

Paper, and no other business can come from another place until the debate on the Address is finished, I move, "That the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, 11th August."

Question passed.

The House adjourned accordingly, at 21 minutes to five o'clock, until the 11th August.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 29th July, 1908.

	PAGE
Ministerial Statement: Meat Supply and Prices, Royal Commission Promised	50
Questions: Meat Trade, Illegal Combinations	50
Freezing Works Subsidy	50
Water Meter Rents on Goldfields	50
Meters Manufacture, local or outside	51
Mining Tribute, Yarri	51
Timber Workers' Agreement	51
State Batteries—Engine Indicators, Batteries Superintendent, etc.	52
Cows Imported, Tuberculosis	53
Railway Carriage Construction	53
Railway Construction, Widgeemooltha	53
Railway Castings, local manufacture	54
Land and Income Tax	54
Debate: Address-in-Reply, resumed	54

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Treasurer: Reports and returns in accordance with the Government Railways Act, for the quarter ending 30th June, 1908.

### MEAT SUPPLY AND PRICES.

Ministerial Statement—Royal Commission.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) said: In view of the importance of a cheap meat supply to Western Australia, and the recent announcement of a large increase in the retail prices, the Government have decided to appoint a Royal Commission of members from both Houses of Parliament to inquire into this matter.

### Questions (2)—Illegal Combinations in Meat Trade.

Mr. BATH (for Mr. Holman) asked the Premier: Do the Government intend to take immediate action to try to prevent any illegal combination from maintaining the present high price of meat, which is such a serious menace to the consumers in the State?

The PREMIER replied: I have already intimated the steps the Government propose to take in connection with the recent increase in the price of meat.

### Freezing Works Subsidy.

Mr. BATH (for Mr. Taylor) asked the Premier: In view of the recent attitude of the pastoralists in the North-West and the wholesale butchers in raising the price of beef and mutton to almost prohibitive prices, do the Government intend to loan them £35,000, indicated in the Premier's Bunbury speech, for freezing works in the North-West, free of interest for three years?

The PREMIER replied: The Government do intend to loan to a company the sum of £35,000 for the purpose of erecting freezing works at Wyndham under conditions favourable to all cattle growers. This step is necessary to bring the producer into closer touch with the consumer, and so to place the local market at the disposal of all cattle growers.

### QUESTIONS (2)—WATER METERS.

#### Rents on Goldfields.

Mr. EWING (for Mr. Eddy) asked the Minister for Works: 1. Why, in face of a resolution of this House on the 28th August, 1907, condemning the charge of rent for water meters, are such rents still charged to consumers of water from the Coolgardie Water Supply, while consumers in the metropolitan area have been relieved of that charge? 2. When does the Minister intend giving complete effect to the wish of the House, expressed in the said resolution?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: (1 and 2) The resolution referred to by the hon. member has been given effect to wherever the profit earned on the sale of water made it possible for the

Minister for Works to include the meter rent in the price charged for water. In so far as the Goldfields Water Supply Administration is concerned, the whole question is now under consideration with a view of readjusting the charges so as to enable the meter rents to be abolished.

*Meters Manufacture, Local or Outside.*

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Works: 1. In view of the practical encouragement given to Kent's (Limited) for the local manufacture of water meters through placing a contract with them at enhanced prices, why is it now necessary to accept the tender of Leslie & Co. for the supply of 330 meters which will be manufactured outside the State? 2. Are the Government prepared to pay a royalty for the use of meter patents with a view to having same manufactured at the Government workshops?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1. Tenders were called for 1,900 positive meters of the following discharges:—1,570 of 250 gallons discharge per hour; 230 of 330 gallons discharge per hour; 100 of 550 gallons discharge per hour; and 1,570 of 250 gallons discharge meters were ordered from Messrs. Kent & Co., local manufacturers, the price in this case being only 4.9 per cent. higher than the lowest received for the imported article. The other two sizes were ordered from Leslie & Co. because the price of the imported 330 gallons discharge meters was 20 per cent. below the price of the local manufactured article of this size, and in the case of the 550 gallons discharge size, the imported article was 30 per cent. below the price of the locally manufactured meter. 2. No. The conditions of contract were so drawn that tenders could be considered for any established meters of the positive type.

**QUESTION — MINING TRIBUTE.  
YARRI.**

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: 1. Was the tribute agreement of the Lake View Co. at Yarri, providing for royalty on all amounts earned over £3 10s. per week, registered at Kookynie? 2. Did the Warden refuse to register a

tribute agreement on the adjoining lease, owned by W. Thomas, providing for the payment of royalty on all amounts earned over £3 15s. per week? 3. If so, why was discrimination shown between the two applications?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1. Yes. The agreement provided for royalty on earnings from £3 10s net upwards. 2. As no tribute agreement has been recorded at the head office no information is available. Inquiries are being made from the Warden; and a further reply will be made on receipt of a report from the Warden. 3. Answered by No. 2.

**QUESTION — TIMBER WORKERS' AGREEMENT.**

Mr. BATH (for Mr. Holman) asked the Premier: 1. Is it a fact that Millars' Combine have failed to carry out the agreement agreed to at the settlement of the timber trouble in June, 1907? 2. Will he take such action that will compel Millars' Combine to carry out the terms of the agreement (from the date of signing same) forthwith? 3. If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: The position in regard to this matter is shown by the following correspondence:—

Premier's Office,  
8th July, 1908.

Sir,—

I have received a letter from the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Timber Workers' Union of Western Australia, of which I attach a copy, and in which Mr. Holman requests that the Government should take steps to enforce the agreement entered into between yourself and the Workers' Union referred to.

In view of the fact that the Government were, to some extent, responsible for the agreement being entered into, inasmuch as certain relief had been granted by the Government to the industry on the understanding that the industrial agreement should be satisfactorily arranged, you will realise that I am naturally anxious that no breach should occur that would cause a repe-

tition of the unfortunate cessation of work that occurred last year, and inflict so much harm to the industry and the worker alike. I, therefore, confidently appeal to you to make the necessary adjustments, if it is found on inquiry that the contentions of Mr. Holman are borne out.

I have, etc.,

N. J. Moore, Premier.

A. J. McNeil, Esq.,  
General Manager,  
Millars' Karri & Jarrah Co.,  
Perth.

—  
Millars' Karri and Jarrah Company  
(1902), Ltd.

Lord Street, Perth, W.A.,  
27th July, 1908.

Hon. Newton J. Moore, C.M.G.,  
Premier, Perth.

Dear Sir,—

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 8th instant, enclosing copy of a communication addressed to yourself by Mr. Holman, the General Secretary of the Timber Workers' Union, on the 22nd ultimo.

In thanking you for your letter, I trust I need scarcely assure you that it is and always has been not only my desire but also that of everyone associated with the management of the Company to carry out the terms of the agreement with the workers concluded in June last in a fair and liberal spirit. If proof of this be necessary, I may state that the workers have not only received the full benefit of the concession allowed to the Company by the Government, but the Company has voluntarily made adjustments and given direct increases of wages amounting to a substantial sum annually in addition.

Mr. Holman's statements in his letter of breaches of the agreement by the Company are of a very general character, and I wish to point out that in every case in which he has brought to the Company's attention any specific complaint it has been fully and fairly inquired into, and where proved to be well grounded has been rectified without delay; so much will be acknowledged by

Mr. Holman; and it only remains for him to state any grievances that may now exist, and on receipt of the information the management will be prepared to make a thorough examination into them and adjust any departure from the spirit of the agreement.

Yours faithfully,

Millars' Karri & Jarrah Co. (1902),  
Ltd.

per Alex. J. McNeil.

## QUESTIONS (5)—STATE BATTERIES.

### Engine Indicating.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Why was some officer of the State Batteries and Machinery Departments not appointed to take the "indicator cards" of the State Battery engines? 2, Who has been appointed, and on whose recommendation? 3, What is the salary paid and what allowances are granted to the said person? 4, What is the total estimated cost of getting the engines indicated as arranged?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No officer has been specifically appointed to take indicator cards of State Battery engines, but an engineer and engine fitter has been temporarily appointed to overhaul the mill engines. 2, Mr. Hughes J. Carpenter, on recommendation of the Metallurgist and Engineer for State Batteries. 3, Salary, £33 6s. 8d. per month with travelling expenses. 4, The cost of getting the engines indicated is practically nil, as it only forms an infinitesimal part of the officer's duty.

### Superintendent, how to be appointed.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Mines: Is it the intention of the Government to leave the choice of a person to fill the position of Superintendent of State Batteries entirely to the Public Service Commissioner?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The provisions of the Public Service Act will be complied with in its entirety.

### Unit Stamp Mills.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: Is it a fact that ten unit stamp

mills have been ordered from Thompson's works, Victoria?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied in the negative.

#### *Pig Well Amalgam Dispute.*

Mr. STUART asked the Minister for Mines: What are the intentions of the Mines Department with regard to the amalgam in dispute between Messrs. Kelly and Penny of the Gambier Lass Gold Mine and the State Battery at Pig Well; and is it likely that the amalgam or any part of it will be returned to Kelly and Penny, who believe themselves to be the rightful owners of it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Messrs. Kelly and Penny have refunded the value of the amalgam they took from the Pig Well battery, and the amount has been paid in to revenue. It is not the intention of the Government to make any refund as this represents the accumulation from all previous crushings at this mill.

#### *Battery Requirements, Local Manufacture.*

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the need for encouraging manufactures which will provide employment for our own skilled artisans, will he take steps to have State Battery requirements manufactured locally, preferably at the State workshops?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Every effort has been made to induce local manufacture. When tenders were called some time ago for the construction of batteries considerable financial consideration was given to local manufacturers. Shoes and dies have been made in the Government Fremantle workshops, and are now being tested, and a unit mortar box recently imported has been sent to the Fremantle shop with a view to the manufacture of similar boxes locally.

#### QUESTION—COWS IMPORTED, TUBERCULOSIS.

Mr. BATH asked the Premier: 1, How many cows have been imported by the Government? 2, How many have been sold? 3, To whom were they sold? 4,

Were these cows tested for tuberculosis prior to purchase? 5, How many of the cows purchased by the Government have been condemned by the Central Board of Health?

The PREMIER replied: 518 and 3 bulls, total 521. 2, 496. 3, A return should be asked for. 4, No. 5, One.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY CARRIAGE CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Railways: Was a check taken to compare relative cost of carriages recently built by private enterprise and departmentally? If so, will he make the result public at an early date?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The carriages being built departmentally are not yet complete. When they are, the result will be made known to the House.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, WIDGEMOOLTHA.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Works: Who were the successful contractors for the Coolgardie-Widgemooltha Railway line? 2, Who signed the contract on behalf of the contractors? 3, What date was fixed by the contract for the completion of the work? 4, Was the work completed on the date specified? If not, when was it so completed? 5, If there was any delay was a penalty inflicted on the contractors for such delay? 6, Was any extension of time granted to the contractors? If so, what was the length of time, and why was it so granted?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The W.A. Firewood Supply, Ltd. (W. Leslie, Secretary). 2, W. Leslie, Secretary. 3, 17th February, 1908. 4, No. 16th June, 1908. 5, Penalty has not yet been inflicted, the final certificate being still under consideration. 6, Yes; six weeks. The extension was granted on the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief for extras ordered to the contract for an alteration to location of first mile after contract was let.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY CASTINGS, LOCAL MANUFACTURE.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the value of steel castings for use on Government Railways imported from the Eastern States during the past three years? 2, Has a trial manufacture of such castings been made at the Government workshops? 3, Was such trial successful? 4, If so, will the Government take steps to have all future requirements in the shape of castings manufactured locally in the same manner?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The value of steel castings imported from the Eastern States from 1st July, 1905, to 30th June, 1908, is £4,453 11s. 2, Yes. 3, Yes, so far as quality is concerned, but the appliances at present available do not permit of the manufacture at a reasonable cost. 4, The Railway Department has had the matter in hand for some time—furnaces have been designed and will in all probability be put in this financial year.

### QUESTION—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Mr. STONE asked the Treasurer: 1, Is the Commissioner of Taxation to collect taxes on income and land, or on the one only? 2, Was there any understanding at the time of the passing of the Act in Parliament that a tax was only to be collected on the one, whichever was the greater?

The TREASURER replied: 1, The Taxation Act imposes a tax on both income and land. (See Section 2 of the Land and Income Tax Act, 1907.) 2, The only understanding was that comprised in the provision contained in Section 17 of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907. This provision is thus explained by the Commissioner of Taxation in paragraph 52 of his Handbook:—

“Let us suppose that a taxpayer is the owner of land which is bringing him in an income, and that both the land and the income are taxable. He will be assessed for Land Tax on the land and he will be assessed for Income Tax on the

income which he has derived from that land, but he will not be asked for both taxes in full, for by Section 17 there will be deducted from the Income Tax chargeable on his income from such land the Land Tax which is chargeable on the same land. For example: If the Land Tax amounts to £5 and the Income Tax amounts to £7 in respect of the portion of the income which is derived from that land, he will be charged £5 Land Tax and £2 Income Tax; but if the Land tax on a block of land amounts to £5 and the Income Tax on the income from the same land amounts to £3, he will be charged £5 Land Tax and no Income Tax on the income from the said land.”

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Resumptions from Pastoral Leases under the Land Act, 1898, Section 109. 2, Timber Tramway Permits under the Land Act, 1898, and Amendment Act, 1898. 3, Regulations under the Land Act, 1898, and Amending Acts. Timber cutting. 4, Notices and By-laws under the Cemeteries Act, 1897 and 1899. 5, Regulations as to control of Gaols and Prisoners. 6, Return of Registered Industrial Unions under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1902. 7, Report on the Fishing and Pearlshell Industries for 1907. 8, Regulations of the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

### DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### Third Day.

Resumed from the previous day.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): In rising to continue the debate on the Address-in-Reply, I do so without offering any apologies. We have arrived at a stage in this State when a section of the people and a section of the Press would lead us to believe that the Address-in-Reply debate is a mere waste of time, and that members should not utilise the opportunity presented to them to criticise

the actions of the Government and to voice their opinions upon what should be done in respect to the general development of the affairs of the State. I take up a different view, for I consider that the debate on the Address-in-Reply should be utilised in order that members may voice the opinions they hold on matters affecting the administration of the Government and the general development of the State. I suppose no Government in Australia have ever received more generous support from the Press of the land than the present Government have received from the Press of Western Australia. Continually, day after day, the Press apologises for the errors and mistakes of the Administration and eulogises any particular piece of success that comes along through the efforts of members of the Ministry. Consequently, we find that whenever a Minister goes into the country he is accompanied by representatives of the Press, and a full report is given of his doings. However, I desire to congratulate all the Ministers for the tours they have taken through the different portions of the State. I have always said that, in a vast State of this description, where the electorates are so very large, it is utterly impossible for one member to voice all the requirements and emphasise the needs of that particular portion of the State, and to enable his district to receive the encouragement and assistance which it deserves at the hands of the Government. There is only one way in which that assistance can be obtained, and that is by Ministers utilising all the opportunities they have of visiting the different portions of the State to see the developments that have arisen and to understand the requirements. I am not one of those who take exception to Ministers touring the State, and I have been very pleased to see that during recess members of the Government have been utilising their time profitably in that direction. A matter of regret, however, is that so many promises have been made by Ministers, irrespective of the denial by the Treasurer that Ministers toured the country with a view to handing out scraps and making promises in order to curry favour with the electors and to gain

their assistance at the coming elections. Despite this denial, I say it is an absolute disgrace to the Administration that so many promises have been made on the eve of general elections. Ministers must know it is impossible for them to carry out all the promises they have made of assistance and for various works in the State. While I congratulate them on the one hand for visiting the various parts of the State, I regret that, on the other hand, they have so far forgotten themselves as to go to the extent of promising in the way they have done. In view of the utterances made in different papers of the State as to the absolute waste of time in continuing the debate on the Address-in-Reply, I think it is just as well to devote some little attention to the reasons which actuate the papers in trying to influence members of the Opposition not to take up time in discussing the question. In trying to arrive at some decision as to why they do this, I have reached this conclusion, that the people are beginning to realise, I am happy to say, that the papers in Western Australia are absolutely inconsistent in their attitude on matters political. As a matter of fact, we see some papers that have changed their front in the last month or two: but I take no heed of that class of papers, for they change so very often that people do not take them seriously. But when we deal with the daily press, the papers supposed to influence and voice public opinion, we find to-day absolutely changed opinions on matters of importance in connection with politics. For instance, my mind flies back to the time I held a position as Minister of the Crown, when it was looked upon as a crime for any Minister to suggest that the amount passed by Parliament on the Loan or Revenue Estimates should not be expended. I remember at that time the Labour Government were seriously taken to task because even a suggestion of that description was made; but we find to-day the leading paper, the *West Australian*, eulogising the present Administration and actually going to the extent of saying that the Government, in failing to spend the money Parliament voted, deserved all the best support of the country and were

really by that means practising economy. I was rude enough last night to interject to the Treasurer, asking if he seriously thought that in reducing expenditure they were economising. I wanted his opinion on that. I remember the time when it was clearly pointed out to me by the papers of this State that a reduction of expenditure did not necessarily mean economy; but to-day we find the hon. gentleman claims that it is economy, and true economy, and he is backed up by the Government organ, the *West Australian*, which asserts the same thing. It is now stated that the Government deserve well of the country because they have not spent money Parliament decided should be spent. I assert that if we, members of this House, endorse utterances of this sort we say we are not wanted in this Chamber, for although we tell the Government to carry out certain works and to spend certain moneys, we still at the same time say to them, "Use your own discretion as to whether you obey our directions or not." Is this Responsible Government? Have not we any voice in the financial affairs of the State; or are we not leaving it to the Treasurer to select from the votes we pass which he shall really spend? The position really is that when this House passes a certain number of votes for expenditure we may think that No. 1 is of the most importance; the Treasurer says, "No; in my opinion, despite the opinion of a majority of members, No. 2 is the most important and I am not going to spend money on No. 1"—and No. 2 is carried out.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse*: What course did you take as Minister in deciding what works to start first? You cannot do everything at once.

*Mr. JOHNSON*: I made a determined effort, and was successful in spending the full authorisation to within a few thousand pounds. I admit one cannot go up to the full authorisation, for there is a possibility of exceeding it. In comparison with previous and subsequent years, the Labour Government spent right up to the authorisation. Responsible Government demands that this should be done.

*The Treasurer*: Would you still spend the money if you were not getting the revenue?

