

proposals, upon which I will venture my opinions when they come before the House.

On motion by Hon. C. A. Piesse debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th August, 1913.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: 1, By-laws of Roebourne water supply. 2, By-laws of Yilgarn road board.

By the Premier: Amendments (of various dates) to Public Service regulations.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce at this stage that I have nominated the members for Kimberley, Albany, and Coolgardie as temporary Chairmen for the session.

QUESTION — STATE'S BANKING BUSINESS AND THE COMMONWEALTH BANK.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Colonial Treasurer: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to transfer the State's

banking business or a portion thereof from the associated banks to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia? 2, If not, why not?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied: 1, Not at present. 2, It is not convenient to do so.

QUESTION—AVONDALE ESTATE, APPLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Mr. BROUN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many applications were received by the Department for blocks of land on the Avondale Estate since October, 1911? 2, How many of these applications have been approved, and the area of same?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No applications were received, as all the unselected portion of the estate has been reserved. The reservation, however, is now being removed, and the blocks—with the exception of the homestead and blocks adjoining—will be available for selection on the 6th inst. 2, Answered by reply to No. 1.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Heitmann and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the 31st July.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): In common with other members sitting on this side of the House I listened with very great interest to the speech delivered the other night by the Premier, hoping that we and the country would receive in reply to the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition some explanation and clearer understanding in regard to several matters which should come up for consideration, and upon which the Government have been criticised through the Press of the country during the last few months. I refer, of course, to those matters, more particularly in connection with the State trading enterprises, affecting the finances

of the country, and I must say that I am somewhat surprised that the Premier left the situation just as hazy as it was before. Had the Premier confined himself more particularly to an explanation of those enterprises which are affecting the finances and also given this House a clear explanation in regard to the sleeper contract that has been entered into, he would have done a greater duty to the country.

The Premier: We have a notice of motion on the paper to deal with that.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I wish to be fair in my criticism, and I do not wish in the slightest degree to impute any wrong motives to the Government; neither do I in any degree desire to attack the honesty and integrity of Ministers. At the same time, of course, it is necessary for the Opposition to criticise the actions of Ministers, and the country expects that that criticism will be answered. I was also sorry to find that the Minister for Lands, who spoke shortly after the Premier, did not, to my mind, answer satisfactorily the criticism that had been levelled at the Government. As a matter of fact, I am afraid he got away on to the personal element, because we find him abusing the leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Northam, and the hon. member for Kimberley; and the Minister entirely overlooked the necessity of putting up any defence for the remarkable falling off of land settlement. I think that this is a time when we want some reassurance from the Government upon an important matter like this. This is an important department controlled by the Minister for Lands, and I think we might at least have expected in his reply that he would put up some defence.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Do you not know the reason?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I hope to give the Honorary Minister my reasons later on for the falling off, and I hope the Honorary Minister will listen to me because perhaps I may be able to assist the Government. I have no desire whilst sitting in Opposition to see land settlement fall back to such an extent that this country is going to suffer. We are here to-day to do the best we can for this country, and to help forward our primary industries, and

we cannot do it in any better way than by seeing that our lands are settled and developed. Reference has also been made on the other side of the House to what has been referred to as a want of patriotism on the part of members sitting in Opposition, and I would like here to say that, so far as I know the members sitting in Opposition, they have never on any occasion been lacking in respect of loyalty. They are, I think, mostly men who have had long experience in this country. Many of them have filled public positions of trust and have gained a great deal of experience in that way, and I think that their patriotism should not be questioned. In fact, I consider the boot is on the other foot, and I might remind the Government, while the same applies to members sitting behind the Government, that a great lack of patriotism was shown by the Government and their supporters during the recent referendum campaign. I cannot understand, Mr. Speaker, why we should find Ministers of the Crown and members of Parliament sitting on the same side of the House travelling through this country endeavouring to induce the people to support those referendum proposals which, we know, would have a very detrimental effect upon the Parliament of this country.

The Premier: We do not know anything of the kind.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I say we do, with all due respect to the Premier. I think that before members of the Cabinet should have taken the responsibility of advising the people of this country to support those proposals they should at least have had an inquiry made by this House to see what effect those proposals, if carried, were going to have on the Parliament of the country.

