it to any great extent, because of late years the licensing authorities have been wise and judicious by inquiring carefully into the applications placed before them, and in most cases have exhibited a judgment worthy of a Daniel in framing their decisions; but on the goldfields the action of the various licensing benches has been slightly different in some cases, and there has not been that degree of judgment used which is desirable. It should not be required of any of our licensing courts that they should determine points of policy, such as the wisdom or otherwise of issuing new licenses in the various districts; but the power or right of doing so should be vested solely in the people themselves. I trust that, in spite of the omission of any reference to this subject in the Governor's Speech, this House will have the opportunity, this session, of passing a licensing law, and I hope the Ministers will provide in that law for local option for settling the question of new licenses, if it does not go farther. I should like to have seen some suggestion in the Speech for the reform of the Legislative Council, to see that body brought into line with public opinion; and I should like to see this House follow the example set by some of the wisest politicians who attended the Federal

Convention when they drew up the Constitution of the Commonwealth. I think if the principle of one-adult-one-vote is satisfactory enough to constitute the highest legislative Chamber in the Australian Commonwealth, then it is certainly good enough for our own State Parliament; and therefore I should like to see the adoption of this principle in the constitution of our Upper House. I should farther have liked to see a proposal to remove the food duties, so as to encourage immigration in the most desirable way in which it can be encouraged. We cannot expect everything, even from the present Administration; and I recognise with satisfaction that the present Administration have gone as far as they could reasonably be expected to go in their first session. I trust they will have an opportunity of carrying out their proposals; and I can assure them, as far as I am concerned, that while they keep to the lines laid down in the Governor's Speech, it will afford me the greatest pleasure to support them with all my strength, with all my heart, and with all my soul. I trust indeed that not only will they have a reasonable opportunity of carrying these proposals into law, but that they will wisely guide the destinies of this State so long as they occupy the position in which they are at present placed.

MR. G. H. RASON (Guildford): I desire to congratulate you, sir, on being again elected to the position of Speaker in this House. Still more do I congratulate the House on your having accepted the position; for speaking from my experience of the way in which you have assisted members of this House in the past, I am sure you will always be ready to afford to members of this new Parliament the benefit of the past parliamentary experience you have acquired. The first reference in the Speech is to the lamented death of our late Sovereign, Queen Victoria. In common with the rest of the Empire, I am sure we are all grieved at the loss of her whom we admired and honoured as a constitutional monarch, whom we loved as a good and noble woman; and I am sure the same loyal devotion will be extended to her successor, King Edward VII. We shall soon have an opportunity of welcoming to this State the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall; and although we may not be able to vie in our reception

with the magnificence of the sister States, and though perhaps it may not be advisable for us to attempt to vie in that magnificence, yet I trust we shall be equal to them in the sincerity of our welcome; and if any absolute proof of loyalty is necessary, then we have this satisfaction, that on the battlefields of South Africa our soldiers have been ready to shed their blood in fighting the battles of the Empire. Reference has been made in the Speech to the consummation of the Commonwealth of Australia. I sincerely hope the most ardent wishes of those in favour of that movement may be amply realised; and I look forward to a still greater federation, the federation of the Empire. I think this still greater federation, once regarded as a dream, and even as a dream worthy to be cherished, is now approaching almost daily within the range of probabilities; and I have no doubt that in course of time, in the interests of trade and in the interests of peace this greater federation, the federation of the Empire, will be completed. A kindly reference was made in the speech of the mover of the Address-in-reply to the good fortune of this State in having acquired such an excellent Governor as Sir Arthur Lawley. That sentiment I cordially reciprocate; and I feel sure that since our loyalty has not been wanting in welcoming him here, so when he shall have completed his service in this State, I feel sure the warmest recollections will be entertained in regard to himself and Lady Lawley. The mover of the Address-in-reply referred to the loss which this House and the country have sustained in the death of the member for West Kimberley, Mr. A. Forrest; and I hope I shall not be accused of presumption if I, who knew that gentleman so many years and was associated with him as one of the whips of the late Government party in this House, take on myself to thank hon. members opposite, who would probably have been opposed to that hon. member in politics at all events, for the kindly sentiments which have been expressed from that side of the House. Hon. members have said, and have said without exaggeration, that the loss of Mr. A. Forrest will be felt throughout the length and breadth of this State. Those who knew him best, best knew that

under the semblance of the stern, hard, matter-of-fact business man there beat an exceptionally large and an exceptionally warm heart; a heart so large that it could find room for the troubles of others, and a heart so warm as to dictate countless acts of kindness and countless acts of charity towards his fellow-men. Coming to the policy outlined in the Governor's Speech, I confess there is little to find fault with. There is not a great deal in it, and perhaps that is one reason there is so little to find fault with. For myself, unlike the member for Boulder I cannot pledge a party with the readiness with which he pledged the whole Ministry; but I can say at once that I am prepared to give reasonable and fair support to the gentlemen opposite in their endeavour to carry out the policy outlined in his Excellency's Speech. When seeking election, I did not go before my electors with any uncertain voice; and therefore I am more at liberty perhaps to say that the policy which is outlined here is to a great extent the policy which I told my electors I should be prepared to support; because then it had been submitted, to a very great extent and almost on the same lines, by the then leader of the Government, the member for Northam (Mr. Throssell). That being so, I was prepared to support it, as I should have been prepared to support an almost similar policy if it had emanated from the member for Northam; and therefore I cannot oppose it now when submitted by the hon. gentleman opposite. I do not think there is anything to be gained by discussing at great length the policy as a policy. Rather should we discuss the measures which are intended to give effect to that policy, when submitted to us. I understand that the Ministry propose that this shall be a very short session; that they intend to ask this House merely to vote the necessary supplies to carry on for a short time, and then adjourn the House to a future day. I take this opportunity of assuring them that no obstacle, so far as I am concerned, will be thrown in their way, that on the contrary a full measure of support will be accorded; but I take this opportunity also to say that if I voluntarily give support to hon. members opposite and to the Ministry, I do so of my own accord;

and I do object, in fact I am inclined to resent threats which were conveyed to us in the speech of the hon. member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins). I do object to being threatened with what will happen if I do not do exactly as hon. members opposite may desire. I think that if we on this side are sufficiently generous—I believe to a great extent it may be accounted generosity—to accord support to the Ministry, then surely they, in their turn, should be sufficiently generous not to issue threats. I do not think either that so much should be made, as has been attempted to be made, of the fact that hon. members opposite represent a majority of electors in this State, whilst we as an Opposition, although greater in number, really represent a minority; because if you handle figures of that kind, you can produce almost any result you wish to arrive at. If we take, for illustration, figures relating to the West Perth election—and I can assure the Premier that I take them for the purpose of illustration only, and not with a desire to be personal—we find there were 3,749 electors on the roll; that out of the total number 1,716 voted in the election; that 886 voted for the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, and 828 voted for his opponent (Mr. B. C. Wood).

THE PREMIER: What about the last election?

MR. RASON: This is the last election I am referring to.

THE PREMIER: The last election was unopposed.

MR. RASON: The figures in connection with that election show that only 58 more electors were in favour of the Premier than those who voted in favour of his opponent, and they show also that 54 per cent. of the voters cared so little about that gentleman or his opponent that they refrained from voting at all. It would be better to leave the figures alone, and deal only with the result as we find it to-day. If 50 members sitting in this House are supposed to represent the entire constituencies in this State, then it is fair to say that a majority of the electors in this State are in opposition to the present Government. But in spite of that fact, speaking for myself, I feel that I am prepared at present, and so long as the policy outlined in the Speech

is carried out, to give the most loyal support to the Ministry opposite.

[Several minutes elapsed, no member rising to speak.]

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): I venture to say this Parliament meets under somewhat singular circumstances. When the general election was being fought, several members were pledged, I understand, to oppose the then Government. Owing to the attitude they assumed, I presume, the then Premier, the member for Northam, vacated office. Those hon. members who were responsible for the overthrow of the party then in power, I suppose in conscientiousness carried to extremes feel that it is their duty still to hold that attitude of opposition with which they confronted the electors; otherwise it would be difficult to find a reasonable explanation for the side they are taking in this Parliament. It is impossible not to sympathise, and to sympathise very deeply, with the hon. member for Northam in the position which he was placed in before vacating office. I can fancy his saying:

Perhaps you were right to dissemble your love,  
But why did you kick me down stairs?

Those members who are now sitting on the Opposition side, and yet were prepared to throw the member for Northam out of office, are still sitting in opposition, and are still on the same side as the hon. gentleman whom they were prepared to oppose. I must confess it is difficult altogether to reconcile that attitude with consistency. Possibly members are endeavouring to act on the principle of making the best of two worlds. I understand, from what the leader of the Opposition said, that while they are prepared to sit on the Opposition side, they are at the same time prepared to vote for the Government. That is to say, while sitting on one side of the House they will vote on the other. That is a convenient arrangement for the Government, and a convenient arrangement no doubt for the business of the country; but none the less a somewhat singular arrangement, none the less a somewhat inconsistent attitude, I venture to say, in the eyes of the people. Possibly the reason of that attitude, however, is that the policy enunciated in the Speech of the Governor is such an excellent one that it is impossible for those gentlemen oppo-

site, no matter how much they might wish to do so, to find a vulnerable point in it. Speaking as a country member, I was especially pleased to find that the new Government, a Government which is largely representative of the goldfields, is none the less willing to do its part in assisting and fostering the agricultural industry. And that assistance and that fostering aid will, I venture to believe, take such a form that it will not merely teach the farmer to walk everlastingly on crutches, but will make of him a strong and enduring man.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: He is strong enough.

MR. NANSON: I must ask that, whatever the Government's programme of land settlement may be, it shall at least be of a practical nature. If you go among the farmers in the country districts, as some of us have done during the last month or two, you will find that their wants are not of a particularly difficult nature. They are mostly of a simple nature, and can be described in a few words. One of their first wants is to obtain the easiest possible access to market. It is sometimes the fashion to sneer at those members who are described as "roads-and-bridges members," but I venture to think that in any new country like this a very large portion of the resources of the State must be devoted, if the State is to flourish, to providing means of access to a market; and under that definition comes the provision of roads for the benefit of the country to be served. There can be no question whatever that if this simple provision only is forthcoming, it will do immensely more for the agriculture of this State than many of the highly artificial and ingenious schemes put forward by gentlemen whose knowledge of agriculture is perhaps more of a theoretical than of a practical description. Another point to which I trust the Government will direct attention consists in the throwing open of those agricultural lands which are suitable for farming but are at present held under pastoral lease. In the constituency which I have the honour to represent, an officer of the Government inspected the land last year, and reported that no less than 120,000 acres at present held under pastoral lease were suitable for close settlement. It is a most extraordinary thing that in a



portion of the State which has enjoyed railway communication longer than any other part of Western Australia, in a portion of the State peculiarly adapted for close settlement, in all these years (something like a quarter of a century) nothing should have been done to throw these rich lands open to the agriculturist. I cannot at this stage refrain from paying a tribute to the exertions made by the member for Northam when he filled the office of Commissioner of Lands. It was due very largely to his initiative, and very largely to his firmness in the face of a very stubborn and persistent opposition, that the Government sent an officer into the Northampton district to find out what land was suitable for agricultural purposes. Now it devolves on the new Cabinet to carry out the work that the hon. member for Northam initiated. The fruits of that work, I confess, are at present somewhat disappointing. Out of 120,000 acres declared to be suitable for close settlement, at the present time only 30,000 acres have been resumed from the pastoralist—or notice of resumption has been given, and in due course the land will be declared agricultural areas. The Government, I trust, possessing such a simple means of encouraging settlement, will not be prepared to stop merely at that point, to stop at declaring merely 30,000 acres. I hope they will declare the whole of the 120,000 acres as soon as reasonable demand for the land is shown. I venture to assert that if the possibilities of that portion of the State are properly displayed, it will be only a very short time before the Government will have an opportunity of doing a really good stroke of work for the agricultural industry in that portion of Western Australia. For what are the facts? In that Northampton district you have a rainfall better than that of Northam—exceeding slightly that of Northam; you have railway communication right to the very doors of the land which it is proposed to throw open; you have water all over the area at a depth in many places of not more than 15ft. from the surface; you have a magnificent market in the Murchison goldfields, the North-West, and Geraldton; and moreover you have the Northampton railway—at present an unprofitable asset of the State,

an asset which never since it has been constructed has paid interest on the cost of that construction. Therefore, I contend that even if the Government were absolutely indifferent to the cause of the farmer, they should none the less be anxious to do what they can to settle that portion of the State in order to turn an unprofitable railway into a profitable one. This is an absolutely easy, an absolutely practicable, and an absolutely pressing work. I was disappointed to find in the Governor's Speech no reference to the subject of mining on private property. I trust we are not to understand from the absence of any reference to that subject in the Speech that a Bill to permit mining on private property for the base metals will not be brought forward this session. I hope a measure of that kind will be introduced, whatever may be the state of the public business. I feel convinced that it is a measure not of a contentious description, not of a kind that will meet with opposition from one side of the House or the other; and it will have this advantage—it will enable the mineral resources of a portion of the constituency which I have the honour to represent to be developed more quickly perhaps than could otherwise be the case. It will—and I put the plea forward again as a special one for the Government—it will enable them to put a non-paying line, which might have been made to pay if past Cabinets had shown any reasonable enterprise and activity, on a paying basis. Do not let us forget that this railway was always intended to be a line for the development of the mineral resources of that part of the State. The subject of farming labour is also referred to in the Speech; and I notice the member for Albany suggested that the Government should inquire among the farmers what demand there was likely to be for farm labour, and should import labour on the farmers guaranteeing a wage of from 20s. to 25s. per week. I venture to suppose that that suggestion is somewhat impracticable. We cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that in every portion of the civilised world to-day, in no one country more than any other, there is a steady drift of agricultural labour from the country-side to the towns. If it is a difficulty amounting almost to an impossibility in England to

secure a supply of labour for the farmers, how do you propose to attract to this country men who would be willing to work for a wage (taking the cost of living into account) little if any higher than they get in the motherland? But, suppose you attract these men here, how do you suppose you are going to keep them on the farms when it is an easy matter for them to earn more than double, or something like three times as much, in the towns and on public works? This question of agricultural labour is an economic problem which may elude even the wisdom of Parliament; it is an economic question that is puzzling every country in the world, as I say; and you will hardly arrive at a solution of it by the presumably cut-and-dried method of bringing a supply of labour from a part of the world where it is very much in demand to another part of the world where it is no less in demand. If the difficulty is to be overcome, it can only be by going in as largely as possible for a system, not of large farms, for which this country is little suited—not large arable farms, but by encouraging smaller holdings, by encouraging the settlement of yeomen, who will be very little dependent on outside labour. I confess, however, that I sympathise with the farm labourer who declares that the farmer is unable to pay him a living wage, that the accommodation which the farmer offers him is not equal to the accommodation he can get in the town. And yet, on the other hand, when we look to the fact that the worker is demanding his minimum wage, I ask what about a minimum wage for the producer? If in the towns you increase the price of labour, is it not equally a fair thing that the producer in the country—who is an equally hard worker and in many cases is a poor man, and who certainly knows very little about the eight-hours system—is it not an equally fair thing that he should be provided in some form or other with his minimum wage? The attitude of the Government in regard to the rabbit invasion I must confess, although I sit on their side of the House, is to me a somewhat disappointing one. I do hope most earnestly that the Government do not intend to maintain what I can characterise only as the “fiddle-faddle” policy of previous Administrations. While Parliament

is considering, while the Government is doubtful, the rabbit all the time is advancing. The last action of the late Government in regard to this matter was, I believe, to appoint a Royal Commission to report on the question and to advise as to the best means of staying the rabbit invasion. That Commission prepared a report which, in my opinion and in the opinion of many people whom I have met in the country, particularly in my own constituency, was an exceedingly fair, exceedingly practicable, and exceedingly wise report. And at a time when the country was being committed to excess expenditure in all directions, very often for objects purely ornamental, I think the Government might have “gone one more” and decided to strain the powers given them by Parliament, or to strain the powers anyhow allowed them by Parliament, and expended a sum of money in carrying out the recommendations of that Commission. What on earth was the good of appointing a Commission if its report was not to be acted on? The men composing the Commission were practical men, men who had made a deep study of the subject, men who were interested in recommending only practical measures; and surely the Government of the day might have shown some courage—might have shown the same courage as they would have shown if the country were threatened with bubonic plague, or if it were threatened with invasion by an enemy, and taken steps to combat this terrible pest while yet there was time. I venture to think that the Government, in their policy of inaction in the face of this pest, lacked, as previous Cabinets have lacked, an appreciation of the terrible danger by which Western Australia is threatened. It is impossible for anyone who has not seen what the rabbits have done in the Eastern States to realise the devastation and disaster which they may bring upon us. Had that been realised, no Government could have remained in office for five minutes if they had not decided to adopt some remedial measures, some measures to stop the invasion before the country was thoroughly in the grip of the enemy. Now I suppose the matter will come up for discussion later in the session, so I will not go very much farther into it; but I would merely like

to say that, whatever may be the opinion with regard to the absolute efficacy of fencing, there is a large degree of unanimity on this one point, that fencing at least acts as a check, and that if you are to fight the rabbits with any hope of success you must be able to divide them up, so to speak, into details; you must be able to keep the main host back while you are engaged in exterminating the few who have made an entry. And it is possible to do that only by fencing. We have the experience of the Eastern States to guide us. If fencing there had been a failure, if there it had failed to do what was expected of it, we should not find the people and the Cabinets on the Eastern side of Australia as much wedded to the system as ever, or rather more wedded to it than at any previous stage of the struggle in which those States are engaged with this terrible enemy. I was very pleased to see the Government intend to have a reorganisation of the civil service. I have no doubt the civil service is not as bad as some of its detractors paint it, but undoubtedly there are blots, and one was referred to by the member for Albany in moving the Address-in-reply. That member referred to the practice, which is a too common one, of members of the civil service taking part in public matters; and as though that warning had not been enough, only a few days later we found a prominent member of the civil service, in following up that pernicious custom which has sprung up of welcoming Ministers on their accession to office, expressing the hope that the Government would remain in office, and I think he qualified it by the guarded expression "some time." Possibly when he made use of these words he was thinking it was only necessary for the Government to be in office for a very short time before the country would have had enough of it; but the point I would like to make is that if it is within the power of one of the civil servants to express a hope of long life to the Government, how are you to prevent another civil servant getting up and expressing the hope that the life of the Government will be a very short one? If that condition of affairs ever arose, discipline in the civil service would be at an end and politics would

interfere with the proper transaction of public business. I do not so much blame the civil servants for the action they took, as Ministers who encouraged them to take that action. I cannot forget that when the late Government left office, hours were consumed in all departments in the interchange of flowery compliments. Surely we might have a little more work and a little less compliment. The member for Northam (Mr. Throssell), with that kindness of heart which distinguishes him, being the Premier at that time, was somewhat too prone to indulge in that language of commendation. I particularly noticed that in connection with his farewell to the Lands Department, he referred to the excellent work done by that department, and the perfection with which it carried on its business; and yet surely if he went among the country people and went about among the settlers, he must know there is no department in the Government about which complaints are more loud, more deep, or more long. Only to-day I received a letter from a settler in my own constituency complaining that nearly 12 months ago he had applied to the Lands Department for a poison lease on a squatter's run, I believe, and he had not yet received that lease, and for months had heard next to nothing about it. I would not mention an isolated case like that, if it were an isolated case; but it is one of many. I do not know what the experience of other country members may be, but in the brief time I have represented a constituency in this House, I find that the largest share of my work consists in seeing to these small land matters which are delayed and neglected by the Lands Department, and seeing that they are rectified, and generally in bringing the land officials up to the mark. It seems that if you write to them, you get a civil post-card declaring the matter will be attended to, and then in nine cases out of ten that is the last you hear of your application until a member of Parliament comes along and makes himself more or less unpleasant, whereupon the matter is rushed through at a great rate of speed. That is not the right way to do things. Personally, I do not mind that trouble; we are paid, and I suppose we must earn our money; but, nevertheless, a department which has everlastingly to

be whipped up to do its duty is not encouraging land settlement, and is not helping the selector in a very sensible and practical way. I trust, therefore, that when the Government deal with the matter of placing the people on the land, they will look very carefully into the administration of the Lands office, and see that the men who get on the land are not discouraged by the red-tape, by the woodenness, and by the delays of the department here in Perth, whose object it should be to assist them in every possible way, instead of, as too often happens, placing obstacles in their path. Seeing that I am the only country member—that is, representing an agricultural and pastoral constituency on this (Ministerial) side of the House—I should like to say I shall continue to give the Government whatever support lies in my power as long as they on their part carry out the programme which they have enunciated in this House. It is a programme democratic in every sense, and I have yet to learn that you cannot find men quite as earnest, just, and enthusiastic in the cause of freedom in the country districts as in the towns. Possibly I may with a qualm hear some reference to the redistribution of seats; it may fall to my lot to be one of the massacred innocents; but whatever may happen in regard to that redistribution, I think we may rely upon it that this House in making that redistribution will take into consideration one circumstance with regard to country constituencies, namely the sacrifices country electors have to make in order to record their votes at the poll. Nothing astonished me more, coming from the experience of town elections as opposed to country elections, than the fact that in the fight during the recent contests men, and women too, were willing to travel their 20, 30, 40, and 50 miles merely to record their votes; and I venture to say that when in the country districts you have something like 95 per cent. of the available votes polled, those constituencies establish a claim for sympathetic treatment from this House, sympathetic treatment from the democratic members of this House, and from my friends the members at the back (representatives of the Labour party), because if there be one thing required in a democratic country in order to make its

institutions work properly it is that the voters shall display a practical interest in the politics of the country. The danger you have confronting you in the towns is that you have a sort of dry rot in political interest, for you cannot get the electors to come to the polls to vote, whereas during the recent contest—certainly in constituencies that came more immediately under my notice—I never found any indication of the lack of political interest, but on the contrary the very keenest interest in everything concerning the welfare of the country, and a determination on the part of each elector that when an opportunity allowed, he would make his voice heard in the policy of the State. I hope that point will be brought into view when the question of redistribution of seats arises.

MR. W. B. GORDON (South Perth): It had not been my intention to speak on the Address-in-reply, but it occurred to me it would probably be discourteous not to acknowledge the invitation given to members on this side of the House—I take myself to be included amongst them—to go over to that (Government) side of the House, that invitation being given by the mover and also indorsed by the seconder of the Address-in-reply. In giving that invitation he held up the Governor's Speech, and said, "You gentlemen on that side of the House have been waiting a long time to decide on which side you will sit. You have heard our policy; now kindly walk over." We did not walk over. The inducement he offered was, "The people are all with us." I dispute that statement. If he had admitted or if they admitted that a certain section of the populace were with them, I would say that was correct. Some might designate that populace as the "crowd." I would not dare to do so, because the crowd invariably follows a circus, and the gentlemen who sit opposite are not of that class. Some members on the Opposition side have been twitted with having failed to go over to the side of the new Government; and we have been threatened by the mover of the Address-in-reply and also by the seconder, that if we do not go right over there now, we are to have a dissolution, and we shall then be sorry we did not go over.

MR. GARDINER: I did not say that.

MR. GORDON: Of the two evils, I should choose the lesser. The one evil, that of going to the country, may cost a few shillings: the other evil is that if we leave the Ministry in power long enough, even those now supporting them may not remain there. The followers of the Government practically admit that the Government policy is a weak one, but I would induce them to hold on; for it is an established fact that a weak baby will grow up a strong man, and I am satisfied that the generous members sitting on this (Opposition) side of the House will provide that baby with plenty of gruel. We on this side advise the Government to keep going; but I cannot recognise why the Premier or any other member of the Ministry should have a blind following from the people of Western Australia. Have they any record to entitle them to such following? We on this side, looking after the interests of the country, have a perfect right to watch them, and if they are doing good for the country to assist them. The Government should not only have the power to say "no," but also the power and pluck to say "yes," if it be a good thing they are advocating. At the present time there is a stand-and-deliver policy put before the people: "Give us all you have, or we will take it." That, I say, is a stand-and-deliver policy. If they advocate that long, they will not last long. When they get their breath, if they feel inclined to spend some of the money they are getting from the people, they may get a following of some members on this side of the House; but, with all due respect to them, I will maintain my side of the House until I am perfectly satisfied the Government are capable of carrying out the contracts which they profess themselves able to do.

[A pause ensued.]

THE SPEAKER: If no member wishes to speak, I shall put the question that the Address-in-reply be agreed to.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): I beg to move that the debate be adjourned.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM (Fremantle): I second the motion.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

## ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the PREMIER, the House adjourned at 8:39 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd July, 1901.

Question: Codlin Moth Inspection—Question: Patent Act Amendment, Assent—Question: Reformatories for Drunkards and Juvenile Criminals—Question: Soldiers Returned from South Africa—Motion: Royal Visit, Railway Fares—Papers: Camels Importation and Prohibition—Motion: Kurrawang Wood Syndicate—Address-in-reply to opening Speech, debate resumed and concluded, Address adopted—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## QUESTION—CODLIN MOTH INSPECTION.

HON. G. RANDELL asked the Minister for Lands: If he will inform the House of the opinion of the experts of the Agricultural Department as to the sufficiency, or otherwise, of inspection to protect orchardists against the introduction of the codlin moth.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) replied: Every precaution will be taken to prevent the introduction of the codlin moth, and the proposed methods of inspection and disinfection at the ports of entry will be as complete as possible; but it will be necessary to increase the accommodation in order to give full effect to the proposed methods and secure efficiency.

## QUESTION—PATENT ACT AMENDMENT, ASSENT.

HON. A. G. JENKINS asked the Minister for Lands: 1. If the royal assent has yet been given to the Patent Act Amendment Act passed by the Parliament of this State last session. 2. If