*Mr. JOHNSON*: The position is this. The Treasurer will attempt to apologise and cover up his tracks by saying that he did not get the revenue. It only strengthens the argument that if he does not get the revenue he is the one man who has to discriminate and say where the money shall be expended. Although I will not say that such a thing has been done, it is possible for Ministers to exaggerate the importance of works in their own particular electorates to the detriment of works in other electorates of the State. If we permit the system to continue of Parliament passing funds on the distinct understanding that Ministers can spend them if they like, we rob ourselves of our rights in this House and undermine Responsible Government. Consequently I desire to say when members of this country are taking up that position they not only do an injury to Western Australia, but are taking up an attitude absolutely inconsistent with the attitude they took up in connection with the previous Administration. Then it was a crime, now it is a virtue. Then it was not economy, to-day it is true economy. To proceed now with matters brought forward in this debate, I desire at the outset to deal more particularly with the financial position of the State, and the Colonial Treasurer, rightly so I consider, went back to draw comparison with the year or almost at the time when this State started to retrogress. He went back to the year 1904-5, but he should have gone back a year farther; the year of the James Government when Mr. Rason was Colonial Treasurer. At that time the James Administration started the year 1903-4 with a surplus of £231,000. They finished up the year with a surplus of £83,000, or showed a loss on the year's operations of about £148,000. That was the first year that we started to go back. It was the year that we wanted to realise that owing to the operations of the Commonwealth and other changes in the internal affairs of the State, the position of Western Australia was altering, and it

was absolutely necessary that we should review our financial position, and change our affairs so as to make them fit in with the new and altered conditions. After dealing with that year, I desire to follow the Treasurer and pick up the affairs during what is known as the Labour Government's year. He said the Labour Government showed a loss of £129,000 that year, but I desire to say that this is not a true statement of affairs because it must be borne in mind, while it is true that the year started with a surplus of £83,000, that surplus was never handed down to the Labour Government. As a matter of fact a deficiency was handed to the Labour Government, and that was because the reign of the James Government ended two months after the close of the financial year. During those two months so extensive was the expenditure over revenue received that they actually absorbed the £83,000 surplus, and in addition showed a deficiency of £6,000. The position was this in July, 1904, that the revenue received was £235,956, the expenditure that month was £306,657, so there was a deficiency on that month's expenditure as compared with the revenue of £70,701. Then in August the revenue was £279,433, and the expenditure was £298,069, again a deficiency on that month's operations of £18,636, or a total for the two months after the end of the financial year of £89,337. In other words when the Labour Government took over the reins there was no surplus, there was an actual deficiency of £6,000. [Mr. T. Bath: Hear, hear.] It must be remembered in addition that not only had we a deficiency of £6,000 in our revenue account to face but we had a deficiency of £142,000 in our loan account. [The Premier: Did not the same thing happen when Mr. Rason took office?] I will deal with that later on. I am now dealing with the year 1904, and I desire to follow the example set by the Colonial Treasurer in dealing with the years in rotation. I want to emphasise again we had a deficiency of £6,000 on one account, and we had a deficiency of £142,000 on another account, and we must remember that at that time the Savings Bank funds

were utilised to a great extent by all Governments to assist them. The loan expenditure was so low that the Labour Government found it necessary soon after to increase the reserve of the bank. At one time the reserve was as low as 1s. 8d. in the £. We must remember that no government ever stepped into office under worse conditions than did the Labour Government. The loan account was overdrawn to the extent of £142,000 and our Savings Bank funds were lower than they had been for years before. In addition, while we had a deficiency of £6,000 at that time, we also had the James Government advertising and calling for tenders for huge works, works that the Labour Government stopped, and I as Minister for Works had much pleasure in stopping. These were works which to this day would not have been carried out. They might have been added as burdens to this State, for since that time not one of them has been proved to be necessary. This no doubt was what induced the leader of the Labour Government at that time to make that now famous "mark time" speech. To my mind no speech was more opportune and more necessary when we realised the condition of affairs. [Mr. T. Bath: The Premier made a similar speech at Bimbury.] When we realise the position that the Labour Government at that time had to face, can you imagine any more courageous or any more sound expression of opinion that emphasised the necessity for going slowly and reviewing our position or to use the words of the Labour Premier, "the necessity for marking time until we could so arrange our affairs that we could live inside our revenue"? It was an unfortunate expression, but it was his earnest desire to convey the true position of the affairs to the people of the State. It is true that his remarks were misunderstood. The Press took possession of those words and said that "mark time" meant stagnation, and stagnation would mean ruination to Western Australia. They used those words to cover up the hon. gentleman's desire to express and explain to the people of the State exactly the position of affairs. But when we review the speech of the Premier delivered at



Bunbury recently, it is true that he did not use the same expression, but he told the people exactly what the position of the State was, and he advised them to take the course which was suggested in the famous expression by the leader of the Labour Government; advice which had it been acted upon would have placed Western Australia in a position different from that which it occupies to-day. We would have overcome all our difficulties by this, and we would not have depression staring us in the face and unemployed around us. Instead, it was allowed to grow to the magnitude it is in to-day, when it is much more difficult to deal with. The Labour Government, as I stated, began their revenue account with a deficiency of £6,000, and although they carried out an extensive public works policy, extensive in comparison to subsequent years, and in addition paid off liabilities that were handed down to them, it was really not due to want of attention on their part that they found themselves in the position they subsequently did. During the administration of the James Government the Commonwealth Government took over certain works in connection with the Savings Bank and that account was allowed to accumulate until it amounted to £14,000. This was in addition to the others that the Labour Government had to face immediately they took office. The Labour Government carried out an extensive public works policy and finished up the year with a deficiency of £40,000 of their own. This was from August to the end of the year. As I have said, £6,000 was handed down to them by the James Government. If you take into consideration the surplus that the James Government started with, it will be seen that the deficiency for the whole year amounted to £129,000. The proportion of that £129,000 for which the Labour Government were responsible was only £40,000. The Treasurer would lead us to believe that the Labour Government went back in that year to the extent of £129,000. The Labour Government did not go back to that extent. They went back to the extent of only £40,000. It is worth knowing that during the time the Labour

Government were in power they went back £40,000, or taking into consideration the whole time they were in office, an amount at the rate of £5,000 per month, whereas the James Government during their term went back at the rate of something like £45,000 per month. Surely this is a record that should be used to demonstrate that the Labour Government were sound in their financial administration. Let us look at the present deficiency. We find the deficiency to-day is some £211,000. If we take from that deficiency £46,000 which Mr. Rason started with when he took over the administration of affairs—

*The Premier:* £109,000.

Mr. JOHNSON: How does the hon. gentleman make that out?

*The Premier:* By the same argument you have used in connection with the James Government.

Mr. JOHNSON: When the hon. member is speaking, he can use that argument. Since the Labour Government resigned, the State has been going back at the rate of something like £55,000 per annum. The deficiency has been leaping up, and this despite the fact that the present Administration went into power with the one fixed determination of straightening up the finances.

*Mr. Bath:* And to wipe out the deficit.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. We know that Mr. Rason said he was the one man who could do this. He said that confidence could be restored and there would be increased prosperity generally in this State, and without farther taxation he was going to right the finances and wipe out the deficiency. We have only to take the position to-day. We have to take the position to-day and find out how the people were misled on that occasion, and we see that instead of making the position better it has been made considerably worse. In fact it has been worse ever since the resignation of the Labour Government than it was during their term of office, although the Colonial Treasurer to-day and the then member for Sussex was sitting in opposition. Mr. Rason, now Agent General, pointed out that it was

due to the Labour Government, and the Labour Government only, that the affairs of this State were in the position they were then in, and it was on that account that the deficiency was mounting up. All the blame was put on the Administration of that day, and they claimed that they could put it right; but I regret very much to have to say that, instead, they have been making the position considerably worse; and I defy the Treasurer to explain it away in any other way than that it is want of administrative capacity on the part of the present Administration. But the Treasurer proceeded to point out that it must also be borne in mind that the Labour Government received more revenue than the present Administration. He said that we received £238,000 revenue over and above the revenue of the present year, and that we had less interest and sinking fund to pay to the extent of £144,000, making a total advantage the Labour Government had over the present Government of £382,000. Here it is interesting to review the position. If we had less interest and sinking fund to pay then it follows that the present Treasurer is paying more. Why is he paying more? Because he has borrowed money since the time of the Labour Government. He has increased the interest and sinking fund, but our revenue has not increased. Is that not an absolutely convincing argument against the assertion of the present Government that they have spent their loan funds on reproductive works? If the floating of a loan be justified and if the money floated be spent wisely and judiciously, would not our revenue show an increase, and should not the condition of affairs in the State improve? But we find that while the present Government have borrowed more money, and while they are spending £144,000 more on interest and sinking fund this year as compared with 1904-5, the revenue is less, that is despite the increased loan expenditure, and unemployment in the State is more pronounced to-day, and we find more bankruptcies to-day than we have ever had in the history of the State; also we find that the charity vote is increasing by leaps and bounds.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse:* The bankruptcies are attributable to over-trading in the State.

*Mr. JOHNSON:* The fact remains that they are on the increase. If the State were prosperous there would not be the need for the protection of the Bankruptcy Court that we have to-day. The hon. member must realise that with prosperity there are few bankruptcies, but with depression bankruptcies must follow.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse:* The position is that when you have ten times the number of traders trying to do the business for a slightly increased population, some must go under.

*Mr. JOHNSON:* As a matter of fact, it is not due to any competition; the position is due to the depressed state of Western Australia. But supposing we get away from that and look at the labour market, we find that it is in a worse state to-day than it has ever been in before. We find men walking about—[Interjection by *Mr. Foulkes*]*—*we found only lately in a country district where a man tramped for weeks seeking employment; until he became footsore and depressed, and committed suicide.

*The Premier:* We looked for 30 men for a week and could not get them.

*Mr. JOHNSON:* I remember that last session the Premier said the Government wanted men and could not get them, but I venture to assert that he got them soon after he made that announcement. I will not send men to him to work for 7s. a day, because I do not think a man can live on that; but if the Premier wants men, I guarantee to send him them for 8s. a day.

*The Premier:* Send them for 8s. a day as axemen. If they are no good, they will not be kept.

*Mr. JOHNSON:* I suppose the hon. member wants them for Kurrawang. I am not taking on that task.

*The Premier:* I want them for Denmark.

*Mr. JOHNSON:* If the hon. member wants men for Denmark clearing at 8s. a day, I guarantee to get him the men.

**Mr. Foulkes:** Last week there was an advertisement, wanting men for railway construction work near Donnybrook.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** Yes; contract work, I suppose.

**Mr. Foulkes:** No. The Public Works Department put in the advertisement.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** It is no use hon. members getting up and stating that though they are prepared to pay a living wage they cannot get men. I know men in my own electorate living close to my home who need work and are willing workers, and who will go anywhere if they can get it. That is why I am so emphatic in saying I will get the 30 men the Premier requires for clearing work in the Denmark district. That is the position. The Premier will pay 8s. and I am going to get men for him.

**The Premier:** Men who will work. We do not want dummies.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** In reviewing this most interesting position, that the increased loan expenditure and sinking fund have not increased our revenue, as a matter of fact that the revenue has decreased, and that in addition unemployment has increased in the State, it goes to prove the arguments brought against the present Administration that they are not wise in their selection of works to be carried on out of loan funds. The contention is absolutely sound, when we say that if loan money were wisely expended there would be more prosperity in the State, and the condition of Western Australia would not be that of having a declining revenue, but rather that of having an increasing revenue. I wish to explain the argument raised by the Treasurer that the Labour Government had an advantage of £382,000, as compared with the present Administration. I have carefully reviewed the expenditure of the Labour Government's year, and compared it with the expenditure at present; and I have taken the items I could trace distinctly—there are many items on the Estimates I defy any member to trace accurately—and I find that the Labour Government spent £404,000 from revenue on works that the present Government have been carrying on out of loan funds. In other

words, although the Labour Government received £382,000 more revenue, we spent from revenue on unproductive public works £404,000 more than the present Government are doing. Does that not go to show that while we had more revenue, it was used more wisely than is the expenditure of the present Government? It is true that our position was £382,000 better, but is it not worth pointing out that we spent £404,000 on public works that the present Government are carrying out from loan funds? For instance there is a point here worth noting, and one that gave me some little amusement at the time, though I happened to be out of the House when it came prominently before my notice. When the Labour Government were in office the then Leader of the Opposition condemned the Labour Administration so far as the financial position was concerned and the administrative capacity of the Labour Government, for allowing the deficit to increase; but that deficit was increasing because we were carrying out works from revenue that the hon. member, when he himself became Treasurer, after the Labour Government, did out of loan funds. As a matter of fact, in June we were condemned for the state of our finances, while in August, or a little later, the gentleman who condemned us went into power and carried these self-same works out with loan funds; but in addition he transferred back to revenue the amount already spent from the beginning of June, when he was not in office, and replaced it by expending the money from loan funds. I refer to the Asylum and the Old Men's Depot and other works. That gentleman paid it out of loan funds, and consequently increased his revenue account. On the one hand he condemned us and then he transferred the expenditure to loan and increased his revenue, and was immediately eulogised for straightening up the finances. I said at the time in an interview that this method of financing was the most cowardly that could be resorted to, that transferring from revenue account to loan account was absolutely unsound. I was taken to task by the *West Australian* for using the term, but I said it was the most

cowardly system that could be resorted to. However, this system has grown and grown, and to-day we find the present Government not only continuing the Asylum out of loan funds, a work that was commenced by the Labour Government out of revenue, but building schools and roads and bridges out of loan funds. The system is allowed to increase, until to-day it is absolutely alarming to find the large amount of works carried on out of the loan funds, works that are not re-productive in any sense of the word. It will eventually land us in a serious condition. How can we expect to pay interest and sinking fund on loan funds spent on unproductive works? Our sinking fund is leaping up year after year until it will absolutely absorb our internal revenue, but members sit silently by and allow the Government to carry out this unsound policy of building unproductive works out of loan funds. No doubt I will be taken to task. It will be said "What did the Labour Government do in connection with the rabbit-proof fence?" This is always trotted out. I remember trying to defend myself at Kalgoorlie when the Attorney General took it as one of his principal arguments against my being retained as member for Kalgoorlie, that I had agreed to the construction of the rabbit-proof fence from loan funds. As a matter of fact, the amount spent by the Labour Government from loan funds is small compared with the amount that has been and is being spent by the present Government out of loan funds for exactly the same purpose. But why were the Labour Government forced to carry out this work from loan funds? We need to review the position of the rabbit-proof fence when the Labour Government took office, to clearly understand the true position. If the hon. members will carry their minds back they will remember that the James Government through the Lands Department, Mr. Hopkins being then Minister for Lands, started to construct the rabbit-proof fence, but they were so slow over it, they dilly-dallied about it to such an extent, so bad was their administration in that particular work, and in a large number of other works they tried to

carry out, that the fence had only progressed at the rate of 180 miles for the 12 months. So slow were they that it was found that after the fence had been constructed for a certain distance the rabbits had got inside. Progress had been so slow that rabbits had got round that fence, and they were fencing the rabbits in instead of fencing the rabbits out. The James Government were faced with the position that they had to start another fence, which is known as No. 2 fence. This had just been started when the Labour Government took office, and we were faced with the position that a number of rabbits had been fenced inside the agricultural area, and the only way to protect the agricultural districts from these pests was to continue the No. 2 fence. We could not continue the No. 2 fence at any great speed from revenue because we had a deficiency in our revenue account, and we decided to carry out the work from loan account. So enthusiastically did the Labour Government enter into the work that it went ahead at the rate of 65 miles a month. The previous Administration had carried out the work at the rate of 180 miles a year, while the Labour Government carried it out at the rate of 65 miles per month. The cost under the James Government and the Lands Department was £127 a mile, while under the Labour Government and the day labour system the cost was £118 a mile. At that time there was a great deal of criticism levelled against the James Government for their want of attention, and their want of capacity in connection with the administration of this work. Members who were in the House at that time will remember the arguments and criticisms which were levelled by Mr. White; and members will remember the reception which Mr. White got at the hands of the big man from Boulder City. He ridiculed Mr. White, and said he would show Mr. White how he had dared to criticise the administration, and the result was that Mr. White was dismissed. But we know now from subsequent events that Mr. White was only too correct in his charges. For making those charges, instead of being condemned as he was, he should have

received the congratulations of the people of the State, because he drew attention to the want of capacity on the part of the Government, the slowness with which they were going on with the work, and thereby public attention was concentrated on the fence, and the result was that the work went ahead at a much greater speed.

*Mr. Foulkes:* You forget that you helped to keep that Government in office.

*Mr. JOHNSON:* I am not here to apologise for that Government. I am here to explain to the people of the State the true position, because this rabbit-proof cry is always raised against the Labour Government. If the James Government had carried out their work faithfully and well there would have been no need for No. 2 fence at all; and if there had been no need for No. 2 fence there would have been no need for expenditure from loan. As far as the Labour Government were concerned in regard to that work, we were compelled, owing to the magnitude of the work, to spend money from loan funds, and there is no reason why the Government should take that as a precedent, and say that because the Labour Government did so and so we will do this; that because the Labour Government spent loan money on the rabbit-proof fence we will spend it on asylums, roads, and bridges, and on other works. There is no room for the present Government to apologise for their own misdeeds by saying that the Labour Government did so and so. Have we arrived at a condition of affairs in this State that all that we ask from one Administration is to do a little bit better than the previous Administration? for we find to-day the only apology we receive from Ministers is, "It is wrong, but you did it." That is no explanation whatever. When new administrators go into power we do not ask them to be guided in their efforts by what previous Administrations have done, we ask them to go one better, and not say, "As long as we do a little better than our predecessors we are worthy of the thanks of the people of the State." I am tired of the cry that the Labour Government did it. If the Labour Government did wrong there is no reason why these Ministers should do wrong also, but they should try to profit

by the mistakes of their predecessors, and if I am a member of a Government again I shall not only try to do a little better than my predecessors, but I shall try to profit by the mistakes of previous Ministers. I am tired of this state of affairs, because we should not judge the present Administration by the efforts of a previous Administration, but by their promises to the electors and the actual carrying out of those promises. In referring to the increase of revenue expended by the Labour Government I stated that we expended £404,000 more on works such as are now being carried out by the present Administration from loan. Included in the £404,000 is £79,000 spent by the Government in connection with improving the permanent way, or rather in the general expenditure on the railways. Members will bear in mind that during the term of the Labour Government a large expenditure was carried out in improving the permanent way. Members will remember the amount of argument and the questions which were asked in connection with the blue metal ballasting, and the large amount of handling the Labour Government were exposed to. In the Statistical Abstract we find a special reference is made to the fact that the Labour Government in the year 1904-5 incurred expenditure in connection with the railways that had in previous years been carried out and charged up to loan. It is worthy of note that had we charged up to loan this work, as the present Government have done, that £79,000 from loan, we would not have had a deficiency of £40,000, but a surplus of some £30,000. But we carried out the work to a very large extent from revenue, and so pronounced was our expenditure from revenue on the railways that there is a special reference made by the Auditor General in regard to the figures printed in the Statistical Abstract. I am emphasising this point because the Labour Government did not make a great outcry about it. It is worth while, in view of the present position of affairs, to emphasise the fact that if we adopted the tactics of the present Government and carried on the work out of loan instead

of revenue, we would have had a surplus at the end of the year instead of a deficiency. I emphasise these figures to point out that the Labour Government did great and extensive work in improving the permanent way of the State ; and what is the result ? The good work done by the Labour Government at that time is enabling the present Administration to reap a reward. We find all the economies effected in the working of the railways have been done at the expense of the permanent way. Why is it made possible ? Because the Labour Government brought the permanent way up to such a standard that Government now can continue their railway service at less expense in regard to the permanent way. While in the past 10 to 13 gangs were required to maintain proper efficiency in the permanent way, to-day we find three or four, and in many places gangs have been swept out of existence, and flying gangs are going about the country attending to the permanent way. The main portion of the economy effected has been between Fremantle and Midland Junction, where most of the expenditure was incurred by the Labour Government in bringing the permanent way up to such a high standard. [Interjection by *Hon. F. H. Piessé*.] In reply to the member for Katanning, I do not like to give my candid opinion as to the action of the Government in maintaining the permanent way outside the Metropolitan area. The flying gangs are not keeping the permanent way up to the proper standard, and a time may come when some great calamity may occur. I meet men day after day in my constituency, and they tell me that if more attention is not given to the permanent way in the country districts, a great calamity will occur some day. I trust the Minister for Railways will give more attention to this matter than is being given at the present time. The Government have economised largely through the efforts of the Labour Government in bringing up the standard of the permanent way. Then, there has been curtailment in regard to the cleaning of locomotives and the rolling stock. It is questionable whether that is true economy. It is questionable whether our

locomotives receive that attention which they really require in order to go long journeys and do their work effectually. We find the examination of our rolling stock is reduced to a low minimum. As a matter of fact, I am certain it is not receiving that attention it requires. We find trains going out without being properly inspected. Trains go out from Midland Junction to-day that do not receive the examination they require before going over those high grades around Swan View. It is utterly impossible to give them that examination under the present state of affairs. It is true we have an examiner on duty ; one man looking after the trains going out ; one man to look after three or four trains going out on top of one another, and it is impossible for one man to examine the brakes in connection with every truck or wagon on those trains. Eventually we shall find there will be a calamity, or there will be a break in connection with the couplings, and goodness knows what the smash will cost this State. It is true the Government can show they have reduced the expenditure and saved money in connection with the working railways, but I question if this economy will not eventually cost this country considerably more than the saving they have effected. In addition to this I claim that an attack has been made on the wages of the lower paid men in the railway system. The Minister for Railways and the Premier have denied the accusation made by the Leader of the Opposition that we have sweating to-day in connection with the railway system. I challenge contradiction when I say that the present Government are sweating railway employees. Men are dismissed from work which they have been carrying out for the past seven or eight years, receiving 8s. or 9s. a day ; they are told to stand down for a fortnight, then they are told that they can come on again at 7s. a day to do precisely the same work as they were doing previously. The Government who will do that are guilty of the most despicable tactics that can be resorted to. The Government have done that, and I defy contradiction.

*The Minister for Railways:* I wish you would give me some instances instead of making a statement. Give me some instance, either in confidence or publicly.

Mr. JOHNSON: I ask the Minister for Railways, if I give him names of individuals who have been served like that, will he promise me they will not be victimised for giving me their names, and that they will be placed on the wages which they had previously received if they are doing the same work?

*The Minister for Railways:* Doing the same work, most decidedly.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is all right. I have four or five worker's with large families in my electorate struggling on 7s. a day, which shows that the Minister and the Premier have been misled by the departmental officers, and it shows that the Minister did not really understand the position. When the Leader of the Opposition made this charge against the Government, it was denied by both Ministers; and yet I know a man who is living in my electorate and near me, who told me that his position was so and so in the service, that he was retrenched, and that now he was doing the same work, having been put on again at 7s. a day, which was less than the sum he previously received. Possibly if he had raised an objection to this, he might find he would not receive even the 7s. a day, but would be put out of the department. Now, however, that this man has the protection of the Minister, I will bring not only his case but that of several others before the Government, so that the men will be able to be reinstated at their old wage.

*The Minister:* Do you refer to a case where a man, after having been an engine-driver and being retrenched, has been taken on again as a fireman? In such a case of course he would not get his old wage as an engine-driver.

Mr. JOHNSON: No. With regard to sweating among the engine-drivers, I will leave that to the member for North Fremantle, who will bring the matter up. I am referring at this stage to the men in the locomotive department, and will bring their case under the notice of the Minister. There is another matter I desire to

refer to and one I would like an assurance from the Minister upon, and that is whether a proper retiring allowance should not be made to those old servants of the railways who have been retired. All asked is that these officials should receive the same retiring allowance as is received by officers in other departments. I will not labour this matter, for the Minister knows what I am talking about, but I wish to refer to it briefly. There is a case of a man who has served 15 or 20 years and is then retired from the service. No retiring allowance is paid to him. Certainly it is not compulsory for the Government to pay him a retiring allowance, but this system has been followed loyally by every Government that has yet held office, the custom being that after service for a certain number of years, the retired official should receive an allowance. The Attorney General outlined what had been done by the James Government in this respect when reference was made by the member for Kanoona in the House to the case of Dr. Smith. The Minister then said he would follow the precedent which had been established, which was that any man who had served for 15 years should receive 14 days' salary for every year of service, while a man who had served for over 15 years should receive on retiring one month's salary for every year. The Attorney General then said the Government intended to adopt that system throughout the service, but it has not been applied to the railway officials. While I admit that the services of some of the officers of the department should be dispensed with, I maintain it is absolutely unfair for the Government to deny them the right they assume they have, and which this House thought they had, of receiving a retiring allowance. Is the Minister prepared to give consideration to requests from these men? There are not many of them. There is one in my electorate who feels he has a distinct grievance against the Government in this respect. He has written to numerous public men, including Sir John Forrest, who has informed him he could not believe the present Government would refuse to grant him the

retiring allowance asked for. I have written repeatedly to the Minister on this subject, but have not yet received a favourable reply. I hope the Minister will see that justice is done to this man, who has given 20 of the best years of his life to the service of the department.

*The Minister for Railways:* I cannot recommend a pension.

Mr. JOHNSON: I said I did not apply for a pension. All I wanted was one month's salary for every year of service. It is true this gentleman stated he was entitled to a pension, but I disabused his mind of that idea, telling him he was not entitled to one. I said I would not support that claim, but that he was entitled to one month's salary for every year of service. I am satisfied that officer will be quite content with such a retiring allowance, and if he receives it will realise that the Government has done him justice.

*The Minister:* Did you mention Dr. Smith's case to me?

Mr. JOHNSON: I referred to the speech made by the Attorney General on the question. I have now done with the financial position. The Government have departed from the main plank of their platform at the last general election, when they said they would right the finances. They are now trying to cover that up, to get away from it, and to retain the favour of the electors by saying that their one great plank, their chief policy, is to develop the country. They say they will carry out a huge system of railways, build in different portions of the State numbers of miles of agricultural railways, and they would lead the people to believe, if they could, that they were the initiators of this system of spur lines of railway. What is the true position? It is that the proposal for the construction of agricultural spur lines was first prominently brought before the State by the Labour Government, who in their policy stated their one object was to give the producers a better opportunity of placing their produce on the markets of the metropolitan area. With this object they were going to build light agricul-

ture-in-Chief and asked him to go into the best means of cheaply constructing agricultural lines, and they appointed a Royal Commission whose definite instructions were to outline to the Government the best means of increasing land settlement, and to pay particular attention to the best methods of opening up the agricultural areas. In presenting their report to Parliament the Commission devoted their principal attention to the question of the construction of agricultural spur lines. They published a map showing the different portions of the State where such lines should be run. Figures were given by the Engineer-in-Chief and other experts from the Public Works Department to show exactly how cheaply the lines could be constructed. [*The Minister for Works:* What did they cut the cost of the lines down to?] I cannot remember the figures, but practically to what the cost is now. Shortly after the presentation of the report, tenders were called for the construction of certain agricultural lines, and the tender of the Works Department was the lowest. As a matter of fact the work was carried out more cheaply than the amount submitted in the tender, and since then the lines have all been constructed at the same price originally outlined by the officers of the department to that Commission appointed by the Labour Government. Not only did the Labour Government get the Works Department to pay special attention to the construction of these lines and appointed a Commission to go into the question as to where the lines should be constructed, but they actually borrowed the money on the London market with which to construct the new lines. When the Labour Government went out of office, instead of leaving behind them a deficiency in the Loan account as was received by them as a legacy from their predecessors, they left behind them one million of money for the Rason Government to spend on these agricultural lines, and yet we are told to-day that the present Government initiated the system and deserve well at the hands of the State because of their administration in this direction. As a matter of fact the pre-



sent Government simply carried on the policy of their predecessors, who not only outlined the policy but left money with which to carry on the work. [*Hon. F. H. Piessé*: We give you credit for good intentions.] I am thankful for that. It is encouraging for me to know that I have made one convert who is prepared to admit the Labour Government had a great deal to do with the introduction of this very sound policy of constructing agricultural lines. The Labour Government also proposed to introduce a board, free from politics altogether, to determine where those lines should go, and it is a pity the present Government did not copy that portion of their policy. I am sorry to say a number of lines have been built, and are proposed to be built, from political considerations instead of solely in the best interests of the State. I fear the system will continue, unless we get a board of experts appointed who will be free from all political considerations and will have the one object in view, the object which we should all have, of what is best for Western Australia. We have had political lines constructed, we are having lines constructed now, more from political significance than from any other consideration. This is undesirable, for it will land us in a very awkward financial position in the near future. We know from the experience of Victoria and other Eastern States what these political lines meant there. They will have the same influence here, and there is only one safeguard to adopt for the protection of the State, and that is to hand the matter over to a board of competent experts who are free from politics altogether and who should report to the House as to where the lines should be constructed. [*Mr. Ewing*: Can you name one political line?] I could name two or three. I am of the opinion that most of the lines are influenced by political considerations. You can take them all. I have not the lines by heart, but you can say that politics have had a big influence in getting them constructed. There is one other matter I desire to refer to, and that is our water supply. I consider the position, especially with re-

gard to the goldfields water supply, must be giving the Minister some very serious concern. I follow the administration of that department very closely, and whenever there are reports in the papers I peruse them with great care. I was very sorry to read a report recently as to the operations of the goldfields water supply during the last financial year. The position is this. We find the total revenue for last year was £172,550, while the working expenses had increased by £10,000, making the total for the year £74,883. This increase, I understand, is due to more attention being necessary to the main, and to an increase in the pumping cost. The gross surplus for the year was £97,667. If we allow interest and sinking fund on the debentures, that is on the capital borrowed from the Savings Bank for reticulation purposes, to the extent of £17,000, we leave the sum of £80,000 to be handed over to pay off the £91,700 for interest and £80,000 for sinking fund. In other words, we have enough handed over to pay the sinking fund, while the interest, amounting to £91,700, must be met from revenue. This is an alarming position. It is worse than it has been for some years. In turning round to look for a reason, one finds there is only one thing that causes this state of affairs. I am not here to cast reflections on the Ministry or the administrative staff, for I have absolute confidence in the staff managing the goldfields water supply, but the cause of the trouble is that the main is corroding up to a very large and alarming extent. We are arriving at this stage that we will shortly have to put in increased pumps to get the water through the mains. We must have reserve reservoirs to store the water in case the pipes burst. It is really an alarming position, and I want the Minister to look into it seriously, because we cannot go on like this. We want the Minister especially to review the position of this goldfields water supply and in addition to outline the policy of the Government in connection with the metropolitan water supply.

*Hon. F. H. Piessé* : There is a fungus growth in the pipes ?

*The Minister for Works* : There is a great deal of pitting going on.

Mr. JOHNSON : I think it is corrosion eating away the pipes. It seems as if it is the action of the sand in portions of the pipes, eating through them. It is so bad in places that pipes have had to be taken right out, and I think it is time that hon. members had the whole position placed before them. We have to bear in mind that we have to supply more money from revenue to make up the deficiency in connection with the goldfields water supply. This year we have to spend £91,000 ; last year we had £80,000 to spend. I only outline these facts because we are arriving at a stage when, as I have said, we may have to put in additional pumps because of the corrosion that is taking place in the pipes. The present pumps simply cannot force the water through the distance.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse* : It must be caused by a closing up from some sort of fungus.

Mr. JOHNSON : I am not an engineer ; I cannot tell you. Perhaps there is a growth or something like that.

*The Minister for Works* : It is the formation of nodules inside that is causing the friction.

Mr. JOHNSON : Yes ; there is a formation of some description, and the position is that we must increase our pumping or we may have to instal extra pumps through the pipes corroding in this manner. I am of the opinion that we will soon have to construct a new dam on the goldfields, in order to have a greater reserve there. I only emphasise this point to demonstrate how unwise it is for the present Administration to go outside Mundaring for water to supply the metropolitan area. The consumption of water on the goldfields is decreasing. Although we have extended our mains through the agricultural areas, the consumption has not at all increased ; and while we have increased consumption at Beverley, York, Northam, etcetera, that increase is being discounted by the decrease on the goldfields area. If our goldfields consumption is decreasing, we have a greater amount of water stored at Mundaring ready to supply the metropolitan area. I bring this matter forward be-

cause I would like to have a definite announcement from the Government as to whether they intend incurring any further expenditure in connection with the proposed Canning scheme. I am satisfied that the whole of the metropolitan area can be supplied from Mundaring, although I was of a different opinion when I was Minister for Works. I was then fairly well determined to bring water to Perth, but the reports of the engineers were so strong against me I felt I would not be able to justify my action to this House. I was compelled against my will to limit the proposal to supplying only Midland Junction and Guildford. I find to-day that I was right and the engineers were wrong. There is plenty of water at Mundaring, sufficient to supply the whole of the metropolitan area. That being so, and realising again that the consumption on the goldfields is decreasing, it would be an absolutely suicidal policy to incur further expenditure in connection with Canning. That is all I have to say in connection with this Address-in-Reply. There are other matters I would like to refer to, but there are other speakers also who intend to deal with them. I would like to refer to the utterances of the Treasurer in connection with the timber combine and the action of members on the other side of the House. The member for Murehison (Mr. Holman), however, is in a better position than I am to reply to those arguments and accusations that were made against members on this side of the House, and I will leave it to him. Much could be said in connection with the administration of the Mines Department, more especially the administration of the State batteries branch. I get some little pleasure from the fact that I find the Minister now—although he condemned me while I was Minister for proposing certain alterations in the administration of the State batteries—I find that only recently he decided to turn round and adopt the proposal that I then submitted, and which at that time he condemned me for submitting. I know there are goldfields members who desire to pay special attention to this question, and I will leave it for them. I am here to say that I rose mainly to de-

fernd the accusations made against the Labour Government. I know it is the intention of the present Government to go to the country and compare their work with that of the Labour Government. They will do that, and their speeches will be reported fully in the press. Our speeches are only reported in "Hansard." We cannot always get our speeches reported in the newspapers as the Government do. Members on this side of the House are always at a disadvantage; consequently, we are doing our best to make our utterances known through the only channel that we have. The Government of the day always has this distinct advantage. The ordinary member cannot get his remarks reported as a Minister can, because the same importance is not always attached to them. Consequently, when a Minister makes a speech, his utterances are fully reported irrespective of whether he is criticising any previous Administration or not. This is the only opportunity we have of criticising the Government and showing where they have done wrong : and as far as I am concerned, I shall always be prepared to do this when I think wrong has been done, and I shall be prepared to give credit whenever I think it is due. The only credit I can give them is for having gone over a great portion of this State and endeavoured to realise its magnitude. I am satisfied, however, that they have not done anything to make Western Australia any brighter and more prosperous. They promised, but they have failed. We can now safely leave them in the hands of the people. The people will want from them an account of their stewardship, will expect them to outline the results of what they propounded at the last elections, and the results of the promises that they gave, and which they declared would put Western Australia in a sounder position and make this State much brighter and better than they found it in.

At 6.10 *the Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. P. STONE (Greenough) : In common with other members, I wish to

say a few words on the Address-in-Reply. There seems to be little business laid down and intended to be put through this session. This is the fifth session of the present Parliament, and though up to the present we have had a lot of debate, I do not think we have done much work ; and Parliament is now called together mostly, I think, to pass the Estimates and not take on much new work. However, there are several things in the Premier's policy speech and in the Governor's Speech I would like to comment on. First, I would like to say a few words in connection with the cold-storage system the Government propose to introduce. This has been much debated and some are averse to it, but I think that if the system is introduced in some of the principal centres it will be the means of reducing the price of meat, which is now at such a price that poor people can hardly supply their families with the quantity that may be required. If we had a cold-storage system in the State a great quantity of the stock that now goes to loss might be turned to commercial value and be of benefit to the consumers of the State and also to the stock-holders. The life of a sheep is very little over six years, and about twenty per cent. of the sheep die in the bush, a percentage that might to a great extent be utilised if we had a system of cold storage, while meat might be sold at a cheaper price if sheep could be killed when in the best condition, as they are at a portion of the year. In this country we cannot hold stock in good condition except for a few months of the year ; and during these few months they are always fit for killing, whereas if they are kept till later, particularly in the case of ewes, they fall away and before the following green comes in a great many of them die. I think this loss could be stopped if we had the cold-storage system in the principal centres connected with the railways. Last year with the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) I advocated the making of agricultural machinery in the State by the Government. Most of the machinery the agricultural community use in Western Australia is made in America and is brought to the other States and transhipped to

this State. The profit the middlemen get out of this machinery is more than reasonable. Machinery that can be bought for £18 or £20 in America costs about £60 landed here, because the agents' charges, the middlemen's profits and the duties bring up the price pretty well to that amount. I have had a little to do with machinery, and that has been my experience. We have large workshops at Midland Junction with a large staff, and the works are well equipped with machinery, so that I think a branch of this machinery manufacture might be carried on in the establishment. I am not an advocate for private enterprise. Private enterprise has not taken up this matter, but I would like to see the Government follow this up and make our agricultural machinery in the State so that the money for this machinery, which is now spent among the mechanics of America, might be kept in our State. I think it would lead to a better supply of machinery and to the better development of our agricultural interests. [*Mr. Collier* : Why you are a socialist !] In some things, yes. Private enterprise has not taken this up. As soon as the State takes it on, private enterprise will get jealous and come to terms and supply the public at a satisfactory price. For some time back the Government have considered the desirability of placing a steamer on the North-West trade to bring down the freights and fares on that part of the coast to what would be a reasonable basis. We have a splendid service of steamers on the North-West coast trading from Fremantle to Singapore ; the vessels are well equipped and are a most creditable class of steamers, but the prices they charge for conveying produce and merchandise on the North-West coast are higher than those charged in any other part so far as I can ascertain. We have to look to the North-West for an outlet for a great deal of our farmers' produce, but the freight charges on the commodities are double what they should be. If we had reasonable fares and freights on the steamers trading along that part of the coast, the development of that portion of the State would go on a great deal faster, and it would be

better all round. If the Government were to charter a steamer for that trade, just as a private person would do, and put it on for three or five years and give scheduled rates of fares and freights and a time table, the other steamers would have to come to the same level, and that would enable small stock-owners to get their stock on the market, which is now a difficulty for the small stockowners in the North-West. They cannot charter a steamer to get into the trade, and they have to sell at a large sacrifice to other stockowners who are in a position to charter their own steamers ; and those who are in a position to charter their own steamers will not buy the stock from the small stockowners of the North until their own stock is all used up, and in all probability the stock of the small man cannot be kept in marketable condition to a time suitable for the others to buy it. So I think the Government would accomplish a useful purpose if they chartered a steamer for that trade. There would be no risk. The vessel would be self-supporting and would pay from the jump. The Government would have no risk of the steamer sinking or anything happening, because it would be insured. I would like to bring under the notice of the Minister for Railways the unsatisfactory state of the railway freights. The long-distance rates are not what they should be. If there is anything to justify long-distance rates on railways in a country like this where there is no competition from an opposition line, it would only be from the port inland ; but when we find these long-distance rates apply along the coast from port to port and even past ports, I think they are not accomplishing a useful purpose, but are simply making room for monopolies and giving undue advantage to people away from the market, while not giving those producers nearer the market the advantage of their geographical position. I have always looked on the office of the Public Service Commissioner as one that should be abolished. I look upon it as an office created as a buffer between the Ministers of certain departments and civil servants of the State and the public. It is only the outcome of weak-

kneed Ministers being afraid to take the responsibilities of their duties that the office is continued. I would like to have seen in the Governor's Speech or in the Premier's Bunbury speech some mention of a railway from the Cue line at Eradu to the coal mine on the Irwin, a distance of about 30 miles. It has been known for 40 years that there is excellent coal existing at that locality, and I think the time is ripe when the coal mine should be developed and a small line of about 30 miles built to connect it with the Cue line at Eradu. The distance from the line is only about 20 miles in a straight line, but from the coal seam to Eradu it is about 30 miles. Such a railway would enter a large area of land suitable for wheat growing. I refer to that land between Mullewa and Miningew. I would like the Government to take this matter into consideration and have it investigated so that it might come before Parliament at a later date. The rabbit-proof fence cost the State more than it should have. I think it cost something like £300,000, but I do not think it is benefiting the number of people it should. It was paid for by the many to benefit a few, and I think the time has arrived when we should appoint vermin boards and divide the State into districts, so that the districts may have power to tax themselves and keep up the fence and extend it as may be required. Those people who benefit by the fence should have a tax levied upon them for the maintenance, and the cost of the fence. [Mr. Taylor : The whole maintenance ?] Yes, and the interest on the cost. I think it would be a reasonable thing for a stock tax to be levied on the people who benefit by the fence ; the public would then be relieved of any farther expense in the matter. I consider the Government should take steps to have a revenue stamp placed on one-pound notes. I do not see why people who draw cheques should have to pay one penny for each cheque drawn, while the banks who pay dividends amounting to 20 or 30 per cent. go scot free. I know Mr. S. F. Moore, who is a director of a bank, would object to see stamps placed on one-pound notes, but it is a reasonable way of raising revenue.

[Mr. Walker : Why should not the Government issue the notes ?] That may come later on. In the meantime we should collect a little money from the banks. I also consider that there should be a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. Considering that the principal matters Parliament had to deal with have been handed over to the Federal Government, and there is very little left for the State Parliaments to consider, we might curtail the number of members with advantage. I think we could readily reduce the number of members of the Assembly to 30 and the number of the members of the Council to ten. We should then have more work done and less talk. I have for a long time held the opinion that the manner in which pastoral leases are issued is not fair to the people who wish to make a start. Several holders of pastoral leases in the State have millions of acres, some as many as six million acres, which they have never seen and never will see. If pastoral lessees were only allowed to hold land which they can use we should have thousands more stock-holders in the country, doing more good than men with five or six million acres, not one-tenth part occupied. The Government might restrict the size of the holdings that pastoral lessees can acquire, so that those who desire to get a start in the same line of business can do so. I have noticed lately that the Government have made certain retrenchments at Northampton. The resident magistrate there held several small offices, and his combined salary amounted to not more than £300 a year ; now the resident magistrateship has been taken from him. For that office he received £150 a year, the balance he draws for the position of resident medical officer, but it is not sufficient for him to live on and he is not likely to remain there. I should like to see this officer reinstated in the position of resident magistrate, which would be in the best interests of the people. It is very unfair for the Government to make these retrenchments. We have heard a lot during the debate about the financial question. The trouble has arisen through the Federal Government taking possession

of our customs duties, and it has now reached such a pitch that we must find some other means of taxation to keep matters going in a satisfactory manner. I would like to see the police court fines handed over to the Treasury and not taken possession of by municipal councils. The municipal councils have no more right to the police fines than the roads boards in country districts have. The municipalities do not contribute to or pay the police or the magistrates or the upkeep of those officers, and it is unfair that the police fines should go to the municipal councils; they should be handed to the Treasury to help swell the revenue. The municipal councils, as was referred to last night, by the manipulation of their balance sheets have obtained money from the Treasury which should not have been paid to them. This should be refunded. The Government will not be doing their duty if they do not have a balance struck, render an account, and ask for a settlement, and if no settlement is forthcoming the Government should put in a writ in the ordinary way and obtain the money. This is the way I would do with people who obtained money by falsely manipulating their accounts. A large number of sheep were imported last year to be divided amongst the farmers so as to raise the standard of the stock in the State and help the small farmers along, but I do not think care and attention were paid to importation of the sheep that should have been. I know a few sheep went to the North, not more than 400 or 500, I saw them myself, but I have seen better sheep landed from Carnarvon at 15s. a head, while the Government supplied the sheep in the North-West part of the country at 23s. 3d., landed there. During that period of the season when sheep could be obtained at 14s. a head, all the farmers in the South stocked up and when sheep got to 22s. or 23s. a head they knocked off. I would like to see some improvement made in the affairs of the Midland Railway Company as they relate to the public. Over that company's railway second-class passengers have to pay 5s. 9d. more than they would have to pay for the same distance on the Government

line. This only applies to second-class passengers. I suppose if it applied to first-class passengers there would be such a howl about it that the matter would soon be remedied. This is a question the Minister for Railways might look into and adjust. The Government must approve of the rates charged by the Midland Railway or that company could not enforce them. The member for Guildford spoke to-night of some of the railway servants. There is a railway servant in the district I represent who was one of the first servants employed by the Railway Department. The Geraldton-Northampton line was the first railway built in the State, and this man was a servant from the time of the construction of that line till the other day, when he received notice that his services were dispensed with. He has a large family, and was put off with a month's notice. He appealed to the Government, and received a reply that there was no allowance or pension for him. I think this is a hard case. The Government should take into consideration that he is an old man, now helpless and not fit to work longer, and after he has worked for 28 or 29 years for the Government on small pay as a fireman he should receive some compensation. He is now dependent on charity, and I think the Government might make him a small allowance, if only 10s. a week.

*Mr. Heitmann* : There are hundreds of men in the State in the same position.

*Mr. STONE* : Not men with 28 years' service.

*Mr. Heitmann* : He had his "screw."

*Mr. STONE* : If that is the member's idea, he thinks it is all right.

*Mr. Heitmann* : It should apply to all alike.

*Mr. STONE* : I do not propose to say more, and I know the member for Mount Margaret is itching to speak.

*Mr. G. TAYLOR* (Mount Margaret) : It must indeed be gratifying to hear the member who has just resumed his seat expounding those socialistic principles which members on this (Opposition) side of the House have been advocating for many years. I am pleased to be reminded

by the member for Geraldton (Mr. T. L. Brown) that his conversion came about through travelling in the train in that member's company. When we hear members in the House like the member for Greenough advising the Government to subsidise a line of steamers so that they may assist the small farmer and small cattle raiser in the North-West, and when we also hear a member on the Government side of the House, who so loyally supported the present Government as the member for Greenough has, advocating freezing and cold storage by the Government to enable other sections of the community who produce foodstuffs and commodities for human consumption to reach markets under more advantageous circumstances, I say the Government should at least recognise the justice of the arguments advanced by this (Opposition) side of the House. In dealing with the subsidising of a line of steamers for the North-West, last session when we were considering the Port Hedland to Marble Bar railway, while opposing the Bill for the construction of that line I suggested that it would be wiser to land products and mining requisites at Port Hedland at the same price as they were landed at Fremantle ; that by this means that portion of the State would be developed in its mineral resources. I pointed out that it would be wiser to spend a few thousand pounds in that way than to spend a large sum in constructing the Port Hedland to Marble Bar line. I was struck by a report, I think in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, of a speech delivered by the Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. D. Connolly) when standing for re-election for the North-East Province, when he said the Government had decided on a line of action of this nature. I have not heard anything about it since, but it was then reported as an utterance of the Colonial Secretary during his campaign. It may be argued that the subsidising of a line of steamers there will be necessary to make this other public work, the railway line, approximate to a paying proposition. I am not going to set that forth as an argument, but I have heard it used outside of this Chamber. With

reference to the speech delivered by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) when moving the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, I am credited with having said that competition would regulate the freights between Fremantle and the North-West on the present line of steamers. I could not really have done that, for anyone who has gone into the question knows that competition will not regulate in any way or modify the present tariff. There are only a very few companies trading in those waters, consequently they regulate the prices to suit themselves. [*Mr. Stone*: There are associated rates.] Yes, that is so. I hoped the Government would at least take some heed of what one of their supporters said with reference to doing something to help a portion of the State. I may be accused by the Government side of the House of preventing the Ministry from helping that portion of the State when I put forth my opposition to the loan of £35,000 about to be made, free of interest, to some company of cattle raisers or wholesale butchers in the North-West. It will be very edifying to this House and to the country when the agreement, which I suppose will be signed and sealed by the Government in the interests of the people of this State, and by the company who are constructing the freezing works, is made known, and for members to see the names of those forming the company. We will then see what consideration the Government is paying to the small cattle raisers of this country. I question very much whether the Government will under that agreement sufficiently safeguard the small cattle raisers in the North-West. [*Mr. Collier*: We have had experience of agreements before.] Yes, we have had some experience in the past, and before I resume my seat I will refer to covenants between the Government of this State and other parties, and show how the terms were honoured in the breach in a most scandalous fashion. At the present time, however, I desire to deal with the loan free of interest for three years, given by the Government to a company for constructing freezing works in the North-

West. I want to know whether the Government are going to safeguard the interests of the consumers of the State in the agreement, whether they have fully gone into the question, whether they are going to tie the company down as to what beef or mutton they shall ship to foreign markets, or set aside for consumption in this State. We have not yet in this State had a meat supply equal to that in the Eastern States. I have had experience in all the States, and I know that our meat supply will not be better under the conditions suggested by the Government in connection with these freezing works. I predict that the very choicest and primest beef and mutton frozen in those works will find other markets than those of Western Australia. I also predict that the prime meat will not fetch as high a price in foreign markets as the second-class meat will in our own towns. [*Mr. Gordon*: That remark applies to the cattle in all the cities of the Commonwealth.] In the Eastern States the outlying and back country contain pastures second to none under the sun. With reasonably fair seasons they can produce there the finest beef and mutton it is possible to put on any market in the world, and the people of the other States can be supplied under more favourable conditions than we can. The Minister for Agriculture shakes his head as much as to say he is in doubt, but one cannot be in any doubt when he knows the Eastern States as I do. This question was referred to by the member for Gascoyne, a gentleman whom I listen to with the very greatest interest whenever he speaks on subjects bearing on the pastoral industry, for I know he has given his life to that particular line of work, and consequently has more knowledge than the ordinary individual. When I hear a statement from that gentleman about stock I believe it to be, as far as his judgment goes, correct. It is a most remarkable thing that we cannot get a meat supply in any portion of the State unless we pay from 7d. to 8d. for mutton, and even as high as 9d. a pound at the present time, and up to 1s. to 1s. 3d. a pound for prime cuts in beef; while

in the Eastern States the prices, although certainly high now, are very much lower, for one can get the choicest cuts from a bullock for from 4d. to 5d., and as low as 1½d. [*Mr. Gordon*: It costs 1s. a pound for steak there now.] The member is speaking now of a range of prices existing after a period of drought so disastrous to New South Wales that the Government of that State have been for many months carrying fodder free over the railway lines, in the hope of keeping people who are interested in pastoral areas in a solvent condition, and their stock alive. It is not a fair thing to judge the meat values in New South Wales, or in the Eastern States, from the prices existing to-day and compare them with the ordinary circumstances and conditions which exist here now, and which to my knowledge have prevailed for the last 14 years. At the present time the position in Western Australia is worse than it ever has been before. As the meat ring become more powerful, as they squeeze out the small men and concentrate their capital, so do people feel the pinch, so are people of this State more at their mercy. That is the position, whatever doubt there may be in the minds of members or of the people of the State as to the existence of the meat ring. During the past week or fortnight it has been proved beyond doubt that a ring does exist. You may call it what you like, but it is a ring, a trust, it is a powerful combination, and in fact the most powerful combination, so far as trading in foodstuffs is concerned, established in this State. I would like to instance the speech delivered by the Treasurer last session, in which he pointed out that there was a big firm started which had been putting meat on the market at a price within the reach of most people in the metropolitan area.

*The Treasurer*: They were doing that at a loss.

*Mr. TAYLOR*: Yes; but the Treasurer in the course of his speech did not say that the firm were going to sell at a loss, but conveyed to me, and I believe to this House, that they were going to do it profitably, for he said they would supply



a good article, and added, "I have passed their shop and looked in, and have seen beef hanging there equal to anything offered for sale anywhere in Australia."

*Mr. Bath* : That firm is in the ring now.

*Mr. TAYLOR* : How long did that firm last with its great wealth behind it? There is no butchering establishment in the history of my time here that started with such a flourish of trumpets as the firm of Fuller & Naughton.

*Mr. Bath* : They quoted *Hansard* in support of their claim for patronage.

*Mr. TAYLOR* : Yes; they did that as proof of their *bona fides* and their genuineness. They went so far as to take up the records of Parliament, and quoted the utterances of a Minister of the Crown to justify them as vendors of a splendid article. They were then a powerful, a wealthy firm, supposed to be able to withstand the ring, and it was announced on their behalf that they would burst the meat ring up, and do it so successfully that they would bring down the prices of meat to an even lower rate than that at which, on opening business, they started to sell. We find the company have not lasted longer than a short twelve months before gradually coming under the influence of this powerful trust or ring. They have now joined the ring. I believe I would be justified in saying they were squeezed into it, for this would more properly define the position than by saying they have joined it. When we find a wealthy firm starting business like they did not being able to stand against the ring for more than twelve months, is there not justification for any member to say we have a meat ring in this city?

*Mr. Bath* : Copley was going to fight it too.

*Member* : He is in the ring now.

*Mr. TAYLOR* : Most firms that have started here have done so on similar lines. Trace back the history of the leading butchering firms in this State, and you will find they all started with the object of bursting up the ring, but none have succeeded. In view of these facts the Government coolly and calmly have decided to join the ring too; more than that, they have coolly and deliberately lent a

portion of the people's money to the ring, and thus by that means are implicating the whole of the State in the ring. In the agreement for lending the money for the establishment of the freezing works, it is provided that there shall be no interest for three years, so that no profit will be able to be derived by the State from these works for that period. I hope that before the Government lend this money Parliament will be given an opportunity of at least having the agreement placed on the table of the House, so that members shall be perfectly satisfied that a good meat supply is guaranteed. I do not want prime bullocks and sheep to be frozen and sent to other markets and have second and third-class stuff dumped down in our markets. That will be the position, I venture to predict, because they are sure of this market. They will send all their prime stuff to the open markets of the world where they have no power or control, and they will just drop down an inferior article in Western Australia and get the highest possible price for it. That is really the position. I have some knowledge of stock. I know exactly how it will be worked, and notwithstanding all the legal knowledge possessed by the gentleman who controls the Attorney General's Department, the agreement with these people will be made in such a fashion that there will be a saving clause for the company. We should find out the names of members of the company—I am informed that there are four in it, four of the leading cattle raisers in the State, four individuals or rather four firms who now control the meat market. They are the very people who are going to get a loan of £35,000 from the Government to build freezing works. I am informed also there is not one of the small cattle raisers among them, I am also informed that not one has been consulted in any way whatever. These four firms are the leading spirits. I may be wrong, but I have been told that on very good authority. The Government should prevent this business from going on. I can only ask the Government to exercise wisdom and caution before they allow themselves to get into the hands of this crowd. [*Mr.*

*Bath* : The Minister for Agriculture knows the names.] Perhaps the Minister will give me the names. I do not think my information is wrong. I have obtained it from Press reports, and these have been backed up by what I have heard from other quarters.

*The Minister for Agriculture* : You will be able to take shares.

Mr. TAYLOR : There are too many people who have taken shares in this world, and fallen. I am not taking shares at this particular juncture. I would deem it wise to wait and see some dividends declared. The quality of their meat and mutton is of greater interest than the share market and the prices too. I desire also to say that when we hear Government supporters echoing sentiments like the hon. member for Greenough did to-night, and we still find him supporting the Government, saying one thing and doing another, one must really think that politics are hopeless and that there is no possible chance of redemption. If I held the views of the hon. member, or if I stood in this House and enunciated them, I would not dream of supporting the Government who have no consideration other than for companies and combines. I want to know what they have done in the administration of departments, what they have done to relieve in one iota the working classes. They have however done much for other classes : whether they be mining magnates, whether they be connected with the meat ring, big pastoralists, or big timber men—whatever industries they have been carrying on, these people have always had the patient ear of the Minister controlling the department. These individuals can get benefits that are not given to others. I will point out before I resumé my seat in support of that argument the attitude of a certain tramway company. The hon. Minister for Railways is looking at me. He knows full well the company I am referring to—the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company. They have been operating in various portions of the State. They have been granted permits by the Government to construct tramlines in various parts of the State. The last permit was

granted in a portion of the State which I have the honor to represent ; that was for a tramway starting from the Lancefield Gold Mine and passing in a north-easterly direction some 18 miles to supply this Lancefield mine with firewood. I want to say, however defective the tramway board may be, however defective the Tramway Act which gives the board power to recommend to the Minister whether a tramline shall be granted or not, and however defective that portion of the machinery may be, it is not nearly so defective as the administration of the department. I want to tell the House that whatever I may have to say to-night in connection with that tramline, I have nothing in the world to say against the tramway board that recommended that the permit should be granted. The conditions are these roughly. The particular company last year made application to the Government for a permit to construct a tramline some 18 miles in a north-easterly direction. I have a litho here which indicates the route. The litho was supplied to me by the Minister for Lands. The tramway board considered the application, and finding that the tramline would not interfere with any of the timbers or fuel used for other mines in that district, and would not militate in any way against their success in carrying on their operations for the future, recommended the granting of the permit. The Government granted it. However, instead of running the tramline some 18 miles in a north-easterly direction, they ran it 18 miles south of a direct east line to their terminal point, with the result that they have encroached upon another mining company's property, the Ida H, and also a large community of people at Burtville, who are all small holders operating in a small way on their own leases and supplying the State battery with stone. These people have been doing well and it has been a rich centre for years, but their fuel and timber for their mines was being jeopardised. The management of the Ida H wrote to the Minister for Lands when the application was first put in for the permit, and when the manager saw that the line would not interfere with his fuel or timber supplies

he raised no objection ; but after the permit was granted as I have said, instead of running north-east for 18 miles, the tram-line was taken in a southerly direction in a direct line for 18 miles, and they were distant about 14 or 16 miles from the terminal point to which they had a permit to run. An appeal was made to me in the matter. I at once interviewed the Premier ; I had not a personal interview with him at that stage ; I wrote to him, and have his reply. I am not going into the details of the case, as I have some correspondence here on the matter. I know no damage can be done at the present time, because the mine requiring the wood supply has been temporarily closed down ; consequently I know, no matter how the company desire to break the arrangement entered into with the Government and desire to continue operations around the Ida H and get the people into their power so as to ensure control of supplies and compel them to get their fuel from the company in the near future, I know they cannot do that. I appealed to the Minister for Lands and he wrote me a letter pointing out that certain things had been done, but unfortunately the company had not carried out their agreement and the management of the Ida H and the people of Burtville were so much agitated about the matter that they sent petitions to the Government and things were very disturbed for some time. I went straight to the scene of action and I was accompanied by the Lands Department Inspector of Surveys from Coolgardie, who is also chairman of the tramway board, and I want to say he is a very estimable officer, an officer in whom I have every confidence. I believe if the company's application had been put in for the route over which they constructed their line, it would have been absolutely refused by the board. As I stated, I appealed to the Minister for Lands to restrain them from cutting south of the line, and thus save the fuel for the people of Ida H and Burtville. The Minister for Lands did that, but unfortunately he was going away at that time and it was one of the last things he did before leaving for the Eastern States. [*The Minister for Mines:*

I stopped it.] The Minister for Mines was then acting Premier and it was with him that negotiations were completed. I want to say this, that the company I believe have given the Government of this State more trouble than any other company that is operating in the firewood industry. They have encroached in places where they have no business to be. I do not suppose there is one member in this House representing a district that that company have operated in that has not had trouble and difficulty with them and who has not had to go to the Minister repeatedly. I venture to say this that on most occasions, the company and not the member have had the Minister's ear, and in one instance so flagrantly did the company break their agreement with the Government that the Government fined them £50. Yet in view of that they afterwards granted them a permit to operate in another portion of the State. I believe that there is a bond of £500 put up by these companies when agreements are made, and I hope that the Government will punish them to the tune of estreating that bond. I know it is no use fining the company £50 or £100. Let the Government estreat the bond of £500, if they desire to carry on administration in the manner indicated in this House by hon. members who grace the Treasury bench or in the manner indicated by Ministers when addressing electors throughout the State, when their only idea is clean and sound administration. If that be their motto, here is an opportunity to deal with delinquents, to deal with people who have cost this Government and other Governments preceding them more time and trouble in keeping them in order than any other company operating in this State. It will be interesting to know how much it takes for supervising the company, and keeping them within reasonable limits. And even then it cannot be done. These people have been dodging the Government officers. Their brains are absolutely trained in that direction that they believe in taking advantage of the Government or anybody else. [*Mr. Scaddan :* Where are the forest rangers?] I suppose the forest ranger resides in Coolgardie, or somewhere

about Kalgoorlie, and these people are operating at least 240 miles from there. How can the forest ranger do it? [*Mr. Collier*: The constable is the forest ranger.] He is not the authenticated gentleman the company take any notice of. Nothing short of a forest ranger in full bloom is of any use for them. The hon. member has had difficulty with the company. The Government should be careful, in view of these facts, in future permits to the company. No doubt they have in other instances committed breaches wherever it is possible. I may as well say, as I have already said, they have broken faith so often with the Government that the Government have found it necessary to fine them. But having fined them £50 for operating in one place, the Government now give them a permit to operate in another direction. No other business people would do a thing like that. I say the Government should at least prevent these people from farther operating in this State. I do not wish the Government to make the company pull up the line, as suggested by the member for Guildford (*Mr. Johnson*) in an interjection. I recognise that would be the proper action to take. I recognise that if the Minister did his duty and realised what a breach of this nature meant he would make them pull up the line, no matter what it cost; but I do not want the Minister to take that drastic step, because it might in some way jeopardise the fuel supplies for a large mine. [*The Minister for Mines*: It would do so.] I have made it clear to the Premier, and to the Minister for Mines when he was Acting Premier, that I had no desire to do that; but I maintain there should be a punishment, and that these people should not be allowed to operate indiscriminately where they like in this State, and to put people to their wits' end to know how to keep their end up with them and to put members of Parliament and Ministers to the trouble of travelling hundreds of miles to watch them. At least I hope the Government will estreat the bond of £500. I may be wrong, but I believe there is a bond of that amount—I fancy it is in the regulations; but the company may have slipped that portion of the regulations;

they may have been cute and clever enough to get the permit without putting up the necessary bond provided in the regulations before a permit of this nature may be granted. I would not put it past them if they had. But I shall watch the operations of the company while they are operating in my district. I now desire to make a few brief remarks with reference to the State battery system in this State, largely on account of the public utterances of the Minister for Mines and on account of some remarks made by the Premier in his precessional speech delivered at Bunbury a week or ten days ago. I find in the reports of civic receptions and functions and welcomes that a Minister receives when travelling through the State, where he has to respond on behalf of the Government or Parliament, that the Minister for Mines is reported on most occasions as making a very strong point that it is his intention to supply the State largely with two-head mills, from an economical point of view and from the point of view of practicability. I think these are pretty well the reasons advanced by the Minister and also by the Premier. So far as these two-head mills are concerned, they have been working about Lennonville and close to Black Range for some years—I do not know with what result, whether they are to blame or not—but that portion of the State was at a very low ebb for many years, and it is a most remarkable thing that the low ebb was reached when these mills were there. I am not prepared to say that it was because of these mills; but since the mills have been removed that portion of the State has gradually taken its place among the principal gold producing districts of Western Australia; and it is unfortunate that in another part of the State depression is equally falling just as it has risen in that part of the State these mills have left. I am not prepared to say these mills are responsible; but I want to advise and warn the Government, especially the Minister for Mines, that before he makes another purchase of a two-head mill he will at least demonstrate to the country that the two in my district are able to treat the stone and save the gold. They can no more treat the

quantity of stone they are estimated to do than fly in the air, and they can no more save the gold than they can treat the stone. As an instance of that, there is one mill working at Linden; and if any battery in this State has caused dissatisfaction and has disheartened genuine prospectors—some of the finest prospectors in the State, men I have known for many years and with whom I prospected myself twelve or fourteen years ago—it is this Linden battery. These men have worked for the last 18 months or two years, raising stone in the hope of getting a public crusher. I interviewed the Minister on behalf of these people for a battery, and the Minister pointed out to me that it was impossible to supply a large plant, but he suggested the type of battery now there. When I found there was nothing better, relying on the Minister's statement, I thought at least it might supply the district. However, it is a hopeless failure. I said to the Minister that if he could not do anything better he might send along one of these plants and try it. Members will see that I am in an unfortunate position, as the Minister knows. This portion of the State verges on the electorate of the Minister for Mines and my own. The dividing line is between the community of people and the battery. The battery is on one side and most of the prospectors are on the other side in my district, the battery being in the district of the Minister for Mines. I want it clear that the reason the battery is in the Minister's district is because it is the most suitable site. The position was chosen by the department, not by the Minister; and I think the men had some say in it.

*The Minister for Mines:* It was also chosen there for the sake of the water.

MR. TAYLOR: I think I am right in saying that was one of the principal reasons. At any rate, it was one of the most central positions at the time, especially when there was only one mill going up. But I am in an unfortunate position, because while most of the people treating their ore at that battery are in my district, a number are likewise in the Minister's district and the battery is there also. [*Mr. Gull:* What does that matter?]

It matters in this respect that I am in the difficulty of having to go to deal with the Minister about a battery in his own electorate. I want to say this in all fairness to the Minister, because if he put up another battery there to-morrow, people would say, "Another battery has gone to the electorate of the Minister for Mines." I know how people may make remarks, and I want to be fair to the Minister, while I certainly want to do justice to my own people. Above all I want to warn the Minister not to dig too deeply into this system of crushing and ruin the goldfields of this State, or at least ruin the possibility of prospecting the State. Unless there is some other method of crushing for the people at Linden, they will be so disheartened that they will pick up their swags and walk away. I wish also to talk about the capacity of these mills for saving the gold. I showed the Minister an assay return of a parcel of stone being treated by this battery. There were about 70 odd tons of stone, speaking from memory, to be treated; but after 18 tons had gone through the engine broke down, and it was impossible to do anything farther until a new engine was installed. The result was that they cleaned up from the 18 tons and got 24 ounces over the plates. They assayed the tailings at the Westralia Mount Morgans mine, and they assayed 66dwts. fine gold, short tons. The member for Swan (Mr. Gull) has had some experience of batteries on the goldfields, and he will realise that those figures are startling. The battery saved 24ozs. over the plates from 18 tons, and the tailings went 3ozs. 6dwts. fine gold, short tons. Is there any goldfield can stand that type of treatment and flourish? Can we open up our goldfields? Is there any wonder that the gold production is slowly and gradually declining? And I want to warn the Minister. We have at Linden, I believe, an extensive mineral belt—anyone who has travelled that country knows it—and it behoves the Government to give every facility in such an area, in a country where we have crushed at the battery 90 odd tons of stone taken out of the reef from the time it was tapped until the men knocked off work for something like 7ozs. over

the plates and 3ozs. in the tailings. That is a fair test. The Minister has the returns from the battery, and they are very promising indeed. I point out these figures to demonstrate that if the Minister will persist in installing these two-head batteries in the prospecting areas of the State he will kill the gold-mining industry, prevent prospecting and make it absolutely hopeless to open up any of our mineral areas. I am not in any way abusive to the Minister; but I desire in the interests of the people that only the best type of batteries should be put up for prospectors, in keeping with economy, and in keeping with the development of our goldfields. I want to say, too, that on account of the absolute incapacity of these batteries to deal with the stone, the Government are now negotiating to take over a plant, within three or four miles of this place, owned by a private company, a five-head mill to treat the stone there for the prospectors for two or three months under the present battery system. But that will not be satisfactory because that battery is located at the extreme north of the area which makes it absolutely impossible for the people to have their stone treated there because they will have to take it ten or twelve miles. Something should be done to help that portion of the State, and in doing so help the State as a whole. As I have pointed out before unless something is done we shall lose from that belt of country from 70 to 90 prospectors, for there are between 70 and 90 prospectors there on a belt of country 18 to 20 miles long. I hope the Minister will do something for these people. A little portion of the territory is within the Minister's own electorate, and in advocating their needs I am not advocating them only for my own district although a portion is within my district. I would be pleased if the whole area was within my district because if the Minister did not listen to the requirements of the people then I could deal with him as the whole and sole representative of these people in the House, and the Minister would then hear something a little more biting than he is hearing to-night. There are other centres where we have five-head mills and ten-

head batteries which are anything but satisfactory. We find at every turn prospectors writing to members about their tailings and slimes. Things are not as satisfactory as they should be. These complaints are spread over a large area. There is hardly a member in this House who has not had complaints coming along repeatedly, so there is a necessity for the Minister to go into the matter and make it easy and favourable for men in various portions of the State. I am not going to-night to deal with the report of the commission appointed by the Minister to inquire into the public battery system because that report has been before the House, but I am very sorry indeed that it has not received that treatment at the hands of the House which it deserves. When we recognise the amount of time and patience, and the cost of that commission to the State and the valuable information given in the report, it is to be regretted that there has not been more notice taken of it, and that the House has not compelled the Minister to do something in keeping with the report of the commission appointed by himself to go into this battery system. The member for Murchison has an idea that the commission was appointed for whitewashing purposes. I am not going to give an idea on that point. If it was for whitewashing purposes one would have to use a microscope to find any white spots on the Minister. The report has not come out as the Minister had anticipated. If that report had come out as the Minister had anticipated we should have heard more about it, and I would not have been compelled to speak for an hour, as I did last session, to force the Minister to have that report printed so that it would be on the records of Parliament in the bound volume and so that it could be sent through the country for the people to see how the money had been spent on the public battery system of the State; to show them that it was not wisely expended, and how the State had purchased old rattletrap batteries here there and everywhere in flourishing centres. I hope the Minister will go into this system more fully, do something of a practical nature and cease using the

system for political purposes. Last night when the Treasurer was speaking I made a remark, by way of interjection, as to the municipal subsidies, and for my authority I quoted the report of the select committee of the House which was appointed last session, of which the member for Perth, the member for Cue, the member for Leonora, and the member for Nelson were members. I have the report of the chairman here, and when I interjected that the report of the select committee pointed out that the municipalities had received a sum of £30,000 more than they should have done, the Treasurer somewhat doubted the statement. To prove what I said was correct I will read the report. There are only a few lines of that report drawn up by the chairman (Mr. H. Brown). It states:—

“From evidence given, and after a perusal of the several balance-sheets submitted, your Committee have decided that a sum of about £30,000 has been overpaid to municipalities on account of subsidy. Taking into consideration that Perth, some six years ago, was compelled to refund a sum of about £7,000, it is inexplicable that the above state of affairs should have been allowed to continue by the Treasury with reference to the other municipalities. Your Committee therefore recommend that—(1.) A special audit of the balance-sheets and books for the past six years of the whole of the municipalities in the State be made; and that an accountant be engaged at once for the purpose, and a refund of the amounts overpaid enforced. (2.) That the Municipal Institutions Act be amended with a view to providing that, while the Government subsidy is continued, one auditor in each municipality shall be elected by the rate-payers, and one nominated by the Government, the latter to be a duly qualified accountant who shall be required to pass a simple examination on the Municipal and Health Acts. The minutes of the evidence taken by your Committee are attached hereto.”

To show the House the nature of the evidence upon which the committee based the report, we find the first witness called

was Mr. Laurence Stirling Eliot, Under Treasurer; the next witness was Henry Watson Edmondson, treasury clerk; also there was John St. Eloy D'Alton, town clerk of Northam, the town clerk of Fremantle, and I am also informed that the Kalgoorlie Council were notified of the sittings of the select committee. These were the greatest delinquents in the matter. The Kalgoorlie Council failed to send along their representative, their town clerk. The three great offenders in this matter were the Fremantle municipality, the Northam municipality, and the Kalgoorlie municipality. [Interjection by Mr. Collier.] My friend from Boulder says “That accounts for it.” What am I to assume from that interjection? Am I to assume from that interjection, that this has come about because these three municipalities are represented by Ministers of the Crown? No. When these breaches were committed, I do not think any of the Ministers represented those constituencies. These breaches have been going on since 1900—I think that is according to the evidence—and that is five years ago. I believe some of the Ministers may have been robed in mayoral office at the time, but that is beside the question. The Perth municipality had to disgorge something like £6,000 or £7,000, and yet these other municipalities have never been called upon to refund. There may be something in the interjection of the member for Boulder, for perhaps the exhibition of inactivity on the part of the Government to make the councils disgorge is something in that direction. I do not know if it is, but there is a strong suspicion, to say the least of it. It is even stronger when we remember the last East Province election, when one of the present representatives of that province, Mr. Throssell, was standing for election. The present Minister for Works visited Northam, and we also learn from Press reports that a deputation from the municipal council waited on the Minister, and Mr. Throssell who now represents that province was a supporter of the Government and their proposals for land and income tax. [Mr. Heitmann: Only a coincidence.] Perhaps only a coincidence.

Notwithstanding this report the council pleaded poverty, and the Minister for Works, I believe, told the council that he would be favourable to the Government coming to their rescue with a loan of £400 free of interest for two or three years. I think he came to Perth and with great pressure and the persuasive powers which he must possess in no mean degree he convinced the Treasurer to lend the £400 free of interest. [*The Honorary Minister*: Was that at Newcastle?] At the present time I am dealing with the municipality of Northam. There is nothing in the report dealing with Newcastle. This report of the select committee is based largely on the conduct of the three municipalities I have spoken of, and that being so I am confining myself to these municipalities. And I find I shall have quite enough to do, and perhaps I shall have more than I believe I am capable of accomplishing in making the Government place these municipalities on the same footing as they placed the Perth municipality. I believe the undertaking to be too great for me in the present circumstances, to compel the Government to take similar action in these three districts to that which was taken by the then Treasurer (Mr. Gardiner) with reference to the Perth municipality, when he compelled it to disgorge £6,000 or £7,000 which had been obtained in a fashion similar to that of these other municipalities.

*Mr. Collier*: The Treasurer says he is waiting for instructions from the House.

*Mr. TAYLOR*: That is what the Treasurer said yesterday afternoon when replying to the able speech of the Leader of the Opposition, and when he was put to his wits' end to make anything like a decent show; consequently one can readily understand that the Treasurer would say he would take directions from anybody. The Treasurer would be prepared under those conditions to take directions from anybody, for his hands were quite full enough to deal with the speech which he then undertook to reply to. May I be permitted to say that he failed signally to deal with it. I would emphasise some of the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday

afternoon with reference to the Speech of His Excellency. The Leader of the Opposition criticised it as an electioneering cry; a Speech having no other purport than to cajole the electors. I fully agree with that criticism. I have read and heard a good many Speeches delivered, and I have yet to hear one that has such a semblance of a political address as the one we have heard this session. Apparently one of the objects of the Speech is to try and prevail upon the people of the State, when they are called upon to exercise their franchise at a very early date, to give our friends opposite another lease of life. If the electors are prepared to do that, then I am prepared to support the ruling of the majority; but I believe I can say with some degree of certainty that they will not do so. I venture to say that my friends will not come back after the elections so strong in numbers as they are to-day. [*Mr. Johnson*: That is a certainty.] I believe I can safely prophesy to that extent. There will be a great deal of handshaking when the House prorogues, for we know some of our dear friends on the other side will be missing after the elections. I will not at this stage make personal mention of the absentees. When we are before the electors we will find an opportunity, I hope, of dealing with this Speech more effectively than we can possibly do at the present time. I believe if the Leader of the Opposition puts forward the arguments to the people, from the platforms throughout this State, in the course of the general elections, in the same clear and lucid manner he did yesterday, he will have no trouble in convincing them of the accuracy of his statements. I hope my remarks, so far as the public batteries of this State are concerned, will be given attention to by the Government, and that the Minister for Mines will not be allowed by the Ministry to be the great "I am" as a mining expert. The Government should consider the mining industry in this State first, and not the Minister for Mines. The mining industry is a greater question than any we can deal with in this Chamber. We heard from the Treasurer yesterday, that since the Government have held



office, everything has progressed, and everything possible has been done by the Ministry in the way of making things better. Notwithstanding that, we find that matters have been made worse for the people generally in this State and better only for the few. Those who had plenty have made more, and those who had very little are making much less. It should be the duty of the State to see that such things do not exist. I hope the Government will consider what I have said with reference to the batteries, and see that the people of the State receive every consideration at the hands of the Government if they cannot do so at the hands of the Minister controlling the Mines Department.

Mr. J. EWING (Collie) : I intend to follow the excellent lead of the member who has just resumed his seat, who has practically applied his remarks merely to matters affecting his own district. The speech just delivered was not given with the usual power of the hon. member; but I suppose after the general elections he will come back with full vigour, provided he is one of those fortunate enough to be returned. The position taken up by the member to-night with regard to the meat ring is perhaps a reasonable one, and I think we must view with a certain amount of alarm the high prices of meat retailed in Perth to-day. I recognise and fully appreciate the attitude taken by the Government in regard to the establishment of freezing works in the North-West. I join issue with members opposite when they say that this is not a method on the part of the Government to cheapen the price of meat. The sole desire of the Government in establishing these works is that those owning small pastoral holdings in the North-West should be enabled to bring their meat down to this part of the State, and with the assistance provided by the Government, and as referred to by the Treasurer and other Ministers, retail it at a reasonable price. Should that effort on the part of the Government be unsuccessful, and if it is found in years to come that what the Government designed for the benefit of the people is not bearing fruit, then will

be the time to consider the question of subsidising a steamer for the North-West so as to enable the meat to be retailed in Perth at a more reasonable price than will obtain under the proposed new scheme. I give the Government full support in this matter, and believe that, in the agreement, they will securely safeguard the interests of the people. [*Member* : Was any request made for the works?] I care not whether a request was made or not. The Government are not placed in power for the purpose of awaiting requests, but where they see that an injustice is being done, or realise that a certain work is necessary, then it is their duty, if possible, to remove the injustice or to carry out the necessary work. I take it their effort in the present instance is to endeavour to cheapen the prices of meat in Perth, and in that they have my earnest support. No names have been mentioned as yet in connection with the freezing works, but the inference from the various speeches is clear that those now controlling the meat supply are the men who are going to establish the freezing works. It does not necessarily follow that these people are to have a monopoly of the freezing works, for it is open to anyone to submit a proposal to the Government, and I have no doubt whether those people applying are connected with the meat supply of Perth or not they will receive due consideration at the hands of the Government. [*Mr. Scaddan* : No one can live outside the meat ring in Western Australia.] Then all the more power to the Government for making an earnest endeavour to rectify an injustice. In connection with the speeches delivered so far the greatest consideration has been paid to the question of the finances of the State, and an endeavour has been made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) to point out to the people how very successful the Labour Party were when in power in regard to the finances. The Treasurer also placed his figures before the House. I am not concerned one iota as to which Ministry achieved the better results, but I look to the financial position of last year and find that, notwithstanding all

the disadvantages the Government were labouring under, they made a successful attempt to square the finances. [Mr. Holman : What disadvantages?] The great disadvantage of £60,000 having been commandeered by the Commonwealth. Had it not been for this that sum would have gone to the credit of the State, and instead of seeing an over-expenditure of £2,000—which after all is an infinitesimal sum—we should have been £58,000 to the good on the year's transactions. Every member knows well it was never contemplated that any action of this kind would have taken place in regard to the finances of this State, and the Treasurer, when forecasting his Estimates of revenue and expenditure, did not think that at the end of the financial year he would be placed in the position of losing so large a sum of money. I do not take exception to Federation on this account, for I claim to be as ardent a federalist as any man in the Commonwealth, but the actions of certain members of the Federal Parliament, and particularly the actions of the Federal Treasurer, are not such as will help to bring these States together, or result in the proper federal spirit existing between them. We are all satisfied that an old age pensions system is a right thing to adopt, and six or seven years ago, when seeking the suffrages of the people, I advocated the principle, and said then I thought the Federal Government should take the matter in hand. It has been said by some speakers that there has been no great cry for old age pensions in this State. If it were so necessary that the aged poor should receive more than they do now at the hands of the Government we would have had members opposite advocating the introduction of the principle some time ago. In common with the rest of the people of Australia I rejoice to think that old age pensions are coming along. The proposition placed before the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer, with regard to this question, by the Premiers' Conference, was a just and equitable one. The first thing we have to look to is that those in power here should safeguard the financial interests of the State. What

our Treasurer wants, and what the Premier so well fought for in Melbourne—I am proud of the position the Premiers took up, for it showed their genuine sympathy with old age pensions—was a scheme whereby the Federal Government could escape from the attitude they had taken up. This was that a portion of the three-fourths which must, under the Constitution, be returned, should be taken for old age pensions, the amount being of course based upon what would be spent in each State. That was a fair and reasonable proposal. I am satisfied, in common with every member of the House and every person in the Commonwealth, that adequate defence should be provided by the Commonwealth Government for Australia. I know that these things require money, but a reasonable and sensible attitude on the part of those administering the affairs of the Commonwealth should be adopted in asking for sums of money with which to carry out these particular undertakings. There is nothing so irritating as for a man to come along and demand what he is perhaps entitled to demand, but which would be given up gracefully if he approached one in a generous and fair spirit and dealt with the whole question in a just and proper manner. In such circumstances one would go half-way, but on the other hand where he demands it straight out, and not only that but actually takes it from you, commandeers it, a spirit of irritation is set up, which is disastrous. In the present case there has been a spirit of irritation, which is proving disastrous for the Commonwealth, for those in power in the Commonwealth Parliament will not go fairly and properly into the questions to which I have referred. [Mr. Scaddan : Where does this Commonwealth exist? Outside of Australia?] I do not follow the hon. member; the interjection is not a sensible one. We as representatives of the people of this State, sitting in the State Assembly, are perhaps overshadowed by those representing this State and legislating elsewhere for the common good of Australia; but all will have to realise in the near future that something very disastrous is going to happen to our State in 1910, when the Braddon Clause

will be wiped out of existence. Now we are depending entirely upon the good sense and fairness of the Commonwealth Parliament as to what shall happen to us. Judging from what has passed lately, we must fully recognise that we must be on our guard to see that we get full justice when the Braddon Clause has passed away. We must remember the fact that as far as the Surplus Revenue Act is concerned we have the whole of the States of the Commonwealth with us. When the Braddon Clause question comes up we will be alone, and in making that statement I am satisfied I am making a fair and reasonable one. We are going to be in a weaker position than we are in now with the position that we have taken up on the question of the Surplus Revenue Act. In regard to economies that have been effected by the Government, in looking through the Premier's speech we find that during the last three years there have been substantial economies in regard to the administration of affairs in Western Australia. These economies amount to something like £322,000. In the Treasury, according to the figures I have, the economy has been £46,000, in the Lands Department it has been £30,000, in the Law Department £1,500, and in the Railway Department £245,000. This is the saving in the administration of the Departments as far as the last three years are concerned. I think we can say that is a very good record, made in the face of great disadvantages and many obstacles. I would like to point out that within my knowledge no concession has been given to any combine or combination by the present Government, unless it has been with the ultimate object of benefiting the workers. It is perfectly well known to hon. members opposite what a serious matter the late timber strike was. I did not intend to touch upon it, but I will give you briefly my views. The men went to the Arbitration Court, and they had a rate allotted to them which I think was not a reasonable rate; still, the rate was allotted to them, and they found they could not live upon it. A strike ensued and the Government intervened and granted a concession to the combine, which enabled them to pay the

workers a reasonable rate of wages. I do not think that concession is anything to worry about, because it had the effect of giving an increase in the wages and a fair living rate to the workers who were engaged in the industry. What hon. member can take exception to that? Not one. If the Government had not intervened in this direction and seen that a fair standard rate was paid, the result might have been very serious. In regard to loan expenditure we find, as stated by the hon. member for Guildford, that so much money has been spent on reproductive works out of loan funds. We are told that the Labour Party spent out of loan £130,000 on the rabbit-proof fence. I give them credit for doing so, because the money was not available from revenue, and it was necessary that this fence should be put up. At that particular time there was more revenue in the State than there is to-day, and we find that money was expended from loan funds on the development of agriculture, on developing the mineral resources, and on roads and bridges. If money is not available from revenue we must expend it from loan funds, and tax our people to find the necessary interest for it. I am in accord with hon. members who urge the carrying out of as many reproductive works as possible from revenue, but I am not prepared to stand by if that revenue is not forthcoming and see these works go by the board. What is the position in regard to loan expenditure? About 50 to 60 per cent. of this is on the railways of the State, which are a magnificent asset; 17 per cent. on water and sewerage. [*Mr. Johnson:* The percentage is declining every year.] I am just pointing out the position now. Harbours and rivers 13 per cent., mineral resources 6 per cent., agriculture about 6 per cent., and public buildings 1 per cent. If hon. members will look at the history of the Eastern States, I venture to say there is a much greater percentage of loan moneys there for public buildings than is the case in Western Australia. I do not say it is right but I do not see how it can be said that we have sinned so much in that direction as hon. members would have us believe.

*Mr. Horan :* What justification was there for building the Art Gallery out of loan funds?

*Mr. EWING :* I very much appreciate the building of that gallery from loan funds; and every man, woman, and child will now have the opportunity of studying art and improving their minds, and it would be an excellent thing for some hon. members to go there and improve their minds too. We have listened to the member for Mount Margaret with regard to State batteries. I do not intend to follow him in that discussion, because I do not profess to know much about the gold mining industry, nor have I had the opportunity of visiting the Eastern Gold-fields and seeing the different classes of machinery used to extract gold from the ore. If what the hon. member says is true, and if two-head batteries are not sufficient, I have no doubt the matter will be remedied at an early date. I would like to say this, that I think it is admitted throughout Western Australia that the department has never been so well handled as it is to-day by the Minister who is in charge. [*Member:* That is a parrotery.] No it is not; it is perfectly true, and everyone in Western Australia I think will uphold the contention. I as a member of this House, and as a custodian of the rights of the people, am perfectly satisfied to leave the management of the department in the capable hands of the Minister, knowing that it will receive proper attention. I feel perfectly sure those prospectors who have come into touch with the Minister have a high opinion of him, and I am perfectly satisfied they are prepared to leave everything in his hands, knowing that their interests will be thoroughly safeguarded. I think the hon. member has put up a splendid record, and I am satisfied that he will again secure the confidence of the electors of Menzies. [*Member:* And you?] Nothing would please me better at the elections than to have some member opposite contest the seat against me.

*Mr. SPEAKER :* If the hon. member will address the Chair, there will be fewer interjections.

*Mr. EWING :* What I said, Mr. Speaker, was by the way, and has no bearing on the subject. I think there is one thing the Moore Government are to be congratulated upon, and I think not only by this side but by the other side of the House. I refer to the splendid development that has taken place in the agricultural industry. I think this has taken place solely through the legislation that was passed by the Premier for closer settlement of the lands of Western Australia. It will be in the memory of hon. members that two years ago an amendment to the Land Act was passed by this House at the hands of the Minister for Lands, and it has had the beneficial effect of largely increasing the settlement of the lands in the State. It provided that an area not exceeding 2,000 acres could be taken up under first-class conditions, 5,000 acres under second-class, or as a grazing lease, and also provided for progressive improvements. Under these conditions we have had closer settlement, and I think we can congratulate the Government on that particular class of legislation. I would like to say here, that in my opinion what is greatly responsible for the advancement of agriculture, is the Agricultural Bank, and the liberal assistance it gives to farmers. The Agricultural Bank has played a great part in the development of land, but to the present Minister for Agriculture is due every credit for increasing the capital of that bank and giving more liberal terms to the settler. Is it not splendid to contemplate that a man who has only £10 in the world can secure a farm of 500 acres, and go to the Agricultural Bank and get an advance equal to £300? All he has to do is to clear and improve his property, and he goes on earning his daily bread while he is doing that.

*Mr. Johnson :* He pays more than £10 for his fees.

*Mr. EWING :* I repeat, every day's work he does is his day's wages.

*Mr. Angwin :* That is not the position to-day.

*Mr. EWING :* It is the position to-day; it is a position that does not obtain in any other part of the Commonwealth; and we have largely to thank the Minister for

Agriculture and the present Government for so liberalising the bank and making such things possible. The Leader of the Opposition has taken up some land, and I hope he will not require the assistance of the Agricultural Bank; but if he should, he will find that he will have much to be thankful for to this Government.

*Mr. Bath:* If you have the land cleared, what are you to do?

*Mr. EWING:* Then you should be in a fair way, with a few sheep on it, to make a living. Anyone who is in the position of having the land cleared should be able to make a living without difficulty. A good deal has been said about large estates along existing railway lines; but the present Government are the first to make any attempt to break up large estates by the imposition of a land tax. What is the argument of members opposite? They say, "Tax the land and break up these large estates and give us closer settlement." Is it not to the credit of the Government that they have taken the initiative in this matter? They have put on a land tax which does not tax the genuine farmer or the small holder, because there are liberal exemptions, but taxes the man who holds his land and does not improve it along railway lines. What more can be done? If these landholders are willing to pay the tax we cannot confiscate their land. We can only impose the tax in the hope that it will be sufficient to make them subdivide their land and sell it at reasonable rates. I would like to refer to the statement of the Leader of the Opposition with regard to agricultural railways. One would imagine from the hon. member's speech that he is opposed to these agricultural railways. [*Mr. Bath:* You have a powerful imagination.] One can only read from the hon. member's remarks that he is opposed to all the agricultural railways constructed by the Government. On the other hand we have the member for Guildford saying that his Government had to be thanked for setting the ball rolling in the construction of these works. I think it was ungenerous on the part of the Leader of the Opposition to draw any distinction in regard to these railways. Is

it not ridiculous to call them political railways?

*Mr. Bath:* I did not say any such thing.

*Mr. EWING:* The hon. member said the land along these railways was taken up for speculative purposes, and that some people got information they should not get and secured an advantage they should not have secured. But if the hon. member examines the charts at the Lands Department, he will see that the Minister for Lands took every possible precaution in this direction. I happen to know it because my particular business is in the land. I know that the Minister has protected every agricultural railway as far as possible. Does not the hon. member know that in every Railway Act passed in this Parliament for years gone by there is a provision for resuming this land at a price not given to it by the railway, but that obtaining before even the railway was sanctioned by Parliament? What could be fairer? What does it matter if a man holds a million acres of land along a railway route? The Government can step in and purchase them at a price not affected by the railway. [*Mr. Bath:* Within twelve months.] Yes; and if the Government are sensible they will do so. I believe the Government have stepped in and secured many large areas of land traversed by these routes. Much as I admire the member for Guildford, I cannot commend him for his remarks with regard to what he called political railways. The hon. member knows well what the loan authorisations were with regard to railways in this State. The Loan Bill authorised the construction of railways to Mount Magnet, Pilbarra, and to Norseman and the Premier has definitely promised the construction of a railway to Meekatharra. Yet all these railways are in the electorates of members sitting opposite. Are they political railways? If they are political railways why were they not given to members sitting on the Government side of the House? [*Mr. Heitmann:* You have not done too badly.] I have done well; but it is only because of the fact that the district I happen to represent is such a fertile and splendid one that it has justified the expenditure

of Government money. The Government have recognised this and have supplied railways for the district. The Leader of the Opposition the other day particularly mentioned the Preston Valley Railway. [Mr. Bath: The proposed extension.] No; the Preston Valley Railway and the proposed extension. The Preston Valley Railway is not altogether of an agricultural nature. Since the construction of the railway the promises made in this Parliament by the Premier have been fully verified. The Premier said that large timber areas would be opened up and that mills would be erected and that a large number of men would be cutting sleepers in the district.

Mr. Bath: I did not talk of the existing railway. I talked of the extension.

Mr. EWING: I think it stands to the credit of the Government that they could see so clearly what would happen. The Premier knew the position perfectly well, and almost to the letter what he stated has turned out to be the case. I backed up the Premier on that occasion, not because I represent the district, but because I knew perfectly well that the railway was justified. During the last few months we have had something like 5,300 tons of loading over that line. Is not that a splendid record for what is called an agricultural railway? All the way along that line the land is held in small areas. The hon. member has been down there recently. He visited Donnybrook, I think, and went up the Preston Valley and saw the settlement and the genuine work done by those old settlers, and he would not keep a railway from them, I am satisfied. Yet in this House he picks out the Preston Valley Railway as one where land has been secured and speculative values given to it.

Mr. BATH (in explanation): I did not; I have denied it twice, and I do not like to be like St. Peter and deny it thrice, but evidently it is necessary. I have pointed out that in my speech I referred to the proposed extension of the Preston Valley Railway, but the hon. member continues to repeat his statement. I wish he would accept my denial.

Mr. EWING: I most decidedly accept the hon. member's denial, and I re-

gret that I have perhaps erringly understood him, but listening to his speech, his words seemed to convey what I have expressed to the House. At any rate, I will deal with that aspect of the question and ask why that railway should not be extended to Boyup to benefit the people along the route, people the hon. member thinks should not be benefited? If a man has a large area of land and is improving it, and if the Government have the right to take that land at its price prior to the building of the line, it matters not whether the land is held in large areas or small areas.

Mr. Angwin: How long did they hold this land before the line was proposed?

Mr. EWING: I do not know the area to which the hon. member refers. It has been said there are large areas taken up for speculative purposes; but I defy any member to point out any area taken up during the last two or three years for speculative purposes. Certainly there is one large area held by the Hon. J. W. Hackett; but I venture to say that gentleman has put improvements on it to the value of £10,000 to £15,000. It is a pity there are not more people in the State prepared to spend £10,000 to £15,000 on land. If any man has pluck and energy and faith in Western Australia to spend that sum of money, I say, good luck to him! We want thousands more like him. The whole crux of the question is, as I pointed out before, that even if the land through which the railway will pass is held by speculators for speculative purposes, we have in the four corners of the Act we have passed the right to purchase that land at a price it held prior to the sanction being given to that railway. Is not that sufficient to protect the interests of the State? So we need not quarrel as to who holds the land. I congratulate the Government on the development of the North-West. Without wearying the House, I wish to say that it has always given me the greatest pleasure in the world to support anything in that direction. Speaking to-night, the member for Mount Margaret seemed to pride himself on the fact that he had opposed the Pilbarra Railway. He seemed to think that there should be

a subsidised steamer to put machinery and goods and stores on the wharf at Port Hedland, and that this would develop the country. It was a most ridiculous statement to make. How are they going to get the goods across the desert if this railway is not built? It is a good thing a railway is to be built there, and it has my hearty support. In my opinion the future policy of the Government is not a "mark-time" policy, though members sitting on the opposite side of the House have said to-night that the Premier, in recognising the seriousness of the position, is practically going to mark time. The Premier pointed out to-night, as every man should point out, his earnest desire and the determination of the Government to safeguard the State so far as the finances of the State are concerned, but yet not lose faith in the State. Read the policy speech through and find what the Government are going to do when they come back to power, which is, of course, a foregone conclusion. They are going to open the agricultural land of this State, north, south, east and west. [Mr. T. L. Brown: Do you believe that?] I do believe it. We have the evidence of what they have done in the past. They have already constructed about 200 miles of railway lines, and they have another hundred or so under construction, while they have promised in their policy speech to construct railway lines to a thousand miles. That is a policy that has my firm endorsement. [Mr. T. L. Brown: It is a very promising one.] There is no promise about it, the Government are good performers. They are not prepared to promise what they cannot perform; and if to carry out this policy it is necessary to borrow money, we should do so. Of course, as I have said before to-night, I am quite at one with members opposite in endeavouring to do as much as we can from revenue, but I would not retard the progress of this State for one moment because of any fear of a borrowing policy. I would myself borrow two or three millions to-morrow in order to bring people to Western Australia. I think it has been recognised by those who have studied the history of Western Australia and marked the times that have gone by, that

people have gone 60 miles beyond railway lines and tried to develop their land. Then is it not right that the Government should give these people every encouragement by following them up with railway lines? I feel sure the Government will go ahead in their policy notwithstanding the difficulties in their way, and that they will succeed, because we have only to travel Western Australia outside the city—and that is improving too—to see signs of progress from one end to the other. All the agricultural portions of the State are progressing, and the Government are certainly in good odour in those districts. The people fully recognise it and have sufficient faith in this wonderful territory we have inherited. I believe that the holder our policy the more we will have the approbation of the people and the more secure the Government will be in the position they now occupy. There is one other point on which I would like to make a few remarks. I appreciate some of the remarks of the member for Guildford with regard to the Railway Department. Last session I moved for the railways to be placed under Ministerial control.

Mr. Bolton: And you were bluffed by a promise, or the motion would have been carried.

Mr. EWING: Does the hon. member dare to say that I was bluffed? The hon. member knows that nobody ever bluffed me. I moved that the railways should be placed under Ministerial control, and I thought I would have carried the motion in the House.

Mr. Bolton: So you would have.

Mr. EWING: Why did not the hon. member see that I had a majority?

Mr. Bolton: I would have done so had it not been for the Minister.

Mr. EWING: We have to abide by the decision of the majority. The majority decided that the railways should be placed under a Commissioner; and I as a member of this House must certainly abide by the decision of the majority, whether I agree with them or not. I did not agree with the Government on that occasion, and I did not refrain from telling them so. I congratulate the Parliament on having largely liber-

alised the Act controlling the Commissioner of Railways, who has not such great powers as he had previously. The Minister has more responsibility now, and the Governor-in-Council can veto anything the Commissioner does. I do not think any such serious thing as has happened in the past will occur again. As to the appointment of Mr. Short, he seems to be a very fair-dealing man, and he has exercised very great care during the past twelve months. He has largely improved the railway service, and I have greater confidence in him than I had in his predecessor. Although I do not believe in the Commissioner system, I shall give him support so long as he does not depart from the paths of rectitude. I regret that it should be said that in the railway service there are men receiving as low a wage as 6s. 6d. a day. I have always advocated that there should be a minimum wage of 8s. No matter where I sit, I shall always voice the opinion that the minimum rate should be 8s. a day, for it is little enough for any man in Western Australia to live on, if he desires to live decently. I have advocated that right through my career. I hope legislation will be introduced to secure that advantage to the railway workers so that those who now receive a less wage than 8s. a day will receive the minimum of 8s. I am not perfectly satisfied what men are getting 6s. 6d. a day; who they are or what they are, I do not know whether they are boys or men; but if they are able-bodied men who are working for a living, and probably have families to support, then less than 8s. a day is not sufficient to live on. I hope the Government will see, while there is so much talk of a surplus in the railways—£245,000 in three years—that no one in the service is getting anything but what is a fair and reasonable wage. I am not saying this because the elections are coming on. Members who have followed my career and listened to my utterances, if they were worth listening to at all, will find that on every occasion when I have spoken, and whenever I have asked for the confidence of the electors, I have practically pledged myself to a minimum wage of 8s. a day. In conclusion I will say I would like to

see this saving of £245,000 in three years—something approaching £100,000 a year—directed towards a reduction of freights. I hold, and always shall hold as long as I represent any constituency in the State, that the railways are for the benefit of the people and for the development of the State. I do not think there should be any profit from the railways placed to the consolidated revenue. All that the railways should be asked to do is to pay interest and sinking fund, and any surplus should be given to those people living on the goldfields who have to pay heavy freights and a high cost of living. It should be devoted to the development of the agricultural industry and the mining industry; especially in regard to one industry which I happen to represent and which I think I have voiced in this House pretty often, the coal industry. I have not wearied the House with it to-night, and I did not intend to mention it; but perhaps it would not be characteristic of me to conclude a speech without some reference to it. I am going to say that it is pleasing for me to be able to say on the floor of the House that great progress has been made in that industry. People have invested their money in that industry and have looked outside the Government for support, not depending so much on the Government order, although I am pleased to say the industry has received 80 per cent. of the Government order. I do not think that is sufficient; I think it should be 100 per cent. I think the Government should see that nothing but Collie coal is used on the railways, and I believe this will be done in the future. It must be gratifying to know that we have secured a large amount of oversea trade. As much as 800 to 1,000 tons of coal have been exported in a week; and in looking at the report I see that the output of the Collie field is going on satisfactorily. That is largely due to the liberal treatment the industry has received at the hands of the Government, and on behalf of the people engaged in that industry I am sincerely thankful to the Government. There was a stage in the history of the Collie coal industry which was not bright; but that stage has been passed, and with a reduction of freights for the export of coal, as



for the export of flour and timber, there will be a huge industry in the Collie centre. I can only conclude by saying that I hope after the elections are over that all of us will meet again and have as happy sessions as we have had in the past.