The Premier: Did your Government do that when they issued circulars asking the people to vote against the referenda proposals?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I think it was a very reasonable view to take; they asked that the people should vote against those proposals because the people did not thoroughly understand them. There is no getting away from the fact that the Government and their supporters showed

a lack of patriotism in trying to kill the Parliament of the country, because we know that Parliament would be reduced to the level of a municipal council or a roads board. We would give away all our powers; we would become isolated, and the people of the country would have to go to the seat of Government, either Melbourne or Canberra, for anything they required. We know there would be matters of domestic concern, matters which we could deal with better than could the Federal Parliament, and so I say the Government and other supporters of the Referenda were running a grave risk of killing the State Parliament.

The Premier: You do not understand the question, that is very evident.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I think I understand this much about it, that before I would hand over the country's heritage I would give the proposition the fullest consideration, and would see that the people of the country fully understood what they were doing. I will ask members opposite how it was that only a few years ago they were opposed to handing over these powers.

Mr. Bolton: I never was.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Quite a number of them were. I think the members of the Government were.

The Premier: That is wrong.

Mr. Green: Name those who were.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It would take too long to name them all. The Minister for Works was one, the Attorney General, I think, was another, and, if I am not mistaken, the Minister for Railways also.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, no.

The Premier: What about me?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: At any rate we know that members sitting on the opposite side were opposed to these powers being handed over. It is an astounding fact, and it is difficult to understand why every member sitting opposite should be in favour of handing over the sovereign rights which some day, perhaps, we will have to fight for. However, I have touched on a delicate spot. The Government and their supporters do not like the question. I can only hope that wiser counsels will prevail when these questions are again submitted, and that whatever Government be

in power they will give this Chamber a chance of discussing the effect of the proposals on the privileges and rights of the House, before they give their unanimous support to and ask the people to join them in supporting those proposals.

The Minister for Works: Would you consult the Legislative Council as well?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes, both Houses. At any rate, so far as this House is concerned, I think at least it should have been consulted. I may say the State that had most to lose was most in favour of those proposals. Unfortunately, our friends on the goldfields out-voted us.

Mr. Bolton: No, that is wrong.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes, it was so, for outside the goldfields the feeling was against the proposals, and I can only hope that the people on the goldfields may yet see that they have some State rights to protect, and that on the next occasion these proposals are put forward they will see that the interests of the State are protected. I often think it is futile to endeavour to put up any argument in this House; because we so often find that whatever is said in the House, particularly on this side, seems to have very little effect upon members opposite. They vote in a body on the main questions, and so it is futile for any of us to endeavour to put up arguments.

The Minister for Works: We had the same experience of your Government, you know.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It leads one to the conclusion that we very often waste a lot of valuable time in discussing matters in this House when we might, perhaps, be better employed looking after affairs in the country. What is the use of taking up the time of the House when all that one can say will be of little or no effect?

Mr. Foley: A lot of talk goes through the *West Australian*.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Hon. members seem to have their preliminary Parliament outside, and to come along with most of their measures already decided upon. It seems to me to be little short of a waste of time keeping this House going while the government of the coun-

try is carried out along these lines. We seem to have done away altogether with a deliberative assembly, and we can only hope that the time is not far distant when this state of affairs will be remedied. While this state of affairs continues it is easily understood why the deficit should continue to pile up. However, it does not seem to be of very much concern to Government followers, for they are quite content, and do not mind a few hundred thousand pounds. Evidently, they are quite satisfied and have thrashed the matter out before they came here. They know amongst themselves what are the opinions of individual caucus members, although the country does not. However, I say that this system has done away with the deliberative assembly which Parliament should be. Now, it is only to be expected that in view of this the Opposition will be sometimes critical, especially of the administrative acts of the Government. I have not the least doubt that we shall have nothing to say about the good intentions of Ministers. I will be fair to Ministers and say that their intentions, no doubt, are as good as our own. Their desire is to do their best for the country; but I would like to point out that they are doing it in a way which does not commend itself to thinking people. Their administrative acts are very often carried out in secret, to wit, the sleeper contract, which the country should have known more about. No doubt caucus and the party have known all about it all along, but they, after all, are not the Parliament, and the party as a whole is not the country. It is no wonder that the Government are not taken more seriously by the Opposition in these matters, and especially when we take into consideration the partisan proposals from time to time brought down by the Government. The Speech put into the mouth of His Excellency the Governor, excites very little interest. The main proposals are, after all, rehashes of certain measures we had last session. I notice that one important proposal which was introduced last session is to be again brought forward, namely, the land and income tax measure. I

want to say again that I consider the people at the present juncture are taxed quite as much as they are able to bear.

The Minister for Works: How would you get over the deficiency?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: By cutting down administrative expense.

The Minister for Works: Roads board grants?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: You must bring all your votes down within reason.

The Minister for Works: Increased railway rates?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I will deal with that directly. When we believe that some of the ventures of the Government are of a questionable nature and likely to land the country in loss, naturally it is very hard to make the people in the country see the reasonableness of increased taxation.

The Premier: Which ventures are likely to land us in loss?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I will deal with that later on.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The whole lot of them are going to land us in loss.

The Premier: You supported most of them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am pleased to know that the great gold-mining industry is in a satisfactory condition, and that there are very good prospects of the gold output being increased. I can also rejoice with the Government in the prospect of an excellent season for the agricultural industry, and while we can only regret that the pastoral industry has suffered in the North to a considerable extent during the last two or three years, it is refreshing to know that during the last few weeks the drought in the greater part of the North has completely broken up. One must remember the great losses which have taken place in these areas.

Mr. Underwood: Not in the North.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In the lower North. We know that suffering must take place when these bad seasons continue for any length of time. I am glad to say there is something I quite agree with in the Governor's Speech. I

am glad with others to know that the Agent General, Sir Newton Moore, has been reappointed.

Mr. Foley: A valuable member of our party.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: His long experience as a member of this House will be of considerable value to the country, even putting aside the fact that he has already served a term of office in London. I am pleased that the Premier had an opportunity of going home. There is not the least doubt that his visit to the old country and abroad was undertaken in the best interests of the State, and it is well that the head of the Government, the Treasurer of the country, should visit the old land, and so come more closely into touch with various matters which affect the progress of a new country like Western Australia. His Excellency's Speech is, I think, remarkable for some of its assertions. We are told that a vigorous public works policy has been consistently maintained. There is a great deal of doubt about this vigorous public works policy, and I think that before we can accept that statement we require to have more details from the Minister for Works in regard to the various undertakings, and particularly in regard to the question of agricultural railway construction.

The Minister for Works: We are doing twice as much as you were doing. Will that satisfy you?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: We have heard that so often from the Minister, and yet there are loud complaints from many districts. The Government are being urged to push on with various works. Moreover, I think the Minister should take the House into his confidence in regard to departmental construction.

The Minister for Works: You practised it, or your party did, except when it paid you to do it otherwise.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Paid the country to do it otherwise.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: They did not entirely depend upon departmental construction, but they had other works going on by contract as well.

The Minister for Works: And they fell in every time they let a contract. You

ask the Commissioner of Railways about the maintenance.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Excellent work and excellent results.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The country wants to know if this work is being carried out at a cheap rate or as cheaply and as effectively as work carried out by contract.

Mr. Underwood: If the Minister told you it was cheaper would you accept his word?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I want to know what is the system of inspection.

The Minister for Works: What do you want us to do to convince you?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I want the Minister to convince me as a business man would be convinced, by seeing his costs and by having some independent inspection of the work.

The Minister for Works: We have independent inspection of every job.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Then we have not heard of it.

The Minister for Works: No, you stay down at Katanning and do not inquire.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It is due to the House that the fullest information should be supplied in regard to departmental construction. As far as the public works policy is concerned, I am satisfied that the Minister is not building the railways as fast as the needs of the country demand.

The Minister for Works: You left 500 miles of railway to be constructed.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Minister has been busy ever since he has been in power building the railways of the late Government. He has not started any of his own, I believe, yet, and the people in the out-back places are anxious to know when the Government are going to push on with these much-needed railways.

The Minister for Works: You passed the Bills and we build the railways.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Minister has many Bills passed, the Yillimining-Kondinin railway which was passed a considerable time since. The railway passed Parliament, and the people in the district are labouring under great disabilities for want of railway communication. Then there is the Mount Marshall area. I had

an opportunity of attending a deputation with the Mount Marshall people about 18 months ago, and I was struck with the number of settlers who have taken up country in that locality, and the good stamp of men there. I am surprised to know that nothing beyond the survey of the line has been carried out.

The Minister for Works: It would have been better to have built that line than the Kojonup line.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is a matter of opinion. There is also the question of departmental construction under what is known as the Public Works Water Supply Department. It would be rather interesting to know what the Minister has done in connection with the work of this department during the past year. I know in some districts a good deal of work has been done, I want to be fair to the Minister, but in other districts work is practically at a standstill. The staff have been located in the district for a long time and, as far as I know, very little has been done. It would be as well if the Minister looked into this matter.

The Minister for Works: Do you refer to Katanning?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not refer to any locality in particular. The districts I refer to are not only Katanning, but other districts along the Great Southern, where officers have been located for a considerable time, awaiting instructions from the Government to carry out the work. The Minister must realise if the officers go there and no work is being carried out it must be a considerable loss to the country.

The Minister for Works: They have not been there long.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Government are not continuing the policy adopted in the first place. I know contractors waiting for work there which was supposed to be done by the Works Department. Contracts were let and stopped; the contracts were cancelled.

The Minister for Works: What for? For well sinking at this time of the year, I suppose.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: No, it was concluded that the work was stopped for

want of funds; that is the reason given in the district.

The Minister for Works: The silly policy of well sinking in the winter has been abandoned, I hope for ever.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There is no well sinking in my district, but road clearing and dam sinking. It would be better if the money was handed over to the local authorities and they spent it. I agree with the department doing work where there are large areas cut up, and in sparsely populated areas, but where the districts are more closely settled, work can be more economically carried out if the money is handed to the local authority and they carry out the work. I believe in the department having inspecting engineers in the district to see that the money is properly expended and the work thoroughly carried out. We are also told that land settlement proceeds satisfactorily. I would like to ask whether it is considered satisfactory when we note the great falling off which has taken place during the last three or four years, and I think some explanation is really due from the Ministry in regard to the serious falling off in land settlement. I do not wish to quote figures which have already been referred to, but by way of comparison, I would like to refer to the last six months, that is for 1913, There was a total of homestead farms and conditional purchase lease blocks amounting to 337,966 acres taken up. We will assume that a similar quantity will be taken up for the remaining six months, but that could hardly be maintained if the falling off is as great as during the past three years. But assuming that double that area was taken up that would amount to 675,000 acres. We find that will be less than the area taken up in 1912 by 402,000 acres, and less than that taken up in 1911 by 651,000 acres, and less than that taken up in 1910 by 1,290,000 acres. I think it is time we went into this matter more thoroughly. The Minister should give us some explanation of the falling off, and a reassurance that it is the desire and intention of the Government to push land settlement more vigorously ahead than has been done during the last three or four years.

The Minister for Works: Sending them out into dry areas again.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There is an excuse in regard to the dry areas. It is stated that one million acres of land is held up in these dry areas because the Government think it is not wise to send people into these places. I think it is wise to hold up some of that land. But let me tell the House that the Lands Department have been holding up land for the past two years in well watered districts, some large areas too. I have written to the department myself as to some of the lands, and I think people have been looking for these lands, and have not been able to take them up because they are withheld from selection.

The Minister for Lands: Are they served by a railway?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: They are within a reasonable distance of a railway. Good mixed farming lands and people are willing to take them up.

The Minister for Works: And when they get there they complain that they have no railway to serve them.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There is a lot of land within 15 miles of a railway. The land I refer to is to the east of the Great Southern and it is withheld from selection. There is some between the Nampup and Ongerup line. At one place I am informed there has been a dam of water full for 18 months. Yet people have been going to that district looking for land and have not been able to get it.

Mr. Monger: What reason has been given?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Some are said to be dry areas, but in one case water has been in a dam for 18 months.

The Minister for Works: That does not mean anything. In some remote instances dams are filled by a thunder storm.

Mr. Green: Is this land you refer to in your district?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The lands I am referring to are in my electorate.

Mr. Green: Have you written to the department?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I have already written to the department.

Mr. Green. And what was the nature of the reply?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: One Minister interjected just now what was the cause of the falling off in land settlement. The one over-shadowing reason was the unfortunate regulation by the Minister for Lands. There is no getting away from that fact.

The Attorney General: The regulation was only an explanation of the law. It made no more additions to the law whatever; it was only an assertion that the law would be observed.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Surely the Attorney General cannot remember the regulation. I do not wish to say more than is necessary about this regulation; it is ancient history now, but there is not the least doubt it caused a lot of unrest and it was no doubt an error of judgment on the part of the Minister. No Minister would be foolish enough to bring into force a regulation that would be bring about a discontinuance—

The Minister for Works: Of the land shark.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Of the land settlement of the country. I admit it did away with a certain amount of speculation, possibly which was not good for the country and was not in the best interests of the country. At the same time it reminds me of the man who wanted to kill a snake which had got into his house and who burned his house down in order to do so. That was rather an expensive way of getting rid of the snake. The Government have killed inquiry for land. There is not the least doubt that the action of the Minister meant a great falling off in genuine settlement. Then again, another reason, to my mind, was the possibility of a Bill providing for the non-alienation of land being introduced.

The Minister for Works: The price of the land had no bearing, I suppose.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I will deal with that in a few moments.

The Minister for Works: I should have thought you would have put that first; that is the main cause.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Under the Bill the Government would not give me an opportunity to buy land at all.

The Minister for Works: We would give everyone an equal opportunity.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is the chief reason why—

Mr. Heitmann: We want people not to buy land but to produce from it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: If the desire of the hon. member is to encourage production, we must give the people some interest in the ownership of the land, and I think it is most unfortunate that the Government should have introduced this Bill because I do not think they believe in it. I do not think the Government were really serious in the matter of that Bill.

Mr. Thomas: That is ungenerous. It is not your usual style.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There is not the least doubt that it did a certain amount of harm.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We offered them three years rent free anyway.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That could be given under ordinary conditions.

Mr. Heitmann: And 10 years on poison land.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That also could be given under ordinary conditions. In regard to the disposal of land, no member has been more consistent than I have on the question of the valuation of land.

The Minister for Works: I have not heard you protest very vigorously when you had an opportunity.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I did protest. On every opportunity that offered, I opposed the policy of my friend the ex-Minister for Lands, and he knows that I disagreed with his ideas of valuation, and if hon. members doubt me they can refer to *Hansard*. I have also brought the matter under the notice of the present Minister, and yet, to a great extent, the same thing is going on to-day. We know that the values have been reduced very little indeed, if they have been reduced at all.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Increased.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I have been informed that they have been increased.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Considerably in some cases and they can stand it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The price of the land should not be one of the main considerations; if we can once get the people on the land there will be every inducement for them to make their homes upon the land and become successful producers, and once they become successful producers, the land is always there for the purpose of taxation if the supporters of the Government like to impose further taxation. The settler makes an asset of the land, but supporters of the Government will not allow him to make an asset of it if they charge too much in the early stages of settlement.

Mr. Heitmann: It is a strange thing that a man will take it up at your price and under your conditions, which allow speculation, and make money on it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There may have been some people who made a little money out of land speculation in the boom times.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And some who lost it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: But would it not be better to have speculation and to have people to keep up the value of the land than to have the land as it is to-day, practically of no value at all?

Mr. Heitmann: Speculation would not produce a bushel.

Mr. Underwood: Nor speculators either. What do St. George's-terrace farmers produce?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: We have heard a good many gibes from the Government side of the House regarding the St. George's-terrace push.

Mr. Underwood: Settlers not push.

Mr. Heitmann: Agriculturists.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: We have heard something from the Government side of the House about putting the boot into St. George's Terrace. I would remind hon. members that this country owes a very great deal to St. George's Terrace. All the banks are situated in that thoroughfare.

Mr. Gill: And St. George's-terrace owes a good deal to this country.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I think we should recognise what the banks have done for the country in the way of assisting in its development. After all, the banks are only the custodians of other people's

money. I think that in order to bring about a more successful settlement of the land the Minister might very well take into consideration the question of amending the Act to deal with those poorer lands adjacent to our existing lines. There is a very large area of unselected land adjacent to the railways, and I would like to know what effort is being made to bring these lands into use. I would be prepared to advocate that some of the poorer lands which have been overlooked and passed by should be, perhaps, under a special condition brought about by an amendment of the Act, say such a special condition as compulsory cultivation, sold at a very low rental. In fact, where there is poison and in many cases there is poison—some of those lighter lands are thickly infested with poison—special conditions should be provided in the Act whereby these lands might be disposed of rent free for a certain number of years. It is better to have this land alongside of railways occupied and developed and put into use than for it to continue to lie idle.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That was in our Bill last session but the Legislative Council threw it out.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes, but under leasehold conditions, and we do not want leasehold. It needs to be under freehold so that people can have a home of their own after developing the land and making it of some value. Then there are the poison lands to the west of the Great Southern. I would like to ask the Minister whether, in view of the delay which has taken place in coming to a decision in regard to reclassification—I understand some blocks have been reclassified—he is not prepared to meet those settlers by having a valuation made of the poison land, and by reserving the rents for a fixed period. This to my mind is the only solution of this difficulty, which is especially presented in the district to which I have referred. A grave responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the Minister. People were sent into that country, not by the present Government and not by the preceding Government, but in the time of the Moore Government, and in many

cases they have not made a success of their holdings. They require some special consideration. I know that quite a number of people have left the land; some have returned to England whence they came; others have drifted into the towns, and in many instances—

Mr. O'Loughlen: What areas are those?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The areas have been too small.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But in what locality are those areas?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: West of the Great Southern.

Mr. Underwood: What area do you advocate?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: From 1,500 to 3,000 acres.

Mr. Underwood: Three thousand acres?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: If a man is to make a success of it, it should not be less than 1,500 acres.

Mr. Underwood: You want a sheep run. In the North-West you could get it for 5s. per 1,000 acres.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I hope the Minister will take this matter into consideration, because I know that many of these people are suffering very much indeed, and unless the Department meets them in some way, a number of them will have to leave their holdings. I notice, in regard to the State steamers venture, that the Premier admits there has been a great loss in the working of the undertaking and he mentioned in his reply that the railways and tramways of this country to be consistent should also be scrapped. The railways and tramways are practically a monopoly; the steamship enterprise which the Government have undertaken is not a monopoly, but is competing, I suppose, with the strongest competition which they can possibly come into contact with. Therefore, it behoves the Government to be careful before entering into these speculative enterprises. In regard to the agricultural implement works, I do not know whether this venture will have the desired effect. I believe the Government in all seriousness think they will be able to reduce the cost of agricultural machinery, and if they succeed, no one will be more pleased than I.

The Minister for Works: But you do not endorse the policy.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not endorse the policy because I think there may be only a temporary reduction of the price. I am afraid that we shall have that continuous unrest that is generally experienced in undertakings of this kind. The employees will naturally want the profits of the undertaking, and as a matter of fact, we heard of its being stated recently in Victoria by a prominent labour man, that what a worker was out for was not the 6s. 8d. of his earnings but for the other 13s. 4d. When we come to take this into consideration, we may well wonder how the Government will cheapen the cost of manufacturing agricultural machinery if they are going to accede to all the claims brought forward by their employees.

Mr. Munsie: We have an Arbitration Court to settle these disputes.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am also afraid that the Government, in undertaking these works do not realise that such things as managerial brains and skill are required to successfully carry them out. We know that men in charge of similar businesses are men who have grown up in them and have taken years to become the experts they are in these particular undertakings, and I can only hope for the sake of the country that the Government will be able to secure the right person to manage these works.

Mr. Gill: We have got him.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Another noticeable omission from the Governor's Speech is the all-important question of the cost of living. This is one matter which it would be more in the interests of the country for Government supporters and the Opposition alike to deal with in a businesslike way—

Mr. Munsie: That is why we supported the Referenda—to bring down the cost of living.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: One matter, I say, instead of dealing with so much in the nature of party politics. We must realise that as far as the primary producer is concerned, his very existence is governed by the cost of production and there is not

the least doubt, if we want to see the primary producer become successful we must take into consideration the cost of living, and the question of wages after all is governed by the cost of living. Wages are being increased every day and naturally there follows an increase in the cost of living. This is a question which wants taking in hand seriously, because unless our primary industries, such as the great agricultural, the pastoral, and the mining industries can show a profit, we do not know what will be the result.

Mr. Underwood: Are you in favour of reducing the price of meat—that will reduce the cost of living—of course you are.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am pleased to note that the Government have, during the recess, carried out permanent surveys in connection with agricultural railways. I would have been better pleased if the Government had given us some idea as to the railways which are likely to be built. We know that at the present rate of construction it would be impossible to say that all these railways would be built during the next year, but it is a singular fact that the only railway Bