

Agent General's office. There are one or two advertisements, however, I desire to mention; one is the fact that the timber industry in the State offers 7s. 3d. a day; another is the statement allowed to go forward that the timber industry cannot employ women and children. Another advertisement I protest against is one the Premier gave us when he, as Premier, sent a begging letter to Carnegie. [*Member*: How did it get on?] As it deserved; there was no reply. It is very rarely I am ashamed of our country, but I did feel ashamed when I saw our Premier's name under a begging letter to Carnegie. I trust the Premier will refrain from doing that in the future. It was a request for a donation for the Goldfields' Fresh Air Fund. It was not merely an application to a foreign country for assistance to give our children fresh air, but it was an admission that our country had a lot of foul air in it. Australia has the finest, healthiest, and most rarified air in the world; and I would advise, with all due respect to that society on the fields, that they should alter the name; because if there is any place where fresh air can be got it is inland on this continent. In regard to advertising, as a rule it is only the spiffs and shoddies that require advertising; the all-wool advertises itself. In my opinion Western Australia is all-wool, and if we were half-efficiently governed it would speak for itself in no uncertain language.

On motion by *Mr. Stone*, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.25 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th July, 1907.

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

Prayers.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the *Colonial Secretary*: Report of Education Department for 1906.

#### COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION.

On motions by the *Colonial Secretary* sessional committees were appointed as follow:—

*Printing Committee*: The President, Hon. G. Randell, and the mover.

*Library Committee*: The President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, and Hon. J. W. Hackett.

*Standing Orders Committee*: The President, Hon. M. L. Moss, the Chairman of Committees, the Hon. G. Randell, and the mover.

*House Committee*: The President, Hon. R. F. Sholl, Hon. R. D. McKenzie, Hon. C. Sommers, and the mover.

#### MOTION—DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE OF PERTH.

On motion by the *Hon. M. L. Moss*, ordered that a return be laid on the table of the House, showing—1, The amount actually expended in Perth for works in connection with deep drainage and sewerage since the present Government took office. 2, What contracts have been let in connection with the same works, showing the amounts thereof during the same period. 3, Similar information with reference to expenditure and contracts as mentioned in (1) and (2) in connection with the same works at Fremantle. 4, What works are intended to be undertaken at Perth and Fremantle respectively, during the year ending 30th June, 1908.

# MOTION—RETRENCHMENT OF GOVERNMENT OFFICERS.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East) moved—

*That in the opinion of this House, all Railway men and others retrenched from Government departments should be recompensed by a free gift of land, such gift to be subject to survey charges and improvement conditions as provided by the Lands Act, and limited to an area of not less than 300 nor more than 500 acres.*

He said: It is not necessary for me to ask the sympathy of members of this Chamber for the persons concerned. To my mind, there is not a member in the Chamber but regrets that there has been any need for retrenching railway men and other officers in various Government departments. I want to put that sympathy in a practical form, and that is why I move this motion. To those men who have others depending on them it is a serious thing to have to seek fresh fields and pastures new. Many officers have been several years in the service, and they have nothing else to go to when they are retrenched, and if we offer them this gift, which is not a great gift after all, it will be something for them to look forward to. In proposing that 300 to 500 acres, in accordance with the position the officer occupies, should be granted to these men, I am not asking a great deal, because under the present conditions a man can acquire 160 acres as a free homestead farm. If a person decided to take advantage of this offer and did not elect to go on the land I would permit him to sell his block, subject of course to the usual conditions of improvement; and I make that a feature right throughout my proposition, that the conditions of improvement shall be carried out before a title is given, and whoever buys the land must carry out the conditions of improvement. I also provide that the survey fees fixed by the Act shall be paid. It is not necessary for me to press this matter very much, for we know these men must be retrenched in the interests of the State, and we must know in our inmost hearts, that we are, to some extent, responsible for this re-

trenchment. A man dismissed from the service is not like a man dismissed on a farm, because the farm labourer knows he can be dismissed at a moment's notice. Many of the men in the Government service when retrenched had no idea that such a thing would take place until they received some intimation or their notice.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about civil servants in other departments?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: I would deal with them just the same. Several letters have appeared in the Press concerning this subject. If we take 160 acres from the 300 acres which I propose, it only means giving these men 140 acres more than any man who applies for a free gift of land to-day can obtain. The gift to be of any good at all must be subject to all regulations. I do not know that there is much more I need say on this matter; the motion must appeal to members, for something must be done. We are going to a lot of trouble to bring emigrants from the other States, therefore we should do all we can for the people who are here, and make farmers out of them if possible. Although we have had failures on the part of men who have taken up land, still a great proportion of the people who go on the land turn out to be good men. I commend this motion to the House, and trust that the Government will not oppose it unless they can show something better to put in its place. Should they be able to do this, I will support their proposal, but in the meantime I trust that members will give my motion that support to which it is entitled, and by this means relieve to a certain extent the distress which is likely to follow the retrenchment of these men.

The PRESIDENT: I may say that although we have no Standing Order at present, it has been the custom of this Council to dispose of the Address-in-Reply before dealing with other business.

On motion by the *Colonial Secretary*, debate adjourned.

## DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Third day.*

Resumed from the previous day.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): In rising

to speak to this motion, I hardly agree with the opinion expressed by some members who have preceded me, that this opening debate is an empty form. The opportunity afforded to members of this House—more so than members of another place—of speaking on the Address-in-Reply provides the one occasion during the session for hon. members to discuss matters contained in the Speech, matters that are omitted from the Speech, make such complaints against administration as they think fit, and offer commendation for what has been done. In another place the opportunity is afforded when discussing each department on the ordinary Revenue and Loan Estimates, but that is not given to the same extent to this House, and therefore there is more reason why the Address-in-Reply should be more fully debated here than in another place. I always take the opportunity of expressing my opinion on important public questions, and I hope that other members will not regard it as a part of the business of the session which can be lightly passed over. The Speech the Governor was pleased to deliver to us is full of optimism, and gives indications that, as far as the Government are concerned, the country is in a really prosperous condition. I only wish that I could come to the same conclusion and speak in a similarly optimistic manner, but I think it is a matter of common knowledge that, in the populous centres of this State, there are more grievous complaints to be heard than has been the case for many a long day. One cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that the country has struck bad times. The mover of this motion, and in fact the Government notwithstanding their expressed desire to impose fresh taxation and the cries of retrenchment, must however admit that all this optimism while very good from the point of view of giving the country a good advertisement, is not entirely in accordance with the existing state of affairs. The mover of the motion has attributed a good many of the losses the country has suffered from to Federation. I am inclined to endorse thoroughly the opinion he and others have given expression to

in that regard. The enormous loss of customs revenue that the country has sustained since the disappearance of the sliding scale is a very serious matter, so far as the Government is concerned. Only the other day my attention was directed to a speech made by the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain in the House of Commons at the time the Federal Constitution Bill was going through the Imperial Parliament. He there maintained that the plight of the Treasurer of Western Australia would be an unenviable one, in view, chiefly, of the disappearance of one-fifth of the revenue under the sliding scale during the term it was to be in force. The plight of the Treasurer to-day is even more serious than was expected, for the sliding scale is gone and we are confronted with the position that this State is becoming more and more a dumping ground for the products and manufactures of the Eastern States and that the customs revenue is shrinking to an extent which I think the advocates of Federation never for one moment contemplated or realised. It is not only the loss of customs revenue, but we find that factory after factory that was in operation at the time Federation came into force have disappeared. Particularly is this the case in the province I represent and, as time goes on, you will find that these manufacturers of goods, being able to concentrate the whole of their efforts at one point where labour is cheaper and where they can have but one supervision will, instead of having factories in each State, continue the concentration, the reduced supervision will be resorted to, the cheaper labour will be taken advantage of, and it will be found that the tendency will be, so far as regards the smaller States—and Western Australia comes within that category—that the factories will cease to exist. What I fear most in the immediate future is this. It is an open secret that the new Tariff Bill to be introduced to the Federal Parliament will show increased duties of from 12½ to 20 per cent. as compared with those which are imposed at the present time. If one thinks for a moment of the effect

that that will have on Western Australia, one will see how serious the position is. The effect of these increased duties will be this, that, in consequence of the existence of the factories in Melbourne and Sydney, and in Adelaide to a lesser extent, Western Australia will become more of a dumping ground for the manufactures than she has been in the past, and the duties which at the present time are derived by this State from the importations from Great Britain, the United States, and Germany, and other oversea countries, will be bound to decrease. I do not think that the imposition of a land tax, the cutting down of the municipal subsidies, or the savings which might reasonably be effected in the Railways or other departments will be anything like large enough to compensate for the losses that will be sustained on the customs duties. With regard to the effect that Federation has had on this State and the financial proposals of the Federal Treasurer—supported as he is by politicians in Eastern Australia—I desire to refer to the attempt which is being made to curb the borrowing powers of this State by taking over, not only those debts incurred on the day Federation was brought into operation, but also the whole indebtedness up to date. An endeavour is also to be made to prevent this country from any borrowing in the future without the consent of the Federal Parliament. I am glad to think that the attitude of this State was well expressed by the Premier at the recent Conference in Brisbane. Before a proposal of that kind can be given the force of law, it must receive the support of both Houses in this country. It would be a most dangerous expedient, in fact, a great scandal to the country, if any Parliament were persuaded to consent to a proposition of that kind. The future development of Western Australia depends upon the ability of this country, as soon as the financial arrangements are put on a sufficiently sound basis, to borrow not one or two millions of money, but many millions, in order to develop the State. When we compare this State with a compact State like

Victoria, which is highly developed, which has thousands of miles of railway and other necessary public works, a large population in a small area, and very many factories, it will be seen how great is the disadvantage of Western Australia, and it will be readily understood that for this country to be prevented from raising money to develop its industries would be nothing short of a calamity. I trust that the Legislature of this State, constituted as it is now, or as it may be in the future, will have such a mandate from the people that they will never listen for one moment to the proposal to block farther borrowing here. While it may be impossible to repair some of the difficulties and dangers that we are confronted with through having entered into the Federal bond, there are more dangers and difficulties ahead of us if we give away the rights and powers possessed by this State at the present time. Some time ago the Federal Parliament amended the patent and copyright laws. Perhaps this is a small thing to bring up, and I would not mention it only that there is a danger of other legislation of a somewhat similar character being brought into force which might have a detrimental effect upon business generally in this State. Under the Patents and Copyright Act it is now necessary for anybody desiring to obtain a patent to lodge the application in Melbourne. All business in connection with such application has to be transacted there, and searches and inquiries have to be made in that State. That centralising policy is laid down in such a way that we are unable to deal with these matters. At present we find that there are two important Bills which will also be dealt with in the present session of the Federal Parliament. They refer to the bankruptcy and the companies laws. What steps have the Government taken to see if the interests of the people of this State are sufficiently safeguarded and to ensure that to a certain extent some protest will be made if it is intended for one moment—and I speak in the absence of these Bills, although I hear it whis-

pered that it is intended that companies formed in the future in Australia will have to be registered in Melbourne—to place obstacles in the way of the transaction of business here. Inquiries will have to be made to ascertain definitely that no obstacles will be placed in the way of people conducting business in Western Australia. I hope the centralising policy in regard to the Bankruptcy Act will not put any impediment in the way of people who desire to do business with the Bankruptcy Department here. I do not say for one moment that it is not highly desirable that the company and bankruptcy laws should not be placed upon a uniform basis. It is most important that the whole of the Commonwealth should have a uniform legislation on these important branches of the law; and, although that may be so, there is no reason why it should be brought about by a fartherance of this centralising policy which has been adopted in connection with the patents and copyright laws. While there might be inconveniences felt in connection with that specific legislation, it would be tenfold worse were a similar policy adopted in connection with the laws relating to bankruptcy and companies. Although we have our representatives in the Federal Parliament, I hope that the State Government will see that a protest is made if there is any attempt on the part of the Federal authorities to centralise farther business at the Federal capital. In dealing with even small matters it is significant how little this State is considered. Take for instance the printing of the telephone books. A work of this kind should assuredly be done here, and the people have the benefit of it. A paltry thing of that kind is taken away from the country. My candid advice to the people of the State is that we should give nothing away which bears on the rights of this State. I regret to say that an old friend of this country in the person of Sir John Forrest is the statesman who brought down these proposals which will have such a detrimental effect upon this country. Once give the right to the Federal authorities to stop our farther

borrowing, and the day of the development of this State will cease. I am glad that the Premier took a determined position at the Brisbane Conference on this matter, and I am pleased from my position in this House to do what I can to express my approval of the action he took on that occasion. On our two great industries, mining and agriculture, this State largely depends, and of these the mining industry stands out pre-eminently. It is true there has been some decrease in the output of gold, but the Minister for Mines is no doubt alive to the necessity for opening up new fields. So long as the money utilised for mineral development is wisely expended under proper supervision, I do not think that the country can do too much with this object. To secure a large accession of population it is absolutely necessary to develop the mining industry. I am aware that something can be done, but only in a small way, by attracting agriculturists and settling them on the land; but surely no one can doubt that with the outbreak of another large mining field so large an accession of population would result that, after the development had proceeded to a certain extent, hundreds, perhaps thousands of persons who came here to try their luck in the mines would ultimately find themselves on the land. Western Australia cannot hope for a large increase of population, unless by the discovery of auriferous or other mineral areas. Personally I should do all I could to assist the present or any other Government to expend large sums of money and to do whatever else is necessary for the opening up of such country. A railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar has been proposed as a means of opening a new mining province in this community; and I agree with the proposer of this Address that the construction of such a railway will not be of sufficient benefit to the country unless the work is put through with the utmost expedition. If the State Mining Engineer is satisfied of the existence of a mineral belt sufficiently rich to justify the expenditure, then by all means let the work be undertaken, and let its construction be pushed on with the utmost

speed. I think it would be most regrettable if that district should suffer any longer through a delay in building the line which means so much for the prosperity of the country and the benefit of the people. As to our agricultural industry, everything that prudence dictates is doubtless being done in order that it may be brought to as high a state of perfection as our means permit, and I do not wish for a moment to belittle the efforts of the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell), who seems to be throwing his heart and soul into the important work he has undertaken. But I say, to bring to this country people who will follow agricultural pursuits must be a very slow proceeding, and cannot add to our population so rapidly as is necessary to make this a great State. The necessity for a large accession of population stands out prominently when we view the aspect of Federal affairs. If we on this Western side of Australia could increase our numbers to a million of people, and secure the same representation in the Federal House of Representatives as is enjoyed by Victoria and New South Wales, I believe that Federal affairs would then assume an altogether different aspect. To-day it is a question of great might on the one side and our rights disrespected on the other. Western Australia with its five members in the House of Representatives receives no consideration. To-day Western Australia is sending to Melbourne two members who are opposed to the Labour interest, while her three other members are representatives of Labour; and in the circumstances, if we had not Sir John Forrest in the Federal Government we should be practically disfranchised. A great accession of population here, which would compel the Federal authorities to redistribute the seats and give greater representation to Western Australia, would be an excellent means of obtaining fuller justice for this country; and for this and other reasons we must increase our population. No one will contend that a quarter of a million people will be the maximum population of Western Australia. While I make these observations, I do not mean that the immigrants we re-

quire are those whom Mr. Thomson indicated yesterday. We do not want the agricultural labourer here, and I do not think the Government are justified in spending public money to bring him. We want men with small capital, and with large capital if we can get them. I am not one of those who think that the introduction of capital to this country will do it harm. I should do everything possible to bring capitalists into the country. When one tells a body of labouring men that it is only by the introduction of capital that they can obtain work, they are not stupid enough to doubt the statement. But it is always a matter of regret to me that those who put themselves up as leaders of the workers, those whom I call agitators, should oppose the most obvious means of developing the country—the introduction of capital. I say, let us cheerfully give capital the most cordial invitation and the greatest encouragement. I should do all I could to encourage its introduction, whether by giving greater security of tenure for mining holdings, or by refraining from the imposition of oppressive taxation, knowing as I do that we need millions of money, and that without the encouragement of capital we cannot expect people to bring their money into a country such as this. In Canada superhuman efforts have for years been put forth to bring in large numbers of people. Western Australia cannot hope to attract immigrants at the same rate as Canada. That country, seven or eight days removed from the centres of population, a country in which farming is carried on under conditions altogether different from what we understand here, and where large bodies of labouring men are available, is one in which immigration can proceed apace. But I have no doubt much can be done here, and I believe much is being done to provide for the man who can come here with a small capital. That is the class of immigrant the Government should endeavour to attract; and of course I agree with Mr. Thomson that if we are to flood the place with agricultural labourers, the possibility is they can do better where they are and Western Australia can do better

without them. But there is another class of immigrant who comes to this country—and Western Australia does not stand alone in that respect—whom I think the country will be much better without. It is the sort known as the “waster.” We have our share of them, and Canada gets hundreds where we get one. Since the last session of Parliament we have had examples of men coming here pretending that certain inducements were held out to them to come, and that gross misrepresentation was practised. Well, no man in England, no man anywhere, can imagine that in coming to a new country he will at once drop upon a bed of roses. Every immigrant knows and ought to know that there is hard work in front of him. I recommend the Government to persevere on the lines followed for the past few years, and to continue to attract to this country men who will bring with them a certain amount of capital. I firmly believe that if such immigrants are put on the land, there will be no failures but ample successes. First, we have our local market, and, as has been pointed out, a very fine market close at hand to exploit. We know that the teeming millions of Asia await our products, to say nothing of our opportunity of export to the Old Country, which furnishes a better market for Western Australia than the other parts of Australia; and if in these circumstances the right class of immigrant is brought here, there will be no failures. I do not share the fears of Mr. Thomson. I believe the Government should persevere in the policy adopted for the last few years. Bring to the country men with capital; endeavour to keep out those who are absolutely penniless, who will only swell the ranks of the unemployed. In reading a certain correspondence appearing in this morning's newspapers, one regrets to find that a Minister of the Commonwealth should have thought fit to defame this country while he was carrying out his official duties in England. I refer to the remarks of Sir William Lyne. I as a patriotic citizen of Western Australia, like every one of us, should be wanting in my duty if I did not resent such a

statement. I think that Mr. Rason deserves great credit for promptly taking up the matter, and endeavouring to stifle a statement which, had it not been contradicted, would have done this country great harm. What necessity was there for Sir William Lyne, because he happens to be a Federal representative of New South Wales, to go out of his way to tell people in England that Western Australia was the worst part of Australia, or not the best part to go to? I think his statement was a disgrace to his position; and we have a right to complain because a person holding his high office should think it necessary to make such a remark. I wish to refer to a matter which has for some considerable time been a grievous cause of complaint from the mercantile community in Perth, Fremantle, and other parts of the State. I will not say the Government are to blame, but I do say the Government can assist the mercantile community to repair a great injury. I refer to the conditions under which merchandise is transported by rail from one part of this State to another. Members may know that goods are carried under the condition known as “owner's risk,” or under that known as “Commissioner's risk.” Now no business man can afford to forward at Commissioner's risk. The rates charged for the carriage of goods at owner's risk are the ordinary rates as we understand them when we talk on business lines. On goods at Commissioner's risk the rate imposed is so high that no business-man can dream of sending his goods in that manner, because not only is a fair rate and in some instances a very high rate charged for the carriage of goods, but there is added a large sum by way of insurance to meet possible claims against the Railway Department for losses. Consequently every business-man in this community, when sending goods from the coast to the goldfields or elsewhere, is bound to send them under the owner's-risk conditions. Take for instance a merchant in Perth or Fremantle sending fifty cases of kerosene to the goldfields; he receives a consignment-note for the goods, and if the parcel arrives at Kalgoorlie and there are only twenty cases

of kerosene to deliver, in every instance the Commissioner shields himself under the conditions which have been framed for the carriage of those goods at owner's risk—he delivers twenty cases; and neither consignor nor consignee receives a penny for the loss of the thirty cases missing. That loss falls on the unfortunate consignor if he has to give delivery at Kalgoorlie, and on the unfortunate consignee if delivery is taken on the rails at Perth or Fremantle. [*Hon. J. A. Thomson*: Not, I think, if they are short delivered.] Yes; if they are short delivered. To charge the Railway Department with short delivery you have to prove against the Commissioner of Railways that the loss has been sustained through the wilful misconduct of the Commissioner or his servants. It would be bad enough if one were obliged to prove negligence against him or his servants, but to prove wilful negligence is much more difficult; it is absolutely impossible. I can only conceive that it would apply in cases where there was theft or wilful destruction of property. Once the goods go into the custody of the carrier how can one prove negligence? Why is it that the Western Australian Railway Department should demand that the citizens of this country should bear a burden of that kind in preference to the railways? An examination of what obtains in other countries is useful to direct the attention of the Government as to the way in which this highly important matter should be dealt with. In England all goods are carried pursuant to the provisions of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1854, a statute that has been in force for over 50 years, providing that no condition enforced by any carrying company is of any effect unless the Judge of the Court before whom any claim is heard deems it fair and reasonable. In England for 50 years there have been multitudes of decisions deciding what are reasonable conditions and what are unreasonable conditions. The carrier by the law of England which is in force here without a statute, who carries for all persons indiscriminately and from point to point, is what the law calls a common carrier.

The idea is that when he gets the custody of one's goods he must be the insurer of those goods, and must deliver them to the destination to which he undertook to carry them; but in this State these losses are continually being made. The action of the Commissioner of Railways in this connection has been the subject of great consideration by the Chambers of Commerce of Perth and Fremantle, while I believe the country Chambers of Commerce have considered it. The Fremantle Chamber of Commerce have asked me to bring the matter prominently before Parliament, and I believe it will be mentioned in another place. I desire to draw attention to the way in which this matter is dealt with by the Federal Parliament. Of course the Federal Parliament are powerless to act in connection with State railways, but they dealt with it in connection with the Sea Carriage of Goods Act, which is copied from an American Act, called the Harper Act, and it prevents the carriers of goods by sea between the Australian States imposing conditions freeing them from liability in the instances which I have indicated. It is a matter that calls for immediate consideration; it is a matter that affects every class of the community. Is it a fair thing that when goods are entrusted to the Railway Department to carry from one part of the State to another the loss should fall on the individual consignee or consignor? Or should the whole country bear the loss for which the consignee or consignor cannot be held responsible? The last thing I desire to do is to defame the body of workers employed by the Railway Department, but in that body of workers there are dishonest men—I hope and believe they are in the minority; I want the House and the country to believe me when I say that I honestly believe that the majority are honourable men; but with a regulation of this kind, which excuses the Commissioner from liability, it is offering a direct premium to any dishonest servant there may be in the department; and a large number of business men say there is extraordinary leakage in the goods that are put on the railways in the mercantile centres and



taken to the consuming centres. I think these peculiar regulations prevent the Railway Department being as vigilant in the custody of these goods as they would otherwise be ; and I believe that it is a matter that calls for immediate, necessary, and drastic action, in order that the legislation should be put either on the basis of the legislation in Great Britain or somewhere on the lines of the Sea Carriage of Goods Act. I think the case is incontestable for some relief. Why should the department seek to take possession of people's goods, and charge a rate of freight which they dictate themselves ; because there is no opposition ; it is a great monopoly which luckily belongs to the people of this State ; and I think it is fair that the whole country should bear the losses, and that they should not be on the individual consignees or consignors ? Before I undertook to bring the matter before the House I compelled the Chamber of Commerce at Fremantle to supply me with definite instances of what had taken place. I do not propose to weary the House with these instances, but the case is of sufficient importance, and is sufficiently genuine for the House to demand that these grievances should be removed, as the Chambers of Commerce demand. Since last session Mr. George's tenure of office has practically expired, and as one could have anticipated, among certain sections of the public in this community there is clamour to have the railways again placed under Ministerial control, but it is evidently the policy of the Government that this should not take place. I do not believe the temper of the majority of either House of Parliament is that we should revert to that system of control. I do not believe it is the opinion of anything like a majority of people in this country to put the railways again under Ministerial control. We would have a repetition of what took place before the days of Mr. George's appointment. We would have a clamour on the one hand, with all political influence at the back of it, for decreased hours of employment and increased rates of pay, and we would have a clamour from the people in the various

districts of this country wanting reduced rates of freight, and we would have Parliament calling on the Minister who controls the railways to run his railways on business lines and make them pay. He would have a good opportunity of doing that on shorter hours, increased rates of pay, and lower freights ! It is too late in the day to refer to this, but I think it is a debatable point whether the railways should go under the control of one or three Commissioners. My opinion is that one Commissioner is not sufficient to deal with this question. I am not going to say that I swallow *in globo* the whole of the figures that have appeared in the public print in the letters contributed by Mr. Chinn. It needs almost a railway expert to follow them, and make a comparison to thoroughly understand them, but I have no hesitation in saying that the country is under a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Chinn for the enormous amount of labour he must have put in to make the analyses which have appeared. Evidently the Government recognise it because—I do not know whether it was in his Excellency's Speech or in the policy speech delivered at Bunbury—there is a statement made that the comparison made between Western Australia and Queensland was sufficiently serious to justify a careful examination, and that these various charges would have to be reduced. The Premier has not given Mr. Chinn the credit for it, but I think it is obvious to any fair-minded person that as the statement was made shortly after the second contribution appeared, Mr. Chinn is deserving of credit. I hope he will get something more than credit, because the task must have involved a considerable amount of labour and time. I mention this with the idea of supporting the argument I now use, that I think more than one Commissioner is necessary to grapple with this problem. I find on referring to the general summary of revenue laid on the table last session that in the year 1905-6 the estimated amount of revenue from the railways was £1,635,000, and that the receipts were £1,648,648, and that the estimate for 1906-7 was £1,668,000. I

also find on reference to the general summary of expenditure that in 1905-6 the vote for the Minister of Railways was £1,235,213, while the actual expenditure was £1,235,096. The estimate for 1906-7 was £1,255,733. We are dealing with stupendous figures, which I think will justify this observation, that the expenditure, so far as the controlling influence is concerned, of a few thousand pounds a year to get the railways properly controlled is a matter of absolutely no consideration to this country. Here is our biggest earning department, which earns £1,600,000, but has an expenditure of £1,250,000 in salaries and other things in connection with running the railways. This demands that we should get the best available talent possible, and that money should not be a consideration. I object to Ministerial control because I do not think it will cope with that question; but I think that if one of the Commissioners was a business man, and another a mechanical man who could deal with the question of ways and works and conditions, and if we had a general railway expert to deal with this question, then I think much good would result. We may have a stranger. As a matter of fact, from the policy speech we know that it is intended to import someone from over the seas, who will have to familiarise himself with the conditions and the work of this enormous department, and it is bound to take him some time before he can put his fingers on the weak spots. I believe that if the work is divided among three men who will consult together in the best interests of this enormous department, much good will result from it. Mr. Chinn compares Queensland and Western Australia, and if we compare the enormous clerical staff we employ with that of the other State, the thing seems outrageously high; it seems irreconcilable. Railway officers high up in the department may attempt to reconcile it, but I think it will be difficult to do. And it is not only with the clerical staff but with the other items capably dealt with by Mr. Chinn. I think we must come to the conclusion that there are one or two screws wrong, and that the whole thing needs dealing with com-

prehensively. I venture to say in this country with these railways earning £1,600,000, instead of the difference between that and the expenditure of £1,250,000, they should return to the country a much larger amount of money than we derive from them at present. Western Australia is a peculiar country. We have a large consuming population on the goldfields, to whom almost everything required has to be taken by rail; and in this regard we have a carrying business which I suppose is unparalleled throughout Australia, and which ought to return a far greater revenue to this State than it does. I know I shall be accused of dealing in generalities in making that statement; but it cannot be expected that I, as a member of this House and one of the general public, can put my finger on the weak spots. It is sufficient that the Government know that that is the position of affairs, and it is plain that the Government do know this. If the Government were satisfied that Mr. George had carried out his duties as he should have done, it was the bounden duty of the Government to have replaced Mr. George in his position; but the Government have openly stated that Mr. George has not done all things necessary. It is a hard thing to have to stand in this House and make observations which to a certain extent condemn that gentleman; and I do not wish, in making these observations, to deal with Mr. George in any way that will do him injury or to be in the slightest manner unjust. But the Government have come to the conclusion that a great deal of money can be saved, and with that conclusion I agree. I believe that our railways are overmanned. Of course I know that when dealing with a matter of this kind I may be confronted on all hands with the charge of attempting to flood the market with a lot of unemployed; but in a matter of this kind, when we are talking of increased taxation, when we are confronted with shrinking Customs duties, we have got to be just to the people of this country before we can be generous to those servants whom we can do without. This is to my mind the most im-

portant matter of public concern that the Parliament or Ministry of this country have to deal with at the present time. Our largest earning department, which practically monopolises the carrying of goods from one end to the other of this country, ought to be a matter of the highest importance and concern; and if there is the slightest suggestion—and there must be more than that—for saying that money can be saved in our railways bill, I think no more serious or important duty devolves on the Government and Parliament of the State than to see this matter put right. I hope that in another place, which largely lays down the policy in money matters, there will be a preponderance of votes in favour of the three-commissioner system. I recognise that this House cannot dictate the policy in these matters; but I hope that so far as money is concerned, that consideration is not going to stand in the way of our getting the best ability and talent procurable. I notice it is the intention not to fix the salary of the Commissioner by the Act, but to leave it to the Governor-in-Council. [*Member*: Outrageous!] I am not satisfied that it is outrageous, for this reason. If Parliament approves the proposal to put these railways under the control of one person, and we have a vote of only £2,000 of £2,500 as salary for the Commissioner, it may be that we could get a man of very much superior ability and capacity for another £500 a year; so I do not think the Ministry's wings ought to be clipped in that direction. However that may be, whether after the Bill passes through the crucible of both Houses of Parliament it will have a sum fixed in it or whether the salary be left to the Governor-in-Council to fix, I hope that the best man procurable will be put to this work. I think that in the appointment of a head and front of this department, the matter of a small additional salary is of no consequence when we consider the momentous issues with which he will have to deal. If we put a dishonest man in control of the railways of the State, the country could be robbed of the amount of his salary in a week; if we put a fool or an incompetent man in control, he could lose to

the State in a short time the amount of his salary; but a really competent man could and should save his salary a hundredfold. The matter is one of supreme importance to the country, and now that the Government seem satisfied—the general impression is that they must be satisfied—that there is a terrible leakage, I think the matter demands the most rigid and careful consideration. I believe, with the Government, that money can be saved in the running of the railways, and in sufficient quantity to prevent the necessity for any increase of taxation. I do not wish to trouble the House with figures; but there are in the paper from which I have already quoted some figures relating to the enormous revenue of this country. We find that the revenue for the year 1905-6 was over three and a half millions; and the estimate for 1906-7 was £3,592,000, or practically £3,600,000. If that enormous revenue is not sufficient for the needs of a quarter of a million of people, there must be a terrible leakage not only in the railways but elsewhere as well. The Government, however, are satisfied that it is in the Railway Department; but they must not stop there—they must go on and ransack all the departments, and not be satisfied with the work of an understrapper or the head of a department. The closest inspection should be made to ascertain how it comes about that this magnificent revenue is not sufficient for the requirements of this country. I may say that it has often been a matter for surprise to me how the handful of people in this State can find all this money. I know that a lot of this is the result of the earnings of private enterprises; but even excluding the money derived from the earnings of private enterprises, I think that last year the taxation per head in this State was twice what it is in any other part of Australia. And with this enormous and magnificent revenue some effort should be made on the part of the Government to meet Parliament, not with deficits, but with huge surpluses. A revenue of three and a half millions ought to be sufficient to put this country on a good basis, without any necessity for farther

taxation. Last year when dealing with something relating to the railways, I expressed the opinion that Section 17 of the Railways Act, which enables the Commissioner, with the approval of the Minister, to make additions and improvements to opened railways, gave far too much power to the Commissioner. I am aware that in this provision the Commissioner can only act with the approval of the Minister ; but having had some knowledge, from having held an honorary position in two Cabinets, of the methods adopted by the Commissioner of Railways in sending on his reports to the Minister, by always saying "unless something is done, I cannot accept the responsibility for any accident which may occur," the Minister is thus put in the unenviable position of being obliged to comply with the fiat of the Commissioner; the result being that any question of expenditure in this direction is decided practically on the fiat of the Commissioner. When our Loan Estimates were going through last year, I drew attention to this matter. I find that in 1905-6, for additions and improvements to opened railways the year's vote was £90,000 and the expenditure £82,000 ; but in the next column there is given an amount of £73,700 as a liability under Section 36 of the Audit Act ; and adding the two together they make the enormous total of £156,645. I desire merely to let members understand what the provision in the Audit Act means, and I think it will prove somewhat surprising in view of those figures. The section reads :—

"The Annual Estimates submitted to Parliament shall contain a statement of all outstanding liabilities in respect of public works in progress or contracts in execution for which any unexpended appropriation for the preceding year shall have been made by law, and provision for such liabilities shall be shown separately in the appropriation for the current year, and shall be a first charge thereon."

If I read that aright, it means that in 1905-6 there was an expenditure authorised of £82,874 on additions and im-

provements to opened lines ; and there was a farther liability incurred without Parliamentary authority under section 36 of the Audit Act amounting to £73,000. The result is that without these works coming before Parliament for sanction, this functionary spent in round figures £157,000 on additions and improvements to opened lines. [*Member* : There was authority for most of that.] There was authority for £82,874 of that expenditure. But we know that the line to Armadale was absolutely duplicated without Parliament knowing anything about the work, at a cost of about £40,000 ; and the line to Spencer's Brook was also duplicated without authority. I cannot see the difference between that and the laying down of new lines of railway ; yet I venture to think that Parliament would be somewhat startled if the Commissioner were to start the construction of a new line of railway. I believe that when we are dealing with the question of the appointment of one or three railway commissioners, it will be a good opportunity for putting some provision in the Railways Act with regard to the complaint made by the Chamber of Commerce regarding the conditions under which goods are carried. It will be also an excellent opportunity for doing what the Colonial Secretary had in contemplation last year, to make some alteration in the powers of the Commissioner. Parliament is losing too much of its control. It is too big a thing to give one individual the power to expend £157,000 on public works in one year, without those works coming before Parliament. We once passed three spur railways which involved an expenditure of something under £100,000 ; these formed the subject of special Bills to Parliament and elicited much attention. That was a deliberate act of the Ministry, evidenced by three Bills brought in to obtain authority to start the lines ; yet at the same time we give power to one individual to make additions to existing railways to the extent of £157,000 in one year. I hope the policy of the Government will be to clip the wings of the Commissioner, whoever he may be, in this regard. It

is altogether opposed to our notion of constitutional Government that such large sums of money should be expended without Parliamentary authority. That expression is probably not exactly right, so I will put it this way—Parliament votes £90,000 for a particular work, and yet there is expended on that work a farther sum of £73,000 which neither the Ministry nor Parliament know anything about. When the Government become satisfied that there has been mismanagement in the railways, they can be satisfied that this is also the place where there must be a leakage; therefore I think it would be in the best interests of the country to make an alteration. Among the public works mentioned in this Speech are one or two on which I must ask the House to bear with me while I express an opinion. With regard to the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont, I can scarcely tell you the feeling of pleasure I experienced on learning that this building is nearly completed. The very dictates of humanity, I think, would lead any person who had ever visited the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, and witnessed the awful plight in which those unfortunate wretches have been for years past, to come to the conclusion that it has been a disgrace to the country that this larger provision should have been delayed so long. I do not blame any Government for this. I know that many things have been required which could not be attended to in the rush, during the past 10 or 15 years in the development of this country; but I feel that there are many things which could better have waited—the Mint and the Observatory—until this pressing necessary work had been undertaken. It was not until the James Government took office that it was determined in the Estimates of 1902 that this work should be undertaken without farther delay. Mr. Kingsmill will bear me out that in that Ministry and in the Rason Administration which succeeded the James Government, Cabinet absolutely pledged the country to this work; and I am glad to see that the present Government are

going on with the necessary expenditure to complete so necessary a work. It is a matter for regret—though in the circumstances it might reasonably have been anticipated—that the percentage of lunatics is increasing in this country. It has always been about one-half what the statistics were believed to be in the other parts of Australia, and no doubt as the country gets more settled and when more women and children come into the State, and it gets into a more normal condition, the percentage of lunatics will come nearer and nearer to what the percentage is in the other States. When the Asylum is finished, and I believe when it was built the Works Department looked far enough ahead to the future, it will be none too large to house those unfortunates who have such a just claim on the State. I do not grudge a penny of the money to complete that necessary work. We are told that certain lighthouses are to be erected. Is that a necessary thing? It is, but it is more necessary from this view. The coast is badly lighted, but these lighthouses before a very short time will be taken over by the Federal Government, and as the Federal Government have to find us the money to pay for the lighthouses, and as the Federal Government from their past performances would never erect a lighthouse on the coast, we would be blind to our own interests if we did not at once erect these lighthouses. Whatever else the Government neglect, I hope the contracts will be let and the work put in hand at the earliest possible date. I do not care where the money comes from, no more necessary work can be found than that. Steamships visiting the coast, through it being badly lighted and badly charted, have to pay larger charges and the freights by these steamers are greater. We can only lessen these by giving greater facilities to the vessels and lessening the dangers of navigating the coast. Probably within a year of this time the Federal Government will have taken over the lighthouses and then are we to go cap in hand to the Commonwealth Government as we have

to do for a paltry post office or a telegraph station or a telegraph line? They may tell us that they will not put up the lighthouses until we guarantee the cost. I am told by some members of the House that we have felt none of the pinches of Federation yet and that no harm is being done—Mr. Langsford for instance. It has been nothing but a series of pin pricks and unfair dealings with this State. When the Harbours and Lights Department is taken over by the Federal Government we shall again have to beg from them. Now is the time to put up these lighthouses and make the navigation of the coast safer than it is at the present time. We are told that the Government have at last decided on a site for a dock at Fremantle. There may be conflicting opinions as to whether the correct site has been decided on, but nothing that I shall say will in any way be a barrier against the Government proceeding with the work. I shall hold my own opinion as to the suitability of the site, but I implore the Government to get on with the work. Fremantle, like most parts of the State, is not in too good a position at the present time. No expenditure of public money is going on at Fremantle; and if Fremantle was in a worse plight, I would be the last man to ask for the expenditure of public money there to give some expenditure in the town. But the dock in every sense is a national work. This port cannot become an up-to-date and first-class port until every opportunity is given for the docking of steamers, which may meet with mishap between Colombo and the Cape and Western Australia. Frequently boats come here disabled. It is a loss to them and causes the expenditure of a large amount of money, and the owners should be entitled to get their repairing done at Fremantle. Fremantle cannot become an up-to-date place, and the freights cannot be lessened until we give the greatest facilities for the docking of ships. Last session the Government, as a result of the line of policy indicated by the Fremantle members, introduced a Bill for the purpose of entrusting that important work to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The lines on which the work was to be

undertaken were laid down, so that by an automatic increase of wharfares it would not cost the country a penny piece. According to the Harbour Trust Act of last session, the Governor in Council might exercise his powers and allow the Trust to increase the rates to provide interest and sinking fund. Since Parliament last met the Governor has exercised the powers under that Act, and to-day we have the Fremantle Harbour Trust charging an extra rate, and the whole of the work is now a reproductive one. Interest and sinking fund is found for every penny expended and that has been laid out by this country in connection with the construction of that harbour. That is a great deal to say.

*The Colonial Secretary* : And there is enough to pay interest on the dock.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : That may be so ; but if there is not sufficient to pay interest on the dock the Governor has only to exercise his power and put on a penny or a halfpenny to every ton of goods landed, or put charges on to the ships to make it pay, so that the work can earn the money to recoup the country for the expenditure. There is no reason why the dock should not be constructed. Since 1896 the statute book has contained evidence of the intention of the country to provide a dock. In 1896 provision was made for a dock at Fremantle, and a sum of £150,000 was provided out of loan moneys. That money was raised, but it does not exist to-day, because a large portion of it has been reappropriated for other works; but such as now remains and is available at the present time should be expended before another day elapses. It is necessary and it is a national work. It has been promised in connection with the shipping facilities since 1896, and it has been continually and frequently figuring in policy speeches. Mr. James, when he went before the country at the general election before last, provided that a dock should be built at Rocky Bay. The Labour Government stipulated for a floating dock, but the country did not approve of that. The Rason Government came down with a proposal for a dock, and the present Government came down

last session' as again this session with provision for a dock. I want to see the work started with the greatest rapidity, for it is a necessary thing to equip the port of Fremantle and make it up to date. I did intend to refer to the question of sewerage at some length, for a large expenditure has taken place in Perth. Works are proceeding apace here, and the policy from the jump was that the necessary sewerage and drainage works should go on simultaneously in the two districts. The work is not for Perth only but for the two metropolitan areas, and it affects Subiaco, Claremont, Cottesloe, Cottesloe Beach, and North Fremantle, to the same extent as it affects Fremantle proper. That part of the metropolitan district, the city of Perth, will become properly sewered when these other places will still be in the barbaric state which they are in at the present time. I believe it is the intention of the Government to press on with these works, and I would like to see a greater amount of rapidity. I would like to see more work undertaken in the province which I represent. I do not intend to enlarge on that question at the present time, for I have already detained the House for a considerable extent, yet there are other things that I must refer to before sitting down. In the policy speech delivered at Bunbury the Premier told us that the Government were taken to task at the Premiers' Conference in connection with the large amount of money we are burdening ourselves annually with in connection with our sinking fund, and the Government contemplate reducing this, I understand, to one-half per cent. What would be thought if it were possible—but it would not be possible—if a mortgagor of property after arranging with the mortgagee to do certain things in consideration of an advance of money, if he had the power to do it, modified the terms upon which the money was borrowed. The mortgagee would not listen to it, and no court of law would permit such a thing to be done. This country went to the London market and borrowed millions of money on a certain basis, and one of these was, firstly, with regard to all our loans, that one per cent. sinking

fund should be reserved, and for the loan in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme three per cent. was to be reserved, and so on. In every Loan Bill there appears the following provision:—

"The contribution to the Sinking Fund (which shall be at the rate of one per centum per annum) for the repayment of the sum by this Act authorised to be raised shall commence to accrue four years from the date of the first issue of the Debentures or Inscribed Stock."

That is a condition on which our loans were subscribed in London, and I have no hesitation in saying the lender of the moneys knew that the debts were to be extinguished in this way and by this provision. That is the one shining spot in our finance and I will tell the House directly how the funds are invested. It is contemplated by a stroke of the pen by passing legislation to repeal all this, and to provide for a half per cent. sinking fund. The people of the country must learn to keep their obligations and their obligations to the people in London, and see that this sinking fund is carefully husbanded to repay these loans and extinguish them automatically, so that when these loans have matured we shall not have here in Western Australia the experience that Victoria had two years ago when some 5 millions of money became due. The Government of Victoria had to go to the market and float a loan at ruinous rates to raise the 5 millions at a time when the market was dead against them, and when the careful people of London knew that Victoria had to take the money at any price. We shall never be in that position. Save your money in the Railway Department and in other departments, but keep that obligation. If in the future money is borrowed on a basis of a half per cent. sinking fund, if that is the condition on which the lender gives the money, he does so with his eyes open. I doubt if we shall get our money on the same good conditions as in the past if the sinking fund is reduced to one half per cent. It must never be done; and if my vote will prevent it I shall never vote for the

breaking of a legitimate bargain that ought to be always sacred. The Premiers of the other States twitted us that we have this; it would have been better for their finances if they were safeguarded in the same way we have safeguarded ourselves. There would not be perhaps that readiness to fund all the Australian debts if the other States were in the same position we are in. I said I would give some information about the sinking funds. I was in London four years ago when I was a member of the James Government, and I was asked by Mr. Gardiner to familiarise myself with many things in connection with the London Agency, and I did so; and amongst others I looked into the question of how the sinking funds were dealt with in London. If I mistake not, they are invested in the name of one of the directors of the London and Westminster Bank and the Agent General for the time being of Western Australia; and they are invested in this way, that when these trustees get their remittance of sinking fund from this State, they go on the London market and buy Western Australian stock, for which this State would ultimately, without a sinking fund, have to pay £100 as the face value for each bond of £100; and these bonds in the meantime the trustees will be buying up at 86, or 90, or 95, according to the market price. So I say that to buy our own stock on the London market in that way is very good business for this State; and the result is that the people who come after us will derive great benefit from this operation of reinvesting the sinking fund in the stock of this State. When Western Australian stock cannot be purchased to advantage by the trustees, they buy other Government stock, such as Canadian bonds; with the result that if one goes into our Agent General's office in London he will find that the million and a quarter of sinking fund remitted from this State has been well invested, and that when the time comes to redeem the State's bonds at maturity all we shall have to do will be to go on the open market, and those bonds will then be worth their face value. I as a member of this House will never be a

party to decreasing the sinking fund; indeed I would rather resort to additional taxation many times over than give to this State the bad advertisement it would get in London by departing from the bargain we made in raising those loans; and casting on people who came after us the burden of having to find money at ruinous rates when the loans mature. It is a wise policy to pursue, a policy initiated here when this State was a Crown colony; and had it not been in operation from the first days of Responsible Government, nothing would have prevented an impecunious Treasurer from putting his hands on trust funds that he had no right to interfere with. I will do my utmost to keep those sacred in the future. In the Governor's Speech we are promised a Bill for amending the Constitution Act, and it is to reduce the electoral franchise for the Upper House. My views are pretty well known, and in referring to this question again I can only use arguments I may have used before. I say there is no mandate from the people in my constituency to agree to any amendment in this direction. So far from that being the case, my colleague in the representation of the West Province, Captain Laurie, when recently re-elected had the honour of being returned by the largest majority of any member in this House, a majority of 1,031, and he acquired it with the pronounced opinion on every platform from which he spoke, declaring that he would never suffer the qualification of voters for the Upper House to be reduced nor interfered with in any way. I have always been of that opinion; and, as I say, my constituents have given me no mandate and no reason to think that they wish me to alter my opinion on this question, and I am as strong in regard to it as at any previous time. Where is the clamour in this country for an amendment of the Constitution Act in this direction? The people do not want it. The claim, so far as there is a claim, emanates solely from a certain class of individual who must always have some complaint, something to tear down, something to interfere with the existing conditions. I do not know whether my con-



stitutional law is correct on the point, though I think it is, but any attempt to interfere with the constitution of the House of Lords, taking this as an illustration, must be introduced in and emanate from the House of Lords itself. We know that is not the case in regard to the Upper Chamber here, for apparently any alteration in its constitution may originate in either Chamber. I only mention the other precedent in this regard, that so strongly has it been recognised in connection with the second Chamber in the old country, that it is not a question for the House of Commons or even for the people at large to express their opinion, but it is for that body itself, the second Chamber, to express its opinion as to the need for amending its own constitution. In connection with our Upper House, the Constitution has been conferred by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, a very sacred thing; and where the qualifications for the body of electors are as low as £25 a year rental value, or £10 a year for a Government lease, or £100 value in freehold property, qualifications which have been put there for a good and sufficient reason, I say it is not expedient that we should make a change so that one House shall be the counterpart or duplicate of the other House. I have said before that the great disappointment in regard to the working of the Federal Houses of Parliament is that the House of Senate is elected on the same suffrage as the other House. It is a sad disappointment; for had the Federal Senate been nominated by the Crown as in Canada, it would have been better; or if it had been nominated by the various State Parliaments, as in the United States of America. I do not believe in one House of Parliament being a counterpart of the other, nor do I believe it is right to make a change in this direction merely because the man in the street or the agitator says it is necessary to alter our Constitution. Where in the past has this Chamber proved it is a barrier to any reform the country has reasonably demanded? Did it stand as a barrier before the Workers' Compensation Act, which gave the worker a right to compensation even

where the employer was not negligent, in the case of the worker being injured in the course of his employment, and where the employer, if not penalised, is required to pay compensation up to £300 if the worker be totally incapacitated by the injury, or up to £400 in the case of death, even where no negligence on the part of the employer is proved. Have not the workers, the general body of persons in this State, benefited by the consent of this House to legislation of that kind? The Employers' Liability Act is another instance in which the doctrine of common employment was swept away and compensation in certain cases provided for, where previously that was not the law of the country. Did the Conciliation and Arbitration Act get on the statute book without the consent of this Chamber, the workers then stating that this would be a tribunal which would give industrial peace? Parliament was asked to give its consent to that measure, and this Chamber consented to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act being passed. There was no barrier put up there. This Chamber has consented also to the Conspiracy Act, the Protection of Property Act, and the legalisation of trade unions; it has also passed laws dealing with the early closing of shops; it has given electoral reform, with the principle of one adult one vote in connection with the Lower House; it has given payment of members; it has given on every conceivable occasion where the accession of population demanded it a redistribution of seats; it has limited the right of distraint for debt; it has passed laws dealing with co-operative and provident societies; and it passed the Truck Act and the Workmen and Contractors' Lien Act. These reforms were not brought about in Eastern Australia in a few years as in this State, but there in a period of 60 or 70 years; and this House has been a willing party to that legislation. Where has this House proved itself out of touch with the people of this country? I have said before and will repeat, that if the opinion of the country is against the Legislative Council as now constituted, or is against its continued existence, the electors of

this Chamber can in the short space of four years send to this House a majority of members in favour of that view. But, on the contrary, the thinking people of the State do not want to lower the franchise or to abolish this Chamber. What an awful noise a dozen or a hundred agitators in this State can make ! And how yielding the Government are in proposing to bring about reforms that are not in the interest of the country. I venture to say—and the cat has been let out of the bag that one of the foremost planks of the Labour party is the reduction of the franchise of the Upper House, with a view to its ultimate abolition. What would come to this country if that change were brought about ? Some Government would come into power very likely, under the one-House system, which in one session and without the slightest check could pass all manner of legislation. In the great Dominion of Canada, where most of the Legislatures are only of the one-Chamber constitution, they do not possess the powers of State Parliaments as we have them in Australia, but are rather glorified county councils; and every law passed by them may be vetoed by the Federal Parliament of Canada. There is no right to veto here, as far as the Federal Parliament of Australia is concerned; and so the idea of reducing the franchise of this House, with the view to its ultimate abolition, would be a greater disaster than one likes to contemplate. If we in this Chamber consent to such a change, we should be false to the trust reposed in us by the electors who sent us here. There is no retracing the step, when once you begin this downward course ; for the qualification now at £25 might be reduced to £20, the £20 might be reduced to £15, and so clamour would go on for more reduction, and ultimately for abolition. We have still the example before us of the Federal Parliament, where there is no qualification higher than that of the Representative Chamber, the two Houses being elected on the same qualification ; so I say that when the qualification comes down to that of duplicate Houses for State legislation, one of the duplicate Houses must

ultimately be abolished. The great safety here is that we in this House do not go out of office when there is a general election, and when public feeling is running high on one particular question. Suppose the Labour Party, for instance, brought forth some absurd proposal at the time that some Government became immensely unpopular, and on the unpopularity of that Government the Labour party got into power and passed this absurd measure when there was no second Chamber and no right of veto by the Federal Parliament, it would be no good to say then, "What a pity it was we reduced this qualification and allowed the Legislative Council to go out of existence." This is the one thing that the people who have a stake in the country are looking to. The electoral qualification for sending members to the Upper House is not a great qualification to acquire, for every reasonable person may get it if he occupies a house valued at 10s. or 12s. a week; and there is no great difficulty in obtaining the qualification, for when a claim is sent in we know there is no great circumspection exercised in regard to it as to the actual amount of the value. We know in fact that in the bulk of such cases the claim for qualification is not seriously contested. The Constitution Act is a sacred document, and should not be touched without great experience being brought to bear on it; and the provisions in the Act constituting the Upper House in this State have been made as liberal as possible. Comparing our Legislative Council with those in the sister States and in New Zealand, it will be found that in New Zealand it was not until recently the nomination for life was abolished, the members now being appointed for seven years. The nominative system continues in New South Wales; in Victoria the system is the same as in this State; in Queensland I believe it is nominative, so by comparison with the sister States in Australia, the constitution of this House is very liberal.

At 6.15, the President left the Chair,  
At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (continuing): I desire to deal with a few, not with all, of the new legislative proposals of the Government. First, I see that the Electoral Act is to be amended; and without expressing any opinion as to the lines of the amending Bill indicated in the Speech, I hope the Bill will be so framed that candidates for political honours will not be put in a position like that of Mr. Holmes at East Fremantle, or of Mr. Carson at Geraldton. These gentlemen were elected to Parliamentary positions, and did nothing wrong; but the action of persons who remained outside their electoral districts for a period of more than three months, though their names still appeared on the rolls, led to those members being unseated, and to their paying the heavy costs of fighting for their seats. Long ago I thought that the proviso of, I think, Section 107 of the Electoral Act, which is so contradictory compared with Section 26, would have been repealed by the Government last session, so that the appearance of a name on an electoral roll should be a proof that the person mentioned was a competent voter. However, I suppose it will be the duty of the Government and of Parliament to ensure that Parliamentary candidates shall not in the future be placed in such a false position. There is a proposal to amend the Conciliation and Arbitration Act; and in view of the operation of this Act, the question is whether the time has not arrived for its entire repeal. By the advocates for conciliation and arbitration we were led to suppose that as soon as the Act became law there would be an end to all industrial troubles, that industrial peace would be secured for the community, and that the barbaric methods of strikes and lockouts would be things of the past. I think it may be fairly said that as the result of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, every time an employer of labour has had an award given against him he has been bound

to obey cheerfully, or to grin and bear it, because failure on his part to observe the law meant that he could easily be got at and his property attached to compel his obedience to the award of the court. But with a body of workers the case is different. When the workers refuse to be bound by an award of the court, a prison as big as a military barracks would be needed to put them in, and we all know that provision is perfectly impossible and makes the Act a dead letter. I shall not say a word as to the justice or the injustice of the terms of the award in the timber dispute. The court decided on a certain course of action, laid down certain rates of wages, and defined the hours of labour. We know that the industry was paralysed for fourteen weeks until, after some mediation and conciliation, the employees agreed to resume work, not under the conditions laid down in the award, but under much altered conditions. I believe that the timber company's wages bill at the time of the strike was £5,000 a month, or for fourteen weeks £70,000. The Railway Department, we are told, lost £30,000; that is, £100,000; and I believe the amount Millar's Company would have disbursed had the mills been in full swing in connection with their stores, would have been £40,000 to £45,000 more than they actually spent. So the strike and those responsible for it—the advisers of the men and the men themselves—have put out of circulation in this country £150,000, at a time when, as I think, things are desperately bad, and when the community is in great need of that money. I do not know what is the Government proposal, and I shall await with great curiosity the circulation of the Bill. I have been at a loss to understand how it is possible to make large bodies of men observe these awards; and any packing-up of that measure which will not have the effect of compelling the observance of the awards on both sides, will be of little use. It is a peculiar kind of arbitration if the awards are to be observed only when they are against the master; and that every time the workman considers they are against him, he is to disobey.

It is perfectly obvious, as a result of what the community has passed through during this timber dispute, that we are not in any better, in fact, I think we are in a worse position than prior to the passing of the Act. The employer of labour is at a decided disadvantage, whereas the people who disobey the law can go harmless, and apparently the bulk of the community seems to support men who are flouting and acting in open disobedience of the law. But I hardly think that is the temper of the community. I am inclined to think that the newspapers have to a large extent lent themselves to aiding those who were badly advising the men. I shall await with curiosity the circulation of the Bill, for it will surprise me if any patching-up of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act will make it a workable measure. The gross scandals in this community, resulting from the failure to protect infant life, have induced the Government to promise a measure for that purpose. I am inclined to think that the provisions of the Health Act are quite sufficient. But I am afraid that in this as in many other matters, the lack of proper administration has contributed to the scandals. I believe the existing legislation is quite sufficient to cope with the people who disobey the law.

*Hon. W. Kingsmill* : Not while its administration is left to local authorities.

*Hon. M. L. MOSS* : Well, I do not know. If the Bill is intended only to give the Central Board of Health, or the Government generally, the necessary power to aid the local authorities, or to do the work which the local authorities decline to do, perhaps it will be a good measure. But the existing law is ample if properly administered. We know that people have been brought to justice for their ill-doings. However, I do not suppose that any member will complain if this legislation is introduced. As to the proposed amendment of the liquor laws, I do not know any more debatable question that can be brought before Parliament. When we are dealing with the question of local option, against which I say nothing, believing it is a good thing, there is always a difficulty in disposing

of the so-called vested interests; and it particularly behoves this House to watch while discussing any proposal of this sort, that we do not work injustice to people who hold rights under the existing law. One word regarding the Public Service Act, which is to be interfered with. I believe it is necessary that the Act should be amended. I do not know, but I believe that when the Bill reaches us we shall do well to send it to a select committee, so that the Public Service Commissioner may be examined, and that we may ascertain exactly what has been done in the working of the Act. But from the little I know of the Act, I cannot say anything good about it. I believe it is a fearful encumbrance on a Minister carrying out the duty of making any retrenchment. The Public Service Commissioner seems to a certain extent to hold a rod over Ministers, who can do very little without his sanction; and so far as I can see, we cannot secure much reform while the Act continues in its present shape. I will give an instance of what I am driving at. I believe the Act came into force about the beginning of 1905. I think about a year afterwards the Commissioner dealt with the clerical division. It must be known to every member, and I think it is pretty well known throughout the country, that if any branch of the public service needs dealing with promptly it is the stipendiary magistracy. I shall not, from my position in this House, refer to any of the stipendiary magistrates whom I have in mind at the present moment; but dealing with them collectively, I do not know any greater scandal in the State than what is going on—incompetent men, many of them totally unfit to hold these positions, some of them in important centres; men who ought long since to have been off the bench; and still they hold office. And it is on men of that class, and to a larger number of others who are not perhaps quite so incompetent, but whose abilities nevertheless do not entitle them to be vested with a greater jurisdiction than they now exercise, that, as we are told in the policy speech, it is intended to confer a £250 jurisdiction. When the Local

Courts Act, passed in 1904, was introduced by the Labour Government, it contained a provision enabling the Governor-in-Council by proclamation to increase the jurisdiction of any of the local courts from the £100 maximum conferred on it by statute to £250. My efforts I think resulted in the deletion of that provision: the House refused to accept it. I then stated, and I say again, that the large majority of the magistrates of this State are not fit to be entrusted with this excessive jurisdiction. I had an opportunity of dealing with this question, and did deal with it so far as I was able to until my efforts were thwarted; and I think I dealt with it on a proper basis. When I was a member of the Rason Government and in charge of the Law Department, the Government asked me for my views on the establishment of district courts; and had the Rason Government remained in power, this question would have been dealt with as I indicated in my report to the Government. That report, I presume, still remains on the files. I recommended that there should be two district court judges appointed to do that which I had been advocating for ten years in Parliament; that there should be a regular and proper circuit court sitting throughout this country, administering justice at people's doors, without the inconvenience and expense of bringing every case to Perth. I indicated the lines on which a District Court Bill should be framed for this State, largely following the Queensland Act; and my recommendations received the unanimous approval of the Rason Government. The members of the present Government formed a majority of the Rason Government. Before Mr. Rason intimated his intention to accept the Agency General, Mr. Gregory, then and now Minister for Mines, went away to Mt. Magnet. As the result of a Cabinet meeting, Mr. Gregory announced at that place a large part of what would have constituted the policy of the Rason Government had it remained in office; and amongst other things he indicated the intention respecting district courts. But while Mr. Gregory was away making that speech, and before he returned

to Perth, Mr. Rason had decided to become Agent General. There was a scramble for office, with the result that I left the Government, and Mr. Keenan, my successor as Attorney General, did not apparently feel disposed to give effect to the proposal I had advocated for many years; a proposal the necessity for which, if I have not a bad recollection, was keenly felt by him and his constituents before a circuit court sat at Kalgoorlie, when every Kalgoorlie case had to be brought to Perth. He was then as ardent an advocate of district courts as I am now and have been for many years. I contend that the proper course is that if district courts are not to be established our Supreme Court Judges should be, I was going to say "compelled," though that may not be a proper word to use, because I do not think they desire to be compelled—if it is the eminent desire of Parliament that these courts should be presided over by professional Judges, I am sure they would cheerfully go upon circuit and do their duty, because we would not be asking them to do more than the Supreme Court Judges throughout the Commonwealth and New Zealand have done for years past. I have condemned, until I am sick of condemning, this system of quarter sessions courts. We find resident magistrates committing men for trial and then presiding at the trial and acting as Crown prosecutors and judges in the quarter sessions courts. I have no hesitation in saying that numbers of men must have been convicted in the past—we know it—on evidence that would never have been admitted had the cases been heard before a professional Judge. And that system is to be perpetuated, because we are going to give the resident magistrates civil jurisdiction to £250. I have never brought my own office affairs on the floor of this House and I am not going to do it now, but if I could do it, I could tell of a tremendous scandal at one of the northern places where one person holds these dual offices, namely resident magistrate and resident medical officer combined. Mr. Pennefather referred to one case and I am speaking of another in which I can get no relief. I shall not mention the magis-

trate nor the parties, but it is a serious thing allowing these men to deal with cases involving £250. We start off by saying that these courts are not to consider cases over £100, but then it is left to the Government by proclamation to say that a court can take cases up to £250. We have had a Government in this State without a legal man in the Cabinet, and these are the men to decide as to the competency of these unprofessional men to decide on these important matters. I think the House will do as we did before in 1904, prevent this being done. There are two ways of dealing with the question, either to follow the lines in the Eastern States and send the Supreme Court Judges on circuit, or to do as the Rason Government decided should be done, appoint two Judges to go to these centres and take the law to every man in the community. The idea of these quarter sessions courts was discarded very many years ago in the Eastern States. The system is a scandal that should not be perpetuated for another day. We are told that there is to be an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. Members may know that under that Act the magistrate tries the cases assisted by two arbitrators. Speaking as one with experience of the working of that Act, I think that in any amendment it would be wise to do away with the two arbitrators, who are nothing but two partisans. Their appointment only adds to the expense of the litigants. In fact to such an extent are they partisans that in some quarters the importance of getting a little bit of extra influence has been so recognised that legal practitioners have been appointing other legal practitioners to sit with the magistrate to use a little more influence when a law point is raised. But people will tell you that the decision is always given the same way. One arbitrator goes one way and the other another way and the magistrate gives his decision every time. I hope the Colonial Secretary will consult with the Attorney General on this subject. I am sure that if the Attorney General's experience on the goldfields were obtained, he would agree with me that the two arbitrators are the fifth

wheel on the coach. The Minister, as a privilege Bill, introduced a measure dealing with marine insurance. It is a good measure. It is dealing with a branch of the law that is exceedingly hard to understand. I do not think I would be very wide of the mark in saying that perhaps no legal practitioner of the State knows too much about the subject, because it is a branch of the law that the ordinary legal practitioner will be very seldom called upon to deal with. In England it is recognised that this phase of the law is so wrapped up with commerce and the decisions are so conflicting that until this branch of the law is put into a Code it is very difficult to know where you are. If the Colonial Secretary will excuse me for a moment just anticipating what he may say in introducing the Bill, let me say that the Bill was introduced into the House of Lords in 1894, 1895, 1896, and 1899. It was four times introduced there, and since the Bill passed into law in England, after being so many years before the Imperial Parliament, there has been a small work published on it, and in the introduction to the third edition of their digest—it is not a treatise—it is stated by the authors, Chalmers and Owen :—

“The law of marine insurance rests almost entirely upon common law. Only a few isolated points are dealt with by statute. The reported cases are very numerous, being over 2,000 in number. On some points there is a plethora of authority. On other points of apparently equal importance the decisions are meagre, and not always satisfactory. Some important questions are still untouched by authority, and the rule depends on recognised commercial usage. Again, many of the older cases turn upon commercial conditions which are now obsolete. The Marine Insurance Bill was first introduced by Lord Herschell in 1894. Its history up to the present time sufficiently appears from the following extract from the memorandum attached to it, viz.—  
It appears that in the British Parliament they have a very good practice ; to

each Bill is attached a memorandum showing the reason for which the Bill is introduced. This memorandum reads as follows :—

"The Bill is founded on the Bill which was introduced in 1894. Its provisions and suggestions received from various sources have been carefully considered by a Committee appointed by the late Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell). The Committee met at first under the presidency of the late Attorney General (Sir R. T. Read, Q.C.), and afterwards under the presidency of Lord Herschell. It consisted of Mr. John Glover and Mr. Milburn, representing the shipowners, Mr. McArthur (Chairman of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce), and Mr. Hogg, representing the average adjusters, and Mr. J. E. Street, Deputy-Chairman of Lloyd's, Mr. Douglas Owen, of the Alliance Marine and General Assurance Company, Mr. William Walton (legal adviser to Lloyd's), representing the underwriters and insurance companies, Mr. C. B. Valence, Chairman of the Liverpool Underwriters' Association, and the draftsman, Mr. Chalmers."

Then there is this footnote :—

"After Lord Herschell's death, Lord Chancellor Halsbury again took up the Bill, and introduced it in the House of Lords in 1899, but did not proceed with it. Farther criticisms on the Bill were obtained from Lord Justice Mathew, the Right Hon. Arthur Cohen, K.C., and other friends, and the Bill was again introduced in 1900. Lord Halsbury then appointed another committee, on which the underwriters, shipowners, and average adjusters were represented, and, presiding himself, went through the Bill with them clause by clause. After this conference the Bill was passed through the Lords, but it was always blocked in the House of Commons until in 1906 it was taken up by Lord Chancellor Loreburn in conjunction with Lord Halsbury."

Then it was ultimately passed. I only mention that because a great deal of our commerce takes place with the old country. All the insurance policies in the transportation of merchandise to Western Australia will be policies that will be construed according to this Marine Insurance Act, and it is highly desirable that the law on that point should be in this State on uniform lines with the law in Great Britain, and it is very important in dealing with that question that the whole of this difficult subject should be comprised in the 86 sections of the Bill before the House. I hope members of this Chamber will swallow the Bill *in globo* and not attempt to make any amendment whatever, because it is absolutely the work of the finest experts in Great Britain on this subject. It is a Bill which it is eminently desirable should be passed into law at the earliest available opportunity. [*The Colonial Secretary*: It is an exact copy of the English Act.] Last session we passed a number of Acts of Parliament. These came into force, but no one could get a copy from the Government Printer. Members of the House could get the Bills as they passed the third reading, and we were satisfied because we knew what the law was. Doing business from day to day and having to work under these Acts I was not placed in the position that a number of business and professional men in the community were in. Take the Bills of Sale Act affecting the mercantile community. That came into law, but no one knew of its existence. Bills of sale were refused registry at the Supreme Court because the required notice had not been given, though by the amending Act that had been altered. The officers at the Supreme Court were not aware of the amendment. So even the Government officers did not get these Acts. Our Statutes are brought into force, some as soon as they pass, others on the first of January of the succeeding year. I think we should bring none of them into force, unless it is to deal with something promptly, which is an exception to the rule, until the first of February at least, so that the Government Printer may have an opportunity

of printing them. There should be a lapse of three or four or five months except in the case of urgent measures. Then Acts may be circulated in the far-off portions of the State. At Norseman and Esperance and those places they are in a worse position than we are in the city, because we get the Acts from the press as they come from the printer, but in the outlying places they do not get them for months. It is a serious thing. Many laws are passed creating new offences and inflicting new penalties, and the people break the law in absolute ignorance of the legislation that is passed. It is time a small matter like that was attended to because of the results contingent on the laws being brought into operation. The people have no opportunity of knowing what the law is. I think everyone will agree that it is an absurd position. I have never been a very strong supporter of the Dividend Duties Act for the reason that persons who have taken the benefit of incorporation pay a shilling in the pound on the profits in the case of foreign companies or on the dividends in the case of local companies, while others who have not availed themselves of incorporation go scot free; but while the Act remained on the statute-book affecting companies, there were companies excluded from its operation. Last session in amending the Dividend Duties Act we took out one of these exemptions and made the Act apply to brewery companies and companies paying excise duty; but I venture to say that, even now, there is something calling out loudly for interference by Parliament. Life insurance companies are exempt, properly I think, and I think it would be still proper if all the insurance companies in this State were mutual offices, but I understand that the Citizens' Life Office is a limited liability company, that private shareholders, none of whom reside in this country, the bulk of them being in New South Wales, comprise the company, and that the whole of the profits in connection with that life insurance company do not go to swell the bonuses and other conditions of the policies, but that these men are feathering their nests to an enormous ex-

tent. I believe that for about 12 months or more the *Sunday Times* has been publishing matter of a valuable character in connection with this company. While it is always desirable to exclude from the operation of that statute these mutual companies, it is a black blot on the provision which provides for exemptions in connection with the dividend duties for a company like this to escape. I will be glad if the Government will deal with that matter, for I cannot see why such a company should be excluded. I can hardly understand how it comes about that people are so stupid as to insure in such a company; but, after all, the world is made up of all sorts of people; and among them are many who are gullible and who are prevailed upon to put their savings in an institution of this kind which we bolster up by allowing it to escape from the duty when its members make enormous profits. The company, as I had already said, should not be allowed to escape the burden which is put upon legitimate commercial enterprises which have availed themselves of the privilege of incorporation and have to pay the dividend duty. I do not know whether it will be very interesting to the House to hear me mention a matter with which I will now deal; but my observations will be addressed more to the Minister with the idea of his conveying them to the Attorney General. I have seldom brought up on the floor of this House matters in which I had been professionally engaged, and I would not introduce the present one but the litigation is closed; the Government were defeated, and I think I am justified in telling you what obstacles were placed in the way of the litigation in connection with the matter. This was in an action for damages brought against the Crown by a Mr. Mayhew, for the flooding of his property at Claremont. The action was brought under the Crown Suits Act, which statute was brought into force with the object of modifying the rule of law generally known under the maxim of "The King can do no wrong." For whatever the King might do at common law there is



no remedy, but it is considered that in the case of a Government which deals with so many commercial enterprises there should be some similar remedy for the subject against the Crown as against another subject when wrong is inflicted in connection with the carrying out of a public work. In this measure it is laid down that the same procedure shall be followed when once the petition of right has been filed that exists in connection with actions between subject and subject. It is a common procedure in actions between subject and subject to get what is known in legal phrase as a "discovery." This means that power is given to one party to call upon the other party to show them certain documents in their possession which deal with the subject matter in dispute. In the ordinary course of events this application for discovery was made by the petitioner in the case I am referring to against the Government, the desire being that he should see certain documentary evidence dealing with the matter at issue. The Government officials opposed this application, although the Crown Suits Act states that in these actions there shall be the same relations between the parties as between subject and subject. However, the Act does not provide who should make the affidavit required in connection with the application, and in consequence of this the position taken up by the Government was upheld and the documents were refused to the petitioner. He therefore was obliged to go to the Court on the first day of the hearing without having seen these documents, and had to trust to their being produced on the morning of trial in accordance with notice which had been given that they should be furnished there. I do not say that we should go as far as the Commonwealth Act which has set out that in every contract or tort—wrong done independently of contract—the Commonwealth shall be liable exactly as a private individual. That may perhaps be going too far. An amendment is certainly required to our Crown Suits Act and it should be provided that the same "discovery" should

be obtainable from the Crown as in any other suit, and that they should not be allowed to refuse to place in the hands of the petitioner those documents which are necessary for the carrying out of the suit. The Crown can obtain "discovery" against a private individual and one private individual can obtain "discovery" against another; why should not a private individual be able to obtain "discovery" against the Crown? I hope that the Government will give the relief in this direction to which the public are entitled. I feel that I have taken up the time of the House unduly and that, although there are other things one might discuss, I do not think it would be fair to entrench on your good nature, Sir, and that of the House, to any greater extent. I feel that there is a considerable amount of work before this Parliament this session and that the issues we have to meet to-day are as grave and serious as at any previous time of our history. With the decreasing revenue coming upon us as the result of Federation, I must honestly confess that I do not like the outlook. I believe our customs revenue will dwindle and dwindle to an extent none of us anticipate at the present time. When the increased duties come into force, as they undoubtedly will as the result of the Tariff Bill which is to be brought before the Federal Parliament this session, the importation of goods from over-sea countries will decrease to an enormous extent and, owing to the fact that the inter-State duties have gone, the articles previously brought from abroad will be sent here from the Eastern States and a great deal of revenue will be lost to Western Australia. The deficiency has to be made up, but I am at a loss to understand how this is to be done. I wish someone could come forward with a proposal to enable us to get away from the Federal Union altogether. I feel ashamed to think that I was one of those who advocated the cause of Federation and who voted for Western Australia joining the Union, for it has been the cause of bringing on this country the greatest disaster that we could possibly have met with. If we could get our

freedom Western Australia would be as prosperous to-day as at any time in its past history. Take my own province as an instance. A few years ago there was a tobacco industry there employing from 50 to 80 hands. This is now shut up. The place where the business was domiciled and machinery which cost £15,000 are now absolutely valueless; factory after factory that existed in Fremantle on a small scale in the past have now been closed down; one industry after another is leaving the State. It is easy to understand why this should be so for, with one system of supervision in the Eastern States, with cheaper labour, with good markets available, it is no wonder that the manufacturers are restricting their attention to one State and, owing to the insignificant shipping freights, are using Western Australia as a dumping ground for their produce. The saving to-day in the cost of manufacture there must be very considerable, for the necessity for branches and double supervision is obviated and the cheapest labour is employed. The outlook is a serious one indeed and it will have to receive, if not now, presently, the very serious attention of men who are engaged in public life in this State. I do not know why the Commonwealth authorities or the Imperial Government should seek to keep us in partnership with the Federation when it is so evident that it will do away with our prosperity and be a barrier against the development of the State. As I have said before, we want millions and millions of pounds in order to open our vast territory. It is all very well for a country like Victoria to stick up for the Union, for in that place industries are numerous, their country is developed and there is, in addition, the fact that Western Australia is provided for them as a dumping ground. I am sure that if I were a Victorian I would be as ardent for Federation as I was at the time when the idea of Federation was first mooted here, and when I did not know the effect that Western Australia entering the Federation would have upon the business and the prosperity of this country. If we could get out of it the future would

be bright. I suppose, however, that we are bound to keep in and we must therefore do the best we possibly can to develop the country. That development and the opening up of this country must necessarily be very slow with the limited means at our disposal, and with the revenues clipped so short in order to benefit the other parts of Australia. These observations are not so optimistic as the opening sentences of the Governor's Speech, and they may be regarded by those who wish to be hoodwinked into the idea that the State of Western Australia is better than it is, as being somewhat pessimistic. However, not withstanding all these obstacles, Western Australia cannot be kept back when one considers its great mineral wealth, not only in the established districts, but also in the Northern part of this country, and it may be that this newly developed source of wealth will result in a large increase to the population on this side of Australia. If once we can obtain population commensurate with that in Eastern Australia and we remain in the Union, the result will be that our representation will be greatly increased in the Federal Legislature and we will be able to see that right is done to Western Australia. That cannot be brought about in a day and, while the present impediments exist, the progress of this country will be necessarily retarded. That imposes on us, the Government and the people, a burden which we should not be called upon to bear; but, notwithstanding that, I think we may safely say that even if we have to support that burden we will find ourselves equal to the occasion.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West): It is not my intention to detain the House for many minutes. After the very lengthy, very able, eloquent and interesting address that we have had from the Hon. Mr. Moss, I think there is but little left for me to say, except this, that I desire to express my entire approval of his opinions with regard to many of the questions he has referred to. I should like in the first instance to congratulate the Government upon the vigorous policy

they have carried out. Yesterday we listened for a considerable time to what might be called a tirade of abuse. I am not here to abuse the Government nor to defend them, for I occupy an independent position, but when I see a body of gentlemen initiating works, carrying them through the Legislature and, within a very few months, putting them in hand and actually accomplishing them, then I say that credit is due for the energy that has been displayed. I am one of those who employ men, and if I have a person in my employ who is giving me the best he can do and has done well, I always think it is my duty to recognise his services and to give him a word of encouragement. This is due to the Government, regardless of their *personnel*. I believe there is no harder-working Ministry in the whole of Australia than the one at present in power here, and I consider that they have done very well in the time they have been in office. The great question that seems to me to be engaging attention at the present time is that of reducing the expenditure. We have evidence, which has been referred to by the Hon. Mr. Moss, that there is considerable room for reduction, at all events in the Railway Department. When I was speaking in this House some months ago I used the words that the railway service was over-manned and that in my opinion there were three men doing the work that two men should do. I also remarked that the men were absolutely tumbling over one another. I am glad to see that, although somewhat late in the day, steps are now being taken to remedy this fault. At the same time I feel it my duty as a considerable customer of the railways, and one who has large dealings with the department, to express my opinion with regard to the late Commissioner. I believe the railways have improved very much under his administration, and he has been placed at a great disadvantage. I know the Commissioner has felt himself almost powerless to reduce the working expenditure. He has had to face unions, and if a man was discharged from the service he had a right to demand an inquiry, and in many cases the man has been reinstated

in deference to instructions. That was at least discouraging to any gentleman in the position of Commissioner of Railways. After the experience we have gained of Mr. George, and the good work I contend he has done, although the Government have seen fit to end his administration and make other arrangements, I believe the reductions would have been brought about had Mr. George continued in office. Personally—I do not know that the feeling is general, perhaps not—but personally I should like to have seen Mr. George reappointed for another term. I know it requires a strong man as Commissioner to deal with the body of men he has had to deal with. Mr. Moss has touched on a subject which I have given a good deal of consideration to for a long time—the responsibility of the Railway Department. It always seems to me an iniquitous thing, and an unjust thing, that the Railway Department should take charge of a customer's goods, and charge, as has been pointed out, their own price for carrying them, and take no responsibility for the safe delivery of the goods. I endorse all the words the hon. member has used in this connection this evening, and I hope they will be the means of some fresh rules being brought about whereby the Railway Department, as common carriers, will be responsible for every article they take charge of. We know a great many things have been missed. I know people who have sent a couple of turkeys to friends, and only one has arrived; one had been lost on the way. This sort of thing has always been going on, yet there seems to be no means of tracing the thief. There is another matter in connection with the railways, although we have heard of no trouble during the past two years in connection with the shortage of trucks. There is a shortage and it is putting a good many people to great inconvenience. Even to-day I have been trying to obtain trucks, but it is difficult to get the class of trucks required; I think it is time that kind of thing was ended. I would like to refer to one or two remarks made by a previous speaker. The member who ably moved the Address-in-Reply referred to the

native question which has been engaging the attention of successive Governments for a good many years, and the hon. member pointed out that these natives were kept in chains, and he suggested they should be employed on the mainland. It would be a very desirable way of employing the labour, but the member did not tell the House how these natives were to be detained. Anyone who has had experience of the native races knows perfectly well that it is impossible to keep them on the mainland, unless chained; it is as impossible to keep them in custody as it would be kangaroos. I have seen a good deal of the natives in my younger days, and I wish I could see where the injustice comes in. They should be treated with kindness and with humanity. At the same time people have gone into the far north of the country and established stations, and they have a right to protection. The hon. member spoke of trivial offences such as spearing cattle; that is not so trivial to those who have to submit to it. If some hon. gentlemen had seen the natives spearing the beasts they would be surprised; they drive the cattle into a gorge and surround them, and spear six or seven in a heap; many get away with spears through them, others lie and rot. It is discouraging. It is not for the sake of food that this is done, and the squatter is entitled to some protection in this respect. The natives know perfectly well they have no right to interfere with the stock. It has been asserted, I have seen it in the public print recently, by a gentleman whose wide experience in the State ought to have taught him that such a statement was not correct, that whites had destroyed the game and the living of the natives. It is a well known fact that marsupials were never so destructive and numerous as they have been during the last few years. Members must be aware that the Parliament of this State has voted a sum of £1,000 per annum, and a few squatters have been supplementing the amount, to try and keep the kangaroo under to prevent them eating out the estate. No less than a quarter of a million kangaroos are destroyed under the bonus system, and within an apparently small area. It is not want of

food that is driving the natives to the desperate acts which they have committed. Again we often hear the phrase, "it is their country, and we have taken away the natives' country." I am not going to believe that God Almighty ever intended the land of Australia to be utilised by a few wandering savages, who are not hewers of wood or workers of stone; they never work the land or do anything to increase production. While every consideration should be given to them, the white man should be protected when he goes out to develop the State. I remember some years ago a man in a high official position in the State was a great advocate of the native cause, but it happened that the startling news came to him one day that his son had been brutally murdered by natives, and this changed his views very considerably after that. We know that the desire of the native is to kill; they will murder each other, and a white man when they get the opportunity. I was one of the first to go into the Kimberley District, and one of the party was brutally murdered before we had been many months in the district, for no cause whatever; therefore I contend the natives should be ruled with a strong hand, and should not be permitted to murder without provocation every white man they come across, to spear the stock, and commit the depredations which they do without any reason whatsoever. I am at a loss to know how the Government are going to proceed to keep these natives in custody and utilise their labour on the mainland, unless under the conditions that they are now working. I am quite certain that it is absolutely impossible to give them their liberty unfettered and expect them to remain in custody. There is another remark that fell from a member yesterday, to which I take the strongest exception. Mr. Thomson was referring to the immigration question, and he spoke of the treatment meted out to working men in the country. How Mr. Thomson has gained his experience I do not know, and I do not know how Mr. Thomson treats his men, but I cannot allow such an utterly incorrect statement to go outside this House. The member

said that men were badly treated, badly fed, and that their food was half cooked; that is not my experience. Speaking for myself, my men get exactly the same food as my family do, served up to them in a proper manner, and properly cooked. The same applies to every settler I am acquainted with; wherever I have travelled in this State the men are well fed. I do not believe there is a place on the face of the earth where the working men are better paid, better fed, and better treated than in Western Australia, and I regret to hear such remarks go abroad from a member of the House. I repudiate such a statement because it is utterly incorrect. One work the Government has carried out which will be of very great advantage to the squatters in the North and the people on the goldfields as well, is the discovery of the overland route between the goldfields and East Kimberley. This is a great work, it will be very far-reaching in its effect, and give great relief to the squatters who have been considerably handicapped with the scourge of tick in the district. The squatters will now be able to travel their stock to the markets on the goldfields, and dispose of them on equal terms with other people. I regret that here again the native question comes in. One of the party who discovered this route, after all the privations and hardships he had gone through, was cruelly murdered in the prosecution of his work. I notice with a good deal of pleasure the action the Government are taking with regard to the dairying industry. That subject has also been dealt with by a previous speaker who considered it was a matter for private enterprise, but members know well that one of the greatest industries of Victoria at the present time is the butter industry, and that industry was built up by the Government bonuses. There is no doubt this is a step in the right direction, and the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department is to be congratulated on the step he has taken.

*The Colonial Secretary:* We cannot give bonuses here.

Hon E. McLARTY: I know that but we can assist the industry in other

ways. As to the importation of dairy cattle, there is no doubt need for this class of cattle in this country for butter purposes. I hope the cattle which are imported by the Government will be distributed amongst those who go in for butter making, and not be monopolised by the dairymen round town. We have plenty of cows to supply milk but we want cows to supply butter. I myself have a herd of shorthorn cattle that I have been breeding for some years, and some of them are very good milkers, but the production of butter is very poor indeed. I know the necessity of introducing a better class of cattle for butter making purposes. One thing which is militating at the present time against the butter industry in this State is the way people are hampered by health inspectors. I am not one of those who is opposed to reasonable objections being taken if a place is not in proper order. Sometimes it is good to bring under the notice of a person things that may escape notice. But I do object to health inspectors from the city, knowing nothing of country conditions, going over premises without letting the proprietor know they are on the place, and afterwards sending him a list of orders to build up this or pull down something else, putting him to considerable trouble and expense for things that are unnecessary and might be done without. Personally I have cheerfully complied with all requests from the health inspector; and I must say that whenever the late Chief Inspector, Mr. Lockwood, visited my district he always came on the place like a gentleman; he would call attention to anything requiring to be remedied, and there was no objection raised to carrying out his orders. I cannot say that this is the case with other inspectors. I know of people in other districts, large producers of butter, who rather than comply with the unreasonable requirements of the health inspectors have given up the business. That I think is a matter that needs modifying. I regret that in the country districts things are not so prosperous or promising as one might wish; but I

am satisfied that this depression is only temporary and will soon right itself, and that the State will again be on top of the wave of prosperity. Paragraph 8 of the Speech, dealing with the mining industry, tells us that the State has produced about 76 million pounds worth of gold and other minerals. That is an enormous production, and when we realise the small area that is being worked as mines compared with the enormous known auriferous area of country, it is difficult to foretell what the future of the mining industry of the State will be. I notice the Government have realised the necessity for the establishment of freezing works in the northern portion of the State, and I am pleased that this is to be done. Though I have no interest in East Kimberley, and the matter does not affect me personally, I am a strong advocate for the establishment of freezing works as proposed. Something like £80,000 per annum is sent out of the State for preserved meats which might be well produced here. Were freezing works established, thousands of head of cattle which now are left to wander and go to waste on the runs might be brought into consumption. I am aware that exception has been taken to the decision of the Government to assist this industry; but I understand the Government are not going to lose a shilling; they are simply offering to find a portion of the money, for which they expect to be paid interest and to have ample security for repayment. Surely that is not a matter to which a reasonable man can take objection. Queensland has derived considerable benefit from the frozen meat trade, and we may look for a similar result here. The cattle stations are a long way from the market, and it is a costly matter to bring live-stock to the market, there being considerable loss in weight and condition: and hundreds of stock, not fit to ship at all, are left to waste on the runs. These could be utilised, were freezing works established. I am pleased to see that the Government have seen the necessity for encouraging squatters by the establishment of such

works, though I know some people will say the squatters should do it themselves. To start this industry means something like £70,000, and if the half-dozen squatters there are prepared to find half the money, the Government might well assist by providing the balance. Mr. Maley, in speaking yesterday, appeared to be extremely pleased at a letter he received from his constituents justifying his action on the land tax question. No doubt it is satisfactory to any member to know that his actions meet with the approval of his constituents. I regret to see that the land tax question has again cropped up. My feeling towards that measure is very similar to Mr. Maley's; and I cannot help thinking that had that member not been too precipitate last year and had allowed the measure to be dealt with on the lines indicated by Mr. Moss, the Land Tax Bill would have been buried in oblivion. Now, however, we are to have this vexatious Bill brought up again, and it will I suppose occupy the attention of the House for weeks to come. I shall need to be under the conviction that it cannot be done without, that the Government must have the money, before I can support the Bill. I know the state of the country, and I consider it would be iniquitous to farther tax the people, who already find it more and more difficult to pay their road-board rates and other charges, with produce cheaper and wages high. I am sorry that the Government have again considered it necessary to bring this matter before the House; but I have no doubt members will deal with it as they think fair and right. I am pleased at the reference to the intention to construct the Port Hedland Railway, which I believe will be one of the greatest things that has happened to this State. If that part of the country is as rich in minerals as it is reputed to be, the construction of the line will attract a large population to the North, and be of advantage to every part of the State, for supplies must go by steamer. With Mr. Moss, I think this work should be pushed on with the least possible delay. I de-

sire to congratulate the Government on the policy they have introduced, and I hope they will show as great energy in the future as they have during the past twelve months.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central): There is little in the Speech delivered by His Excellency to which I can offer serious objection; and on the other hand there are some measures which it is intended to bring forward that will receive my cordial support. In the chorus of congratulation which characterises the Speech there is only one discord, and that is in paragraph 17, in which we are reminded of the heavy deficit. We were informed to a similar effect last year, and the Government introduced a Bill for the taxation of land on the unimproved value. At the close of Parliament, in His Excellency's Speech it was stated that "As my advisers are of opinion that farther consideration should be given to the question of taxation at as early a date as possible, it has been deemed advisable to hold another session in the early part of next year, and I therefore now prorogue this Parliament to Friday, the 1st day of February, 1907." I should like to know why that special session was not held. It is stated in the Speech to be owing to the fact that many members of Parliament would be absent; but the same argument will apply now, for seven members of this House are at present absent from the State. In my opinion, the Government should have fulfilled that pledge, in justice to their supporters and in view of the inevitable deficit. It should be recollected that the Legislative Council opposed the Bill simply on the ground of the exemptions, and it was rejected on that ground. I am certain that if a session had been held in the following February and the Government decided to remove the exemptions, the Bill would have become law. We are told the Government are doing all they can to secure the permanent settlement of the land; but I would like the Government, while trying to settle the people on the land, to endeavour to look after them once they are so settled. There is a large

number of producing farmers in Western Australia, but very little facilities are afforded to export their produce. In my district no attempt has been made to erect a grain shed. A large quantity of wheat for export came into Geraldton during the season, and the people who desired to export were obliged to stack the wheat in the open, so that a fair quantity of it became damaged before being sent to Fremantle by rail. Fortunately this was not exported, otherwise the wheat from our district would have got a bad reputation indeed in London. Not only should the Government assist the producers in the direction of grain-sheds, but they should go so far as to charter a vessel if necessary to enable wheat to be exported.

*The Colonial Secretary*: There was no need; there were plenty of ships.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Owing to the jetty at Geraldton not having been extended into deep water, the people were not able to export from that port, but had to send their wheat to Fremantle to be again shipped, the producers having thus to pay increased charges. If the Government were to charter a vessel at a convenient time, and the vessel were to come to Geraldton and take a full load for London, the wheat could be taken there at a minimum cost. There is another direction in which the Government might assist the producers in our district, and that is by subsidising the erection of a flour mill. There are at present two mills in the Geraldton district, but they are not in convenient position to offer facilities for the majority of the producers. Geraldton is a suitable site for the erection of a flour mill, and with a fair Government subsidy, say £ for £, I am certain that a company could be formed by enterprising individuals to erect a mill in that locality. This may appear like socialism; but we aid the prospectors, we supply them with camels, we erect public batteries, and we also give a bonus for deep sinking. And if it is a good thing to assist the mining industry by erecting batteries to crush gold-bearing stone, surely it cannot be bad or vicious in principle to assist the farmer to erect

mills for grinding his wheat. The Speech deals with the financial relations of the State to the Commonwealth. The Premier stated recently at Bunbury that he was prepared to support the transference of the State debts to the Commonwealth, provided that the State's right to borrow was not interfered with. I cannot perceive that the Commonwealth Government or any sane Government would take over the debts of this or any other State under such conditions. If they take over our debts, we may rest assured that they will require some control of our right to borrow. In other words, when we require to raise a loan we shall have to go on our knees to the Federal Government, who will have a right to say what we shall borrow, when we shall borrow, or whether we shall borrow at all. That, at all events, is my view of the question, and I think it is very ill advised to take any step at all to transfer the State debts to the Commonwealth under any pretext, or for any consideration whatever that we are likely to receive. With regard to the reduction to one-half per cent. of our contribution to the sinking fund, if that applied to future loans I should offer no objection; but I am in thorough agreement with all Mr. Moss has said in that connection as regards loans that have already been raised. It is to be feared, also, that if we make the plan apply to future loans the effect may possibly be very bad when we go to the London market. The question requires grave consideration, and I think it was very ill-advised for the Premier to make the announcement in the course of a policy speech. There is also a reference to the extension of the Goldfields Water Supply to York and Beverley; and I trust the Government will remember that there is such a place as Geraldton. At Geraldton for many years past, though some members may be surprised to hear it, some of the inhabitants living in the suburbs, within three-quarters of a mile of the town, have been paying during the summer £2 a thousand gallons for water. There has been great agitation on the goldfields over paying 6s. a

thousand, but in Geraldton a fair proportion of the people throughout the summer months of the year pay as much as £2 for water, and not always good water at that. The charge is 2s. for a 50-gallon barrel. A source of excellent water has recently been discovered within three-quarters of a mile of the town, and all we need is a little Government assistance to test the supply. Trenches have been dug 80 yards by 4 feet by 13 feet deep, and the supply from these trenches last month, before the winter started, was 90,000 gallons a day easily—over three times the quantity needed to supply Geraldton. We need sufficient money to make a more thorough test during the summer months—about £500; and if the test proves a failure, we wish the Government to bear the loss. If the test proves a success, the municipality is quite willing to repay the £500. In Albany I believe a large sum of Government money is to be spent in providing a water supply, though fresh water runs from every hill around the town; or that was my experience when I visited that happy seaport. There must be about a 40-inch rainfall for many miles around Albany. Of the proposed tax on unimproved land values, and the liberalisation of the Legislative Council franchise, I will not now speak. I hold exactly the views that I held and expressed last session; hence it would be a waste of time to reiterate what I have stated on previous occasions. There is another matter of great importance, a matter which when mentioned before most audiences tends to make them laugh; but it is a problem which I trust the Minister for Agriculture will tackle without delay. In this State, almost from one end to the other, there is every year an enormous sacrifice of sheep through the ravages of wild dogs. Thousands of sheep are killed, and perhaps hundreds of small calves. When I was attached to the Lands Department, so convinced was I of the necessity for some action to destroy this pest, that I made a rough draft of a Bill taken from the New South Wales Noxious Vermin Destruction Act. I made some amendments and a large number of excisions,



prepared what I thought would be the framework of a good Bill, and submitted it to the Parliamentary Draftsman in order that he might lick it into legal shape. I believe he took the matter in hand, but shortly afterwards I vacated my position. The principle of the Bill was to provide for the establishment of boards in any district which petitioned the Minister for their formation, and it gave those boards the administration of the Act, and the right to impose taxation on the owners of sheep and cattle. At the present time there is absolutely no definite administration of the £5,000 a year voted for the destruction of dingoes. The vote appears in the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, but the department has no control of the expenditure. On the certificate of a justice of the peace a man can call at the Treasury and collect his 10s. or 5s. as the case may be. With the establishment of such boards in the North-West, the Murchison, or wherever the dingo is a great pest, there would be local supervision of the expenditure, and with the taxation imposed in respect of stock the boards would be able to increase the rewards and so increase the number of hunters, thus tending to reduce the pest. The present Premier, while Minister for Agriculture, was waited on by several deputations, and promised to take some action to bring in the needed legislation; but so far nothing has been done. Yesterday morning I received from the North-West, not from my own constituency, though I dare say the communication was sent to me because my name has been mentioned in connection with this measure, the following letter from the secretary of the Tableland Roads Board, in the Roebourne District:—

“In July last year I wrote to you under direction regarding the ravages committed by wild dogs in this district, and requesting that you would use your influence with the Government to introduce legislation with a view to the eventual extermination of this pest. We have been blest with plentiful rains and an exceptionally good season from

the pastoralist's point of view. The lambing, it is anticipated, will be the best for some considerable time past; but these favourable results will be very seriously discounted by the losses which, I may say without the slightest exaggeration, are hourly accruing from the cause under reference. As I pointed out in a previous letter, the principal breeding grounds for these animals are the unoccupied Crown lands in the ranges; and it is considered only reasonable that the Government should assume a portion of our heavy burden by introducing such legal enactments as may be deemed advisable, and also by contributing to the cost of their administration. This, in brief, is the opinion of a fairly representative body of men interested in sheep farming, and at a roads board meeting held at Mount Lawrence on the 20th ultimo, the matter occupied much of the members' thoughtful deliberations, and I was instructed to again solicit your good offices in obtaining from the present Government some recognition of the seriousness of the position and the urgent necessity for speedy relief. It is suggested that this can be best accomplished by getting a Bill passed through the House placing a tax of 10s. per thousand on sheep and 10s. per hundred on all large stock, the Government subsidising to the extent of pound for pound. The method of destruction would no doubt be provided for in the proposed measure. At the same time, my board are distinctly of opinion that it would be most desirable as well as economical if the authorities in each district carried out the provisions of the Act, as from their local knowledge, and for many other obvious reasons, they could dispose to the greatest advantage of any sum allocated.”

Those are the lines which I intended to pursue if my measure had been drafted in accordance with my ideas. Not only in the Nor'-West but throughout the whole of the Victoria District, I may

say through the whole of the Central Province, of which I can speak with some authority, from Gingin to the farthest point of the Murchison, there are as I have said thousands of lambs and sheep destroyed every year by those pests; and this is a matter in which the Minister for Agriculture should take a keen and lively interest. In reference to the immigration policy I think the House should have from the Colonial Secretary the fullest information as to the class of immigrants landing on these shores. Recently in the newspapers we read of two young men sent out here to settle on the land. I believe they were supposed to have about £500 apiece. They were arrested in Perth as idle and disorderly persons. I have never seen any denial from the Government of the statement that those men came out with Government assistance and in pursuance of the Government immigration policy. They had been repeatedly warned by the police to get to work, but still remained in Perth, and eventually the police were obliged to arrest them. Subsequently a Mr. Lane landed in Perth with some immigrants, between thirty and forty, as Mr. Thomson stated; and it was stated also that those men had in the aggregate something like £30,000. Mr. Lane, I understand, is negotiating with the Government to secure between 200,000 and 300,000 acres of good agricultural land for the exclusive use of these thirty or forty persons. I trust that the Government will not show to any person introduced to our shores any favours that they would not extend to the ordinary settler who has been here for years assisting to build up the State. Why should he be disregarded in favour of the imported man, who perhaps lacks a sufficient knowledge of agriculture to succeed in Western Australia until after long experience of the soil and the climate? I must congratulate the Government on their proposal to introduce without delay a Bill for the construction of a railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range. This work has been promised and re-promised by various Governments; but I must admit that no Government have shown

such a genuine interest in it and genuine desire to undertake the work as have been shown by the present Ministry. Black Range has made a material advance during the last few years. Much capital has been invested in the field, and not invested without the most scrupulous inquiry. It is the opinion of some of our best mining men that the field has a long existence in prospect. A large quantity of machinery has been placed on the ground, the population is increasing, and there are now between Mount Magnet and Black Range something like eighty teams constantly employed in carting goods to that centre. I am informed that many of the mine-owners are only waiting for the construction of the railway to erect machinery on an extensive scale. I mentioned the sincerity of the Government, and I think this was strongly evidenced by the fact that the Premier travelled through the country and made a careful investigation before he decided to place before Parliament the Bill to commit the country to this expenditure. I would like to draw attention to the necessity for improving the Northampton Railway. I understand that last year the Commissioner of Railways asked the Government to provide £20,000 out of loan funds to make the necessary improvements and repairs to that railway; but the Government struck out the item. [*The Colonial Secretary*: Not at all. It was passed.] I was assured by the Minister for Railways that he had struck it out, so I did not make farther investigation; but if it was passed, why was it not expended? When the Premier visited Geraldton he proceeded next day to Northampton, and the train which took him there ran off the rails on the return journey. It left Geraldton next day with a train load of passengers, and 12 miles out ran off the rails again and smashed itself rather badly against the side of the cutting. A fortnight after, nine miles out, while running over a culvert it left the rails again, but fortunately remained on the permanent way. I was on the train at the time. A couple of hundred yards

farther it ran off at the next curve, and then they returned to Geraldton. If an accident occurred after these repeated warnings, it seems to me, without claiming to have any legal knowledge whatever, that the person injured in a railway accident could claim very exemplary damages from the Government. There are other matters I desire to refer to, but I think I shall wait until the measures are submitted to the Council. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

Hon. W. PATRICK (Central): I do not intend to say much, because the different items in the Governor's Speech have been so ably dealt with by previous speakers that there is little room for farther comment until we have the particulars of the various measures to be introduced; but I should like to make one or two remarks, because my opinion somewhat varies from that of previous speakers, in reference to some very important matters in the Speech. The first item to which I desire to draw attention is a portion of Paragraph 2, which says that "every effort is being put forward to secure permanent settlement on the soil." Of course this really means immigration, and there have been remarks made by two or three of the members who have already spoken from which I differ. There appears to be a kind of idea among members, at least those who have referred to the subject, and it is very prevalent throughout Australia, unfortunately, that the continent is going to be flooded with undesirable immigrants. I consider that theory is altogether unfounded, and has no justification whatever, because the whole difficulty of any country that wants population is to beg for population, and not be afraid of population coming. Canada, lying in the midst of the dense populations of the globe, by extensive advertising and by push—possibly sometimes the descriptions of the country may have been unscrupulous—has gained population. I have been to Canada, it is a splendid country, but it is no better than Aus-

tralia. They are going there by tens of thousands, and now the Canadians are going to spend another £7,000,000 on a new railway. Here if there are two or three people coming into the State we are afraid it is going to swamp the labour market and cause trouble, and increase our population to too great an extent. The thing is perfectly preposterous. We should be in a position to receive people by thousands. If the country is going to be what we believe it will be we should be in a position to receive people by tens of thousands, and we would have no trouble whatever. As pointed out by Mr. Moss, with a million people in Western Australia we could hold our own with the Eastern States. I commend the Government for every effort made to introduce immigrants into the State. There were some remarks made by Mr. Thomson with reference to farm labourers in Scotland. He said that the farm servant there was quite as well off, if not better off than the farm labourer in Western Australia. I believe he was perfectly correct, but he is entirely wrong in drawing the deduction and in coming to the conclusion that no farm labourer would leave the old country to come here; because a farm labourer there is a farm labourer all his days, but when he comes here he expects to be the owner of a farm; and if he is a perfect immigrant he is prepared to undergo hardships for years until he has established a home for himself. Personally I would rather have a young man, ready and not afraid to work, than a man with £1,000 any day. I think there is one great defect in the Agricultural Bank Act, and I think the measure should be amended forthwith. At present with the amendments passed last session, advances are made on future improvements. I would much rather see, in addition to that, an amendment in the direction of the South Australian State Bank Act, by which advances are made to settlers who have already made improvements. In fact, it is acting as a kind of mortgage bankers. A man can make £1,000 worth of improvement here but cannot

get sixpence from the bank, because he is told that the advances must be on future improvements and not on existing improvements. I think that is a great defect, and it should be remedied. I quite agree with all said by Mr. Moss with reference to our connection with the Federal Government, but I am not at all sure; I cannot see any way that we can get out of our connection with it. However, I consider that we should neither give up our debts nor our railways, nor a single scrap of the rights that we are holding to the Federal Government. We should hold all our sovereign rights. Let them administer the powers they possess, but I would not give them a single scrap, because we would simply end in being a province. We get no sympathy whatever from the Eastern States. I took the trouble last session to read the debates on the Bills and measures that concerned Western Australia, and in scarcely a single instance did Western Australia get a word of sympathy, and not too much sympathy from some of our own representatives. At the same time we have the Prime Minister, Mr. Deakin, entering into an agreement with South Australia, whereby the Commonwealth will take over the liability of £3,000,000 sterling, that is, taking over the Northern Territory and the liability that has been going on accumulating against South Australia at the rate of £200,000 a year for the last 15 or 20 years. Mr. Deakin has entered into an agreement to take over all the debt, and to continue the railway from Adelaide to Port Darwin. That of course will kill our own transcontinental railway. So we need not trouble ourselves about sentiment so far as the Eastern States are concerned. Let us be loyal to the Federation so long as we continue in it, but let us hold to the rights that we already possess, and let the people of the Eastern States see that we are determined to get all the revenue collected in this State paid into our coffers and spent in this country. Finance is the most important question, not only for the State but for the private individual. I do not think the outlook is quite so bad as it looks at the first glance. The Government during

the last few months have made a large reduction in the expenditure, although it has not been quite equal to the reduction in the income; but the very fact that they have been able in such a very short time to make such a reduction, augurs well for their ability to make similar reductions in the future. There is one matter to which I have referred before, and to which other members have spoken, and that is, a means whereby a saving of between £70,000 and £80,000 a year can be effected without a scrap of injustice being caused to anybody. The Hon. Mr. Drew made reference to the water supply for the town of Geraldton, and he appealed to the Government to assist in connection with that supply. There is a certain concern called the Goldfields Water Supply, by which this State lost in the financial year ended June, 1906, between £70,000 and £80,000. The figures for the financial year ended June 30th, 1907, are not yet available. I cannot understand how this is allowed to continue, and I never have been able to understand it. The Hon. Mr. Moss pointed out that the Fremantle Harbour Trust, which used to be a losing concern, is now paying interest and sinking fund on the cost of the works there; and, in addition, is supplying sufficient revenue to pay interest on the construction of a dock. We have a small water supply at Cue and Day Dawn. The Government lent the money for this work and the people pay interest and a 3 per cent. sinking fund. The cost of the water to the people is 10s. per thousand gallons. The wealthiest portion of the State—Kalgoorlie and Boulder—where the people are well able to pay for any water they consume, gets its supply for domestic purposes, or did so for the financial year 1906—and if there has been any alteration it has been in the nature of a reduction—at a price of 6s. 8d. per thousand gallons up to the amount of the rates, and 4s. per thousand gallons afterwards. Men who grow tomatoes, cabbages, etc., get the water at 3s., notwithstanding that it costs 7s. 10½d. I cannot understand why a place such as the Murchison, that produces about one-

fifth of the gold obtained in the East Coolgardie district, and which only requires £20,000 to construct a scheme, should have to pay the full amount, while the wealthy community on the Eastern goldfields should live at the expense of the general taxpayers of the State. The scheme should be managed on business lines in some such way as the Fremantle Harbour Trust. So long as the present state of affairs exists in connection with this scheme it will provide a blot on the financial policy of the men who govern this State. I will only briefly refer to the fact that an enormous amount of water goes to waste every year and will simply point out that last year 20,000,000,000 gallons of water went over the weir at Mundaring, and that this quantity would supply two or three cities of the size of Sydney or Melbourne. If such a vast quantity of water had been utilised, then there never would have been any such loss as occurs every year in connection with the financial transactions of the scheme. The people of the State really know nothing about the financial position of that scheme, and there appears to be a conspiracy of silence on the part of the newspapers. All that is usually heard with regard to this scheme is, that during a certain month, so much water was supplied to the people, that the cost of management amounted to a certain figure, and that there was a surplus returned to the Treasury. The public are under the impression that this surplus represents a profit on the workings, and do not imagine for one moment that, when the scheme put £1 into the Treasury they take £2 out. If the public appreciated this fact they would understand the position much more clearly. I am glad to say that on the whole I have much pleasure in supporting the Government. I certainly think that we might do a great deal worse if we changed the Government at the present moment. It was a splendid thing for the State that a man of such ability and great experience in mining as the Minister for Mines should have taken the trouble during the recess to undergo the arduous trip necessitated by his inspec-

tion of the North-West territory of this State. The result of this visit is, of course, that he has become convinced—and a great many of us are also convinced without having visited the locality—that the State is perfectly justified in building a railway there with the object of developing the vast mineral resources of that part of the country. I am also glad that the Government are going on with the Mt. Magnet-Black Range railway. That line requires no discussion, for the mines there are partially developed, and there is a large population at Black Range. From the moment that railway is constructed it will begin to pay, and the sooner the Bill is introduced to Parliament the better it will be for the State. With regard to the extension of the Geraldton Jetty, to which reference has been made by the Hon. Mr. Drew, I wish to inform the House that, during the last season, the farmers in that district lost 6d. per bushel owing to the fact that they could not export from Geraldton and had to pay the expense of transshipping to Fremantle. We voted a sum of £60,000 last year, as far as I remember, to improve the harbour at Bunbury. We do not want £60,000 for Geraldton harbour; but we want either that the harbour should be deepened at the end of the jetty, or that the jetty should be extended so that ordinary-sized ships capable of taking a cargo of wheat should go alongside and thus do away with the necessity of farmers wasting their money in sending their products to Fremantle. I have not lost faith in Western Australia, and I think the Government are perfectly justified, so long as they keep a proper grip on the reins, in having faith in this country. I am not going to be like the Hon. Mr. Maley who spoke yesterday. His speech was about as bad as getting a shower bath, and he put me in mind of the Prophet Jeremiah who unfurled a roll full of lamentations, warnings, and sorrow. I do not think there is any necessity for that if we all do our duty, and if the Government have the courage to carry on that economical policy which has been so evident during recess, and continue to have faith in the State. I

have no doubt that they will do this, that they will go on with their railway policy; and that they will do all they can to advance the interests of Western Australia. Should they do these things there is no doubt that they will have their reward by remaining for a considerable time in their present position.

On motion by the *Hon. V. Hamersley*, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.25 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 10th July, 1907.

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

Prayers.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the *Premier*: Papers laid before the Colonial Conference, 1907.

By the *Treasurer*: Education Department, Report for 1906.

### QUESTION — RAILWAY FARES, COTTESLOE BEACH AND FREMANTLE.

Mr. **BOLTON** asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware of the numerous complaints from the travelling public as to the high railway fares between Cottesloe Beach and Fremantle, introduced by

the Department since the opening of the new railway station at Fremantle? 2, Does he approve of the increase of about 40 per cent. on previously existing fares to East Fremantle station for an added distance of a few hundred yards? 3, If not, will he cause inquiries to be made with a view to an early remedy?

The **MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** replied: The rates for season tickets are now under revision, and the new scale will be brought into force on the 1st August next. With the new scale, the present anomalies consequent upon the opening of the new station at Fremantle will disappear.

### QUESTION — RAILWAY THROUGH BILLS, FREMANTLE TO MURCHISON.

Mr. **TROY** asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the through bill of lading to the Murchison, which last session was under consideration, yet been arranged? 2, If not, why not?

The **MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** replied: It has not yet been arranged to grant a through bill of lading from Fremantle to the Murchison.

### DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. **P. STONE** (Greenough): Following the usual custom I shall say a few words on this motion to indicate what I think of some subjects before the public and Parliament. First I may mention the large sum expended by the Government on the maintenance of our charities. Very properly the aged poor are looked after by the State, but I complain of the heavy expense involved in administering the vote. In many cases the poor old people might be given, instead of orders on stores for meagre rations, a little cash to be spent by themselves. [*Member*: Some are given cash.] That may be, but I think they are few. The usual practice is to give each of them orders on two or three stores; on one store for sugar, on another for flour, another for bread, according to the contracts made; and many of the recipients are hardly