Mr. J. A. S. STUART: I move, "That the debate be adjourned."

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. J. A. S. STUART (Leonora): On the only previous occasion that I made a few remarks on the Address-in-Reply, I ventured the opinion, in all humility, that to a large extent it was a waste of time. Although on the present occasion I feel called upon to address myself to the somewhat dry Speech again, I do so under this compulsion, that according to the signs and portents, if one does not speak on this occasion there is not much possibility of speaking at all during the present session. While we are discussing the Speech which the present Administration have put into the mouth of His Excellency, I may say there is very little of a promising nature and very little of a practical nature contained in it. We have not any indications of the future intentions of the Government; therefore we are compelled to fall back on a criticism of their past actions. And it is no doubt a change from the manner in which they have been passing bouquets to one another when members on this (Opposition) side have to point out a little on the other side of the ledger. I would have been pleased had the Government given some indication of their desires or intentions to carry out anything like a continuity of their past policy, for there are many subjects which have been prominently forward in the Government platform previously which are altogether ignored or dropped out of sight on the present occasion. That being so, there is nothing left to go on except to point out the faults and omissions in the past of the Administration and to draw from that conclusion what is likely to be the attitude of the Government in the future. In passing I would like to say from reading the Speech one would be likely to receive the impression that the prospects are bright throughout the State. I think

there is not a very large amount of room for congratulation on that point, and I think the greatest criticism that can be levelled against that impression is the poor reception that this State obtained in the loan market recently. If any criticism were needed, I think that would be a strong reason indeed for relieving our minds of the impression given in the Speech that prosperity is prominent throughout the State at the present time. There is no reason to congratulate ourselves on the reception we obtained in the loan market. This is no time for flattery. We should look our position fairly and squarely in the face and acknowledge that we do not stand well where we look for our finances. There have been a great many protestations on the part of Ministers of their desire to square the finances of the State; but I think the citation of a few figures will prove that whatever the attempt has been that attempt has proved lamentable. The finances are very far from squared, and give no great hope of being better in the near future. There have been many features during the past recess which call for a little comment and perhaps a little hostile criticism. The near approach of the elections, I thought, would have in the ordinary course of events precluded Ministers being so prolific or verbose in their promises as they have been of late. We hear the Minister for Mines throughout the country making great promises to assist prospectors; and as I am representing a goldfields constituency I am tempted to devote myself prominently to that phase of current politics. The amount of encouragement that has been given to the mining industry has no doubt been considerable; but it must be admitted on all hands that the encouragement has been distributed very injudiciously. On many occasions when prospectors have been entitled to a little encouragement they have not got it; and there have been many occasions when people who have no claim to assistance have received it. Even the Minister himself must admit that to some extent to be the case. We have seen prospectors given outfits and going out who possibly had no knowledge of mining; and on the

other hand there have been those who have received assistance through perhaps their pertinacity or through being able to get a little more influence than those not receiving assistance had. There has been a large amount of talk about the unit mills and the disastrous failures at Linden. If the Minister is wise, he would be largely guided by the statement of the case sent forth by the prospectors there. At the same time, I think there should be a very strict investigation so that it could be proved definitely whether these mills are to be of any utility or discarded as useless for the work they are expected to do. At Linden, I am told by prospectors, that the amount of gold in the tailings is altogether out of proportion to what it should be. That is at once an accusation against the capacity of the mill, against its worth for gold saving. As to the working of the screens and the blow-out of the oil engine, such matters should be subjected to severe investigation so that the people responsible for the invention of the mills should be able to give the machinery a fair trial with efficient attendance. Apart from that, it is understood that the mills, even though capable of saving gold, could not do so to such an extent as to make it possible for, or to justify the prospectors in, continuing to work their properties. I trust that, in the interests of the people in the back-country who are dependent upon the continuance of the industry, and in the interests of the prospectors themselves who have saddled themselves with machinery, and who in the event of matters not turning out right will have to leave the localities, farther investigations will be made before any additional plants are erected. There are many features in connection with this assistance to prospectors that must appeal very strongly to anyone representing a goldfields constituency, and the Minister will give members on this side of the House credit for supporting him in any step he may take, which will have the effect of improving the position of the prospectors in the back country. If the Minister to-morrow put forward to the country some new scheme, or suggested the establishment of new machinery, which would make it pos-

sible for some of the abandoned localities to be reworked, he would find no more generous support, and would receive no greater credit than from members on this side of the House. Those of us who know these men and realise what they are striving for in the back country, knowing as we do that they are working hard to make a living out of such places as Linden, would give even our opponents credit for any effective method of increasing the gold output. Those who have lived and worked with the prospectors in the last 14 years will agree with me in this. Another item in this connection was brought to my mind when listening to the Treasurer last night, when he said there was no very great desire in the State for the institution of old age pensions. So far as the mining industry is concerned there has been a great outcry for the institution of a worn-out miners' fund. I know of nothing at the present time of so much importance in the mining industry as the taking of action with regard to the institution of this fund, so that people who have worked in unhealthy and unwholesome conditions, and whose lives and health have been endangered thereby, should have something to look forward to. Members will agree with me that it is a terrible position for a miner to find himself in, after working very hard from childhood to middle age then to be told by a doctor that he is not fit to go below any more, and must find a new avenue of labour. What chance has a man who has been a miner all his life to obtain other employment, considering the present state of the labour market? I would have been very pleased to hear mention by the Minister for Mines, in one of his many "promising" expeditions, of an intention on his part to institute this fund. While the Treasurer referred to the fact that there has been no great demand for old age pensions, he overlooked the persistent demand on the fields for this fund. With regard to the administration of the Mines Department and the accidents in mines, we must admit that the list of fatalities is increasing to an appalling extent, and I think there is reason to believe the inspection is not as careful as it might be. As a result

many accidents occur which might be avoided. It is not possible perhaps to bring about a condition of mining inspections which would prevent accidents *in toto*, but there is room for a great deal of improvement in that respect, and especially in regard to investigations which are made concerning fatal accidents. I will bring under the notice of the Minister a case which occurred in the North, for it goes to show there is a very slack method in vogue in connection with holding investigations. A man was injured in the Bellevue mine, Sir Samuel, and died three days afterwards, and he was buried without an inquest having been held. This sort of thing does not tend to give one confidence in the administration of the Act. Whatever the faults of the Act as an Act may be, the administration could, I think, be greatly improved upon. Whenever an accident occurs which ends fatally an inquest should be held. It is not right to the relatives of the deceased that the body should be buried without the usual investigation. I trust that whatever has been the custom in the past in this respect such a state of things will not be allowed to continue in the future. Another item to which I wish to refer in connection with the administration of the Department is what may be termed the Brimage case at Malcolm. It is a somewhat complicated case, and I think the facts should be made public in the interests of the workers concerned. As perhaps members know, the Hon. T. F. Brimage was granted a permit to drive an engine for six months on condition that he would present himself for examination. I have no doubt had he not succeeded in passing the examination the term might have been extended, and none would have taken serious exception to it, but the point is that this gentleman, trading presumably on his position as a member of the Legislature, did not present himself, and in spite of the fact that he was summoned for breaches of the Mines Regulation Act he was granted an additional term without ever having presented himself for examination. Perhaps to some members the position is not clear, but when I state the examination which has to be undertaken before a man

may become a certificated engine-driver is the most severe and searching in any of the States in the Commonwealth, they will see there is something radically wrong, and something requiring exposure where such a state of things is allowed to occur. Not only was the additional term granted to this gentleman without his having presented himself for examination, but when he was sued for breaches of the Act, instructions were sent to the Mines inspector who had laid the charges to ask simply for a nominal penalty. Had this gentleman been on the engine and a serious accident occurred, perhaps the position would have been made plain not only to members of the House but also to members of the public. [*Mr. Taylor*: Accidents did occur.] Not serious accidents, or ones leading to loss of life, but they were serious enough, and I am justified in asking for a definite statement to be made by the Minister on this point. With regard to certain other matters that have been dragged into this, I understand it is not the intention of the Minister to make these papers available.

*The Minister for Mines*: What?

*Mr. STUART*: I understand it is not the intention of the Minister to make these papers available.

*The Minister*: Why do you understand that?

*Mr. STUART*: Well, I will accept the hon. Minister's assurance.

*The Minister*: I never said I would not.

*Mr. STUART*: I said I understood it. If the Minister says he will place the papers on the table, I will withdraw the statement. With regard to other matters that have been dragged into this debate, as far as the Amalgamated Certificated Engineers and Drivers' Association *versus* the legislator is concerned, I am willing to take a part; as far as the Inspector of Mines *versus* the mine or the mine manager is concerned, I am also willing to take a part: but since this case cropped up there are so many things attached to it, accusations, reprimands, and counter accusations, that I do not wish to go farther than ask for the production of the papers of Beaumont *versus* Brimage. I

am sorry to say the officials of the Mines Department up there, the mines inspector, the registrar, and the inspector of machinery, are not sufficiently unanimous among themselves, and there does not exist among them that *esprit de corps* which should do away with accusations and recriminations. A sample is this, that Beaumont has been charged by one of his fellow-officers with the heinous crime of having discussed the Brimage case with me in a railway carriage. I wish to give that a denial. I as member for that district, representing the interest of the workers, asked to look after the case, claim that I had a perfect right to discuss it with any Government official of the State. This will show the Minister, I think, just the extent of the harmony that exists in some of his branch departments. It is lamentable that one Government officer should lay such a charge against another; and if Beaumont desired to consult me at any time and at any place on this question, I had the right to make myself available to him. But there was no discussion, except meeting the gentleman on the railway platform and mentioning certain facts in connection with the matter. I trust we will hear something with regard to this case from the Minister. It has been said that certain very suspicious speeches were made at the court when that case was dealt with. One of them was to the effect that the legislator was closeted with the warden of the district who was about to try the case, for some time previously to the hearing of the case. This is not a desirable thing. The warden should refrain from this kind of thing. It is not likely to lead us to have confidence in the administration of the warden's court or the Mines Department. I think I have said sufficient on that phase, seeing that the Minister has disavowed any intention of withholding the papers.

*The Minister for Mines:* I would like to know why you said I was likely to withhold the papers.

Mr. STUART: I have an imaginative brain, and I can look a little way ahead.

*The Minister for Mines:* You certainly did not ask me for the papers.

Mr. STUART: No, I did not. I simply had the motion written out for months, to get some ventilation on this subject as quickly as possible; and if I made a wrong deduction, I have not done much harm. However, I am satisfied for the present. With regard to some more items in the Mines Department, we have heard talk about encouragement to the people to make low-grade shows pay. In Kalgoorlie, water is given to the Great Boulder mine at 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons for sluicing purposes, that is for pumping away the slimes; yet another mine in the same vicinity where they are making less than 3dwts. pay, the Department are charging more—I do not know the exact figures. I would like to say that on the Hannans Reward mine at Mount Charlotte, where less than 3dwt. is being made to show a profit, they are being charged more than the Great Boulder, which everyone knows is the bonanza of Western Australia. And the manager of Hannans Reward, who as well as being a capable and efficient manager is a bit of a humorist, suggests that seeing the Great Boulder is being given water at 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons, he also is quite prepared to do what they do, that is, let it run to waste as the Great Boulder people do.

*The Minister for Works:* You are wrong there.

Mr. STUART: The Great Boulder mine is getting water for 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons for pumping away its dump, and other mines, I feel sure, are quite willing to do the same.

*The Minister for Works:* For pumping away the residues?

Mr. STUART: Why the Great Boulder should get water for 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons, and other mines have to pay more, I do not know.

*The Minister for Works:* Do the other mines want to pump residues away too?

Mr. STUART: I can safely claim as far as the Minister for Works is concerned that I do not think he would know residues even if he saw them.

*The Minister for Works:* You have been guessing all sorts of things to-night.

Mr. STUART: It is one of the greatest blemishes on the Works Department and the Mines Department, that low-grade

shows should be penalised in this way. Because a mine is showing a profit, is it to be penalised another 1s. 3d. a thousand gallons? If that is the method by which the mining industry is to be encouraged it is time the people knew it, and then we would see if they would throw the same number of bouquets at the Minister while on tour. This is the position as far as the encouragement to mining is concerned. If the Minister for Works and the Minister for Mines can get away from these facts I will give them credit for it. It is not right that these low-grade shows should be penalised in that direction. [*The Minister for Works: They are not.*] I think about the first day I was sitting here there was a debate with regard to an explosion that took place at the Sons of Gwalia mine. The debate I think was on a report of a select committee which had been appointed previously to my entering this House. After a long discussion a resolution was carried that immediate attention and action on the part of the department were necessary in that case. I think there were certain features in connection with that explosion that in the light of recent events could very well have been made public at that time; but I wish particularly to refer to this, that though this House went to the expense of appointing a select committee, and although when the report came to hand the House went to the trouble of discussing it and flogging it to tatters and of carrying a resolution, nothing has been heard from 1906 to the present in relation to the explosion. It was only by the merest chance it was not one of the most disastrous explosions in the country. Had it occurred five minutes earlier, when the men were changing shift there would have been a heavy death roll. But it is throwing contempt on the House not paying attention to a resolution of the House; it is flouting the decision of the House to ignore and practically disregard instructions contained in that resolution carried at the latter end of 1906. In the same connection a fact that has since been made public is that of the two boilers there the one that blew out was not the worse. The other boiler has since been condemned by the engineer on the Sons of Gwalia, after

having been passed and given a certificate by the inspector of machinery. To those not engaged in the industry this may not seem momentous, but it is a very serious indictment indeed that the inspector of machinery should pass a boiler which the engineer on the mine himself condemns afterwards. It is also a most serious condition of affairs that in the notes and records of the Gwalia mine it was understood that the boiler that blew out was not in the worse condition, that there was another boiler in a still worse condition that has since been condemned. This is a matter that should be kept in mind. The department are liable to severe censure for having disregarded the expression of opinion by this House on that occasion. Now, in regard to a matter mentioned by the Minister to-day in answer to a question I put, that is the dispute between the Gambier Lass party and the State battery at Pig Well, there is also disclosed a most remarkable state of affairs. On one occasion prior to Christmas the holders of the Gambier Lass were engaged in a clean-up, and from information received they were given a hint that on previous occasions there was a certain receptacle in connection with the battery that had not been cleaned up; the elevator pit had not been cleaned up. In the reply given by the Minister to-day he has given us to understand that whatever accumulation was in that pit had been accumulating ever since the battery started, for the simple reason that there is no record of its having been cleaned up until Kelly and Penny, acting on information received, cleaned it up. The inference is that the receptacle was being cleaned up without the knowledge of the battery manager. This is a most serious charge to make, but it is necessary to make it. These people, knowing they were not getting a fair deal, took the law into their own hands and cleaned up the elevator pit and got amalgam valued at £40.

*The Minister for Mines:* As we have had it, the value was £28.

Mr. STUART: They gave me that estimate of the value, but we will say £28, and that is even too large an item to go astray. I ask the Minister if he believes

that the £28 has been accumulating from the start of the battery.

*The Minister for Mines:* I understand that it is from the 7,000 tons crushed.

Mr. STUART: I would like, under the same circumstances, to have a clean-up of that pit once a month. It is plain on the surface, the management of the battery was so slack that the prospectors there were being practically robbed, until they took this method of bringing their grievance before the public. I regret of course it is not possible to get restitution made. Fortunately Kelly and Penny are not impoverished by this injustice, but it is a high-handed action on the part of the Government to close down on that sum, and that it should be in the Treasury when it should be in the pockets of the hard-working prospectors.

*The Minister for Mines:* Does it not seem a high-handed action on their part on that occasion?

Mr. STUART: I think there are occasions when it is necessary to take unauthorised action. I suggest that if they were entitled to the amalgam, they were justified in taking it; but if on the other hand they were not entitled to it, then it was open to the Crown Law Department to prosecute them for stealing it. I regret there was any middle course taken. It is one of those things that show up very vividly the injustice under which the prospectors labour, and it discounts to a great extent many of the protestations that have been made as to the desire of the present Government and the Minister for Mines to encourage mining in the back country. I had the pleasure of going through the Kalgoorlie School of Mines the other day. I enjoyed it, and was much interested as well as instructed. I think it is a most excellent institution, but I was surprised to find that a tennis court had been built there for the staff. [*The Minister for Mines:* For the staff?] I know it is there, that is all I know, but I would ask is the country to have comic opera mining, when £150 or £140 is to be spent for a tennis court in connection with the School of Mines and out-back prospectors cannot get £5 spent to give them conveniences, cannot get a subsidy at all in many instances, and cannot get what the law

allows them? It is time this sort of thing is stopped. We can do without tennis courts for a time.

*The Minister:* We will be putting up a tennis court at the Gwalia State hotel.

Mr. STUART: If the Mines Department are bound down to tennis courts, of course I suppose we will have to let them go. At any rate I seize this opportunity of giving these criticisms of the Mines Department in front of the Minister. I have made them when we have been a good many miles apart; but as I have not a motor at my command and have to work for my living in recess, it is not possible for me to keep pace with the Minister on his flying expeditions, and I would not like to be accused of making a speech behind the Minister's back that I would not make when he is present. This being the only occasion when we may be face to face, I am giving the Minister a few criticisms of his department that should be of benefit to him in the future. I am sorry to say I was not in Parliament in 1904-5, so that I am not in a position to draw comparisons with regard to what happened then, and what is happening now; but I admire the attitude taken up by the member for Guildford, in saying that the present Administration should not excuse themselves by pointing out the errors made during 1904-5. It would be far better to profit by those errors and to show a cleaner and better administrative system, if possible; but to be always harping and comparing what happened then with what is happening now: I have no intention of indulging in that. To benefit by the errors of the past is about all we can do, and that is about the light in which I view it. With regard to the retrenchment in the railways, we have heard it said there is no sweating. I have made the statement elsewhere and have been criticised by the Minister for making it. I mentioned three items in connection with the railways to prove that something in the nature of sweating is going on. One is an instance where a junior porter on the goldfields was in receipt of 6s. 6d. a day. He stood it as long as he could, and then left and started something else. He started as a hotel porter, and said he was sorry that

he did not go there before. If the attractiveness of the Railway Department is less than the attractiveness of the position of hotel porter, or of a hotel billet, it does not say much for the Government as an employer. This is a case where a full-grown man, rated as a porter, was asked to live on 6s. 6d. a day on a goldfield. I would like some of the people who have been showing their approval of the Government to make an effort to see if they could live in any sort of civilization at all on that large amount per day.

*The Minister for Railways:* Perhaps he had not passed the ordinary examination.

Mr. STUART: I do not think that 6s. 6d. a day for anyone over the age of 12 or 14 years is a fair thing. With regard to the flying gangs, the treatment meted out to the men on these gangs is altogether unfair, it has been described as deplorable. These men are supposed to attend to long lengths, anything between 20 and 30 miles, and although they may be away, they are rated as being at home always. They are a very hard-working body of men, and entitled to larger remuneration on that account. It is absurd to rate them as being in camp when they may be 30 miles away from their camp. I am inclined to wonder at times as to where is the humanity of the authorities who condemn these men to this sort of living. Another item to which I have referred and have been severely criticised for is in regard to the long hours worked by some of the officers of the Railway Department, and I could give examples where men are worked 12 and 15 hours a day. It may be urged that they are not working hard all the time.

*The Minister for Railways:* Where are men working 15 hours a day?

Mr. STUART: Some of the station-masters on the Northern line.

*The Minister for Railways:* Name the places.

Mr. STUART: These men work 12 and 15 hours. It is necessary for them to be on duty. It may be they are not working all the time, but they have to be there.

Mr. Scaddan: They have to do 15 hours a day all the year to get 14 days' leave in the year.

Mr. STUART: We have had an example in Victoria of what long hours meant, for we are satisfied I believe that the Braybrook disaster was attributable to the long hours and hard work. The time may come when this State may have to foot a bill, and have to lament the loss of good citizens. It is just as well to sound a note of warning; and if the Minister does not know these things are going on it is just as well we should inform him. If these men are evil enough to come to us with these complaints without being able to prove them, I am quite willing to suggest they should be penalised in some way for doing it.

*The Minister for Railways:* Give me the names of the stations where these long hours are worked.

Mr. STUART: These statements have been made to me, and my knowledge of the people who have made them justifies me in saying there is ground for the statements. I certainly would not be a party to bringing these matters forward if I were not convinced the men have some grievance. In the Railway Department also we have been told over and over again that there is no sweating going on. I will give a few examples. We are told that there are no repairs remaining in abeyance. Anyone who keeps his eyes open when travelling will be able to deny that statement. There are repairs which should be done and which were in course of being done; now they are being neglected, and these belated repairs will cost more than if they are done now. This is patent to anyone who travels, especially on the suburban lines here. A criticism of the various departments I suppose is a criticism of the Government as a whole. I would pass on to say a little as to the sweating that exists in some of the Government hospitals. That also has been denied, but complaints on all hands are received from nurses in hospitals that the hours are not as they should be, and the treatment is not what it should be; and these nurses have every reason to look to the House for some redress. I know of instances that could be given where young

ladies who have adopted nursing as a profession are so discouraged and disheartened by the long hours they have to work, that they have started working in hotel bars rather than put up with the long hours in the hospitals. If the highly honourable and worthy profession of nursing is to be discarded for work in an hotel, it leads us to reflect that this is no credit on those in charge of the institutions. I know it to be an absolute fact that in some instances the nurses are unable to stand the long hours, and have gone to hotels rather than put up with the long hours they are asked to work in the hospitals. With regard to some of the administrative work in the various departments during the past recess, I think with regard to the administration of the Electoral Act there is room for a great deal of complaint. Last session we heard a great deal from the Ministerial side of the House with regard to the desire to place people on the rolls. As an instance of the great evidence of this desire I would like to cite just two facts. One is that on one occasion when travelling through the back country I called in at a police station where a sergeant was in charge; I asked him if he could supply electoral claim forms, and found to my surprise that he did not know what they were. When I showed him one he said he thought he had seen some previously, but there were not any about the premises at that time. That is a very serious position indeed, and dozens of people might have been defrauded of their chance of becoming enrolled as electors. On another occasion bundles of claim forms had been sent forward, and when the supplementary roll came to hand the names were not enrolled. On making investigation it was found that these forms were carefully packed up in the local registrar's office, and instead of the duplicates being sent to the head office these had been kept at the local office, and would never have been heard of unless investigations had been made. This goes to prove that the administration of the Act is not what it should be, and discounts the protestations last session to have people enrolled under the new Act. Another item which is very suggestive indeed in this connection oc-

curred at Lawlers, where certain people applied to be enrolled as electors of the roads board, giving as their qualification that they dined in the mess room of the mine. The roads board rejected those claims. They put in the same claim as voters for the Legislative Council, and to their astonishment they received the Upper House franchise on a qualification which was not good enough to get them a roads board vote. If this is not reducing the electoral system to a farce and bringing it into contempt I do not know what it is. I hope we are not likely to see any other instance such as that. We have heard a good deal of the prospects, and I think before long it will be necessary for a good many drastic changes to take place. The first efforts should be made in curbing the encouragement and growth and increase of combines. If we want this State to rival the worst of the filibustering States of the United States, we have only to encourage these corporations and allow them a free hand to continue as they have been doing in the past. If the Government, in dealing with this question, made any effort which we could regard as sincere to cope with this question, then despite the hostility we feel on this side of the House towards them, we would give them credit for their actions and would be generous enough to support them. When we look at the rings which have formed here, from firewood to meat, we surely must be seized with a full appreciation of the seriousness of the position. As to the meat ring, it has been stated here that the granting of £35,000 for the freezing works in the North-West will result in cheapening the price of meat. It must be pretty well known to members that the transit of meat from the North-West to Perth is as great a problem as the freezing works problem. All the room on the boats, trading from the North-West, is taken up for two years ahead, and it will be understood how ridiculous is the assertion that the small producer in the North-West would have an equal chance with the squatters, who have all the boats chartered and monopolised. That an exorbitant price is being charged for meat will be admitted on all hands, and as an indica-



tion of the immense profit made by the ring, I would cite one case which occurred recently on the fields. This was in connection with a retail butcher. I have very great sympathy with the retail butchers, as they are really hard working men, without much capital, and are practically under the thumb of the wholesale houses, combines, or meat rings, whichever they may be termed. This butcher in question, having been doing business with the wholesale butchers for a considerable time, discovered that he was doing no good, that he was working very hard but was only succeeding in getting into debt. He discovered that he was in debt to the wholesale butchers for £700. He went to the latter who, apparently in a moment of mental aberration, admitted to him that even if he never paid the £700, yet the high prices they had charged him previously for his supplies would leave them on the right side of the ledger. These unfortunate retail butchers are in a dreadful position, for they are ground between two forces. On the one hand there is the customer growling at them for the high price of meat, and on the other hand the wholesale butcher grinding them down. They are like the people in the Scriptures who were between the two mill-stones. It is the business of the Government to take whatever course lies within their power, to put an end to the appalling state of affairs, and especially to deal with this meat combine. It has been said there is no meat ring, but I remember the time when it first came into operation here. On many occasions people have come forward with capital to invest in the industry, but the combine always seems to swallow them up, just as a snake swallows a frog. None seemed able to stand against it; and it will be necessary for someone here to start out as the President of the United States has done on a trust-bursting expedition. There is nothing that will bring more kudos or more public favour to anyone than to him who sets out on this mission to curtail the gains of these people, and to take such steps as will lead to the cheapening of the meat supply. As an example of what this State is capable of doing, at Lake Darlot, where

pastoral pursuits are being indulged in, meat is only 6d. per pound, and yet the ring will not buy from the small men there. The producers have no chance of getting their supplies to market, and when the meat reaches the head of the line there are no purchasers for it. It is only bought there at a nominal rate, and very often the stock owners are compelled to keep their cattle on their hands. The people of the State would be very grateful if they could see an indication of something being done by the Government to deal with this question. There is nothing presses more injuriously on the workers and on the people generally than the domination of this combine. The sooner it is ended and the people take the matter into their hands and instruct their representatives to take action, the better it will be for everyone. While the Government have been able to place £35,000 on the Estimates for the freezing works, and while they have been able to get huge sums for other works, I regret to say they have been very negligent with regard to educational matters. It is not a very reassuring circumstance when we find, as stated in the report of the Education Department for the year, that there are places in the State where children are growing up in ignorance because of schools having been closed. I could give the Minister for Education instances where there are numbers of children in localities which have every prospect of being permanent, who are absolutely denied the rudiments of education, except at ruinous and exorbitant cost. The Treasurer, speaking last night, said the salaries paid in some of the localities compared favourably with those paid in the Eastern States. [*The Minister for Education*: All the salaries do.] I am not going to contradict that, but I will give him an example of a state of affairs which occurred at Anaconda. There was a school there, but the salary paid to the teacher was so inadequate that he could not possibly live upon it. I am not quite sure of the amount, but it was less than £2 15s. a week, and the teacher could not possibly live at that rate; board and residence alone would be from 27s. 6d. to 30s. a week.

*The Minister*: How many children were there?

Mr. STUART: That does not alter the fact of the small salary.

*The Minister*: It alters the type of school.

Mr. STUART: There were 10 to 15 children I saw myself, and Anaconda is one of the most permanent places in the State, or even in Australia. The Anaconda copper mine last year produced £60,000 worth of copper, and paid in back-loading, a thing the Railway Department are always crying for, £2,000 in freights for copper from Anaconda to Fremantle. There was a school built in the district, but because of the miserable salary offered to the teacher it is now lying idle. The Treasurer mentioned that smaller salaries were paid in New South Wales; but I would point out that a teacher in that State receiving a salary similar to that offered to the teacher at Anaconda would be able to get board and lodging in most of the districts for 12s. a week; yet the Minister says salaries here compare favourably with those in the Eastern States. There are other considerations than that of salary. I think those are items which should be borne in mind when the Government are receiving all the kudos. There is another item to which I refer with some reluctance. The hon. member for North Perth gave the Premier credit for having settled the wood-line trouble. I think it is necessary to say a few words here with regard to the cause of that strike, seeing that it was the most serious and most momentous industrial dispute in Western Australia. I would say it was the rapacity of the companies that led to the upheaval, and while I have no desire whatever to question the statement that the Premier deserved credit for his action, I think there are other features of it that should be borne in mind; and as I took a somewhat prominent part in that trouble I would like to place matters right on certain phases of it. The original trouble arose, as I said before, from the rapacity of the wood companies, and the men who had been suffering injustices for six or seven years at last took a favourable opportunity of making their case known to the people.

There was a continual howl from all parts that those men should go back to work and submit their case to arbitration. When I became associated with them I advised them to do nothing of the sort, and they were of the same opinion, that in view of the iniquitous awards given on previous occasions they were not going to be hypocrites, and seek an award knowing that the award would not be one by which they could abide. They were candid enough to say that the Arbitration Court was of no use to them, and they would settle their trouble without an application to it.

*The Treasurer*: You advised them to strike?

Mr. STUART: They had gone on strike before I appeared on the scene.

*The Treasurer*: Then you advised them to continue to strike.

Mr. STUART: They simply decided on a certain course of action; and the reasons why they decided on that course of action were that they had a knowledge of previous awards that had been given by the Arbitration Court. Owing to the want of knowledge on the part of the people who composed the court, these awards were altogether unpalatable, and could not be entertained by those for whom they were given. They referred to the award of 1905, and to the South-West timber strike of last year, when the award was so iniquitous that the whole Commonwealth supported the men in their refusal to abide by it; and I was not far wrong when I advised the men to persevere without referring to the court.

*The Treasurer*: Breaking the law.

Mr. STUART: The laws have been broken before to-day. If this tribunal as a last resource for the settlement of disputes is a failure, I think it is time someone was candid enough to say so. In this instance everything came out all right, fortunately. But I regret that other people were involved; people not responsible either for the Arbitration Court awards or the composition of the court. These people had to suffer, but that was inevitable. The opinion I would give unionists in the future is to have nothing whatever to do with the Arbitration Court, because if they go before it they make themselves hypocrites, seeking an

award knowing that they will refuse to abide by it. It is better to keep away from it until we have confidence in it and are prepared to abide by its decisions. I would say that as far as registration is concerned, the Act is hostile to the workers' organisations, the registration at the present time being merely farcical. The Act has precluded any mention of political action in the rules that have to be registered, and it is only a mere subterfuge to seek registration. My advice to unionists and others is to have no more to do with the court except to expend a 2d. stamp to say that they have done with it. That is practically what occurred with regard to the timber trouble on the goldfields, and I certainly feel that we have to congratulate ourselves on the termination of the trouble so speedily. It might have spread farther and had more disastrous results. The Arbitration Court has broken down, and we see also in New Zealand, where it has had the longest trial, the people are tired of it. In New South Wales the people have no confidence in it, and they are resorting to the old method of settling disputes. With regard to the goldfields I feel there is reason to congratulate ourselves that the men who took charge of the workers' dispute were so capable of putting the facts before the public as to gain their approbation, and whether or not the Premier gets credit for the settlement is wide of the mark. That it was settled satisfactorily is acknowledged on all sides. I do not care who gets the credit as long as the workers who were implicated are benefited in the long run. An interjection was made by the Minister for Mines in regard to a tennis court for the State hotel. There are things that require more urgent attention at this hotel than a tennis court. If the Government are seeking farther kudos on the strength of a tennis court I will not dispute it. With regard to the State hotel I would say a few words as to the experiment in regard to solving the liquor problem. On this side of the House we are pledged to defend the nationalisation of the liquor traffic, and nothing short of that is likely to settle this very comprehensive question. But as far as the State hotel is concerned it cannot be cited as having been effective.

That is because the liquor problem is too great for any one man, be he even the manager of a State hotel, or the head of a department, to solve, but as the Minister for Mines has signified his intention of installing a tennis court there, I think what should be done in connection with that place, before anything in the shape of luxuries is added to it, is that the people who spend their earnings there and build up the profit which is considerable every year, should get some farther consideration. The money is spent in the locality, it is earned by the men, and if accounts were totted up, it would be found that the man who buys his pint of beer in the hotel is the biggest factor in establishing the profit. I am pleased there is a profit on the hotel, but one thing should be done, and that is to spend some of that profit in the locality where it is earned. A house with a turnover of £11,000 and a profit of £3,000 should command some consideration; that is, the people who contribute that profit should have some of it spent in the locality. If any of the profit could be used in popularising the desire to have the liquor traffic nationalised, it would also be a very desirable avenue of expenditure. If a tennis court is to be built out of the profits, then I hope at least a reading-room, or some accommodation of that nature, should be provided for the men there who have to lead hard and brutal lives and have nowhere else to go in the evenings. It would give them some little recreation. At present there is one bar, and the people who visit the hotel have to visit that bar only. There is no other room, whereas in other hotels run by private enterprise there would be smoking rooms and reading rooms where the miners, if not in their camps, could go to spend a few hours of the evenings. I would suggest to the Minister to eliminate the expenditure on a tennis court for a while and make the hotel attractive, and fulfil the desire that was in the minds of those responsible for its erection. Now just a word or two with regard to agricultural railways. While I have not opposed any agricultural railways since I have been in the House I have very often been of opinion that it would be wise if there were a permanent board in existence

to approve or disapprove of these lines as the occasion demanded, so that there might not be any suspicion of political influence in their construction. It is perhaps rather too much to say that there are certain features that generally recur in any railway; but when some of these railways have been before the House it was allowable to infer from the heat and perturbation of certain people in the vicinity that they were deeply interested in these railways, and that they had laid their plans beforehand. During my brief sojourn in this Chamber I have seen that while these railways were being discussed the lobbies were well patronised, and that this House was the object of attraction solely on that account. But as for saying there was any political bribery in it, I am glad to say there was none of that, though the features were certainly suspicious on occasions. All of us support these railways on their merits. We have sufficient knowledge in this House to know that land is becoming harder to get and farther away from facilities of transit; and that nothing will overcome these difficulties but building these spur lines. I will support these lines, reserving to myself the right to become hostile should anything become suspicious on the surface; and to avoid anything being suspicious I consider there should be a permanent non-partisan board to deal with these proposals. I do not wish to deal with this question now, because there are no proposals before the House at the present time; but with regard to the desire to settle people on the land, and with regard to the difficulties they find in getting on the land, I would like to read one instance, and it is only an instance of which many similar ones could be cited, with regard to the difficulty of getting on the land. I think this is where the department might be galvanised into a little activity. This is a letter written to me quite recently:—

In reference to my application for land in the Avon district I will attempt to give you the details as concisely and truthfully as I can. In the first place I obtained a locality plan from the Lands Office in Perth, and left the following morning for Tammin, where I met the Government land guide. I was

taken out about 12 miles to his residence, and the following day we inspected the land shown as vacant on the plan which I had, and which coincided exactly with the guide's plan. I was assured by the guide that no one had up to date inspected the block that I picked on. I then returned to Kalgoorlie the following morning and made out my application to reach the Northam land office by return mail, naturally thinking that I would be the first applicant. Subsequently I received a letter from Northam, acknowledging receipt of the application and fees, and stating that as the land had already been selected would I amend my application.

This applicant, after having gone to all this trouble and having the land guide verify the block as being vacant, was told by the Northam office that it had previously been applied for. The letter continues:—

Would I amend my application, and mark same on an up-to-date tracing enclosed and return same to Northam; requests that I immediately complied with.

That is where up-to-dateness is required. Where a man is anxious to get on the land, he wants up-to-date information and does not want the plans of the year before last. It is no trifling matter for a man to get leave of absence from the goldfields to come down and select land. If he does this, he wants to get his land. As the result of complying with the request from the Northam Land Office this man received another letter from the Lands Department, which said:—

With reference to your application for land in the Avon district, I beg to state that the land applied for under homestead farm conditions is within an area at present held as a pastoral lease. There is more up-to-dateness. Why are not these things shown in the Perth office? It was the second time this man was put off. It is not necessary to go any farther into this to show that the desire to encourage men to go on the land may be there, but the method by which they are encouraged to go there is very slack and out of date.

*The Treasurer:* Has the hon. member inquired into this matter at the Lands Department?

*Mr. STUART:* The original letters are sufficient for me. I have not the time to inquire.

*The Treasurer:* Then will you kindly let me have the letters.

*Mr. STUART:* Yes; I have no desire to withhold anything. I am only culling this as one of a number of letters I have received. Being fairly well known on the goldfields, I have gone a great deal out of my way to show men the ropes how to get on the land; but this sort of thing is occurring continually, plans being out of date, and applicants being inconvenienced and practically discouraged. In fact, on several occasions the State has lost a number of settlers. The Midland Railway Company do not lose any applicants of this kind. A man who has £700 to invest in land was humbugged about the city for a while, and eventually went to the Midland Company. That was one settler lost to the Government. I have no intention of labouring this matter at great length. It is only what the Lands Department may expect. The best class of men they can expect is the man who is on the goldfields and has possibly been a farmer on the other side, but has made a few pounds and wants to get back to his old occupation of farming. Every man of this class I think should be encouraged. I do not know that I have anything more in the nature of censure or criticism to offer on this occasion. I would like just to refer to one matter which is on the Notice Paper, and which will not probably be reached; that is with regard to police court fines. This is causing a large amount of exasperation in municipalities. I think there is no reason why this matter should not be settled. As to the overpaid hospital subsidies, that is rather a large question to deal with, and will entail more expense; but the recommendation of the select committee in regard to municipal subsidies overpaid should carry some weight, and receive some consideration at the hands of the House. The amount mentioned, £30,000, it must be admitted is only estimated. It must be admitted that some

of the municipalities are on a different footing from others. Some, in all honesty of intention, did certain things which brought them into this category, but had they done things in a different way they would not have been brought within the scope of the select committee's investigations. The amount of money at stake is too large to allow the subject to be dismissed by ignoring the select committee's report. In conclusion I only trust—*[Mr. Heitmann:* That we shall all get back again.] As far as getting back again is concerned I do not know whether all will come back or not, but whoever comes here after the impending elections I hope may be successful in squaring the finances and reducing the debt per head of the population; reducing the interest bill which we are continually paying to the old country. I hope those who come back will be more successful in doing that than the present Administration are. I trust the deficit which has been growing with surprising rapidity may begin to show signs of shrinking a little. I say that, speaking sincerely in the interests of the people of the State. I trust that any remarks I have made to-night with regard to the administration of the various departments will be accepted by Ministers in the spirit in which they are offered. I have certainly not very great Parliamentary experience to guide me, but speaking with my experience, I say that there has been a great laxity in the administration to which I have referred. If the result of change in the disposition of forces in the House should lead to those who are on this side being saddled with the responsibilities of Government, under these circumstances no one will object to criticism such as I have offered on this occasion.

On motion by *Mr. W. B. Gordon*, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past eleven o'clock, until the next day.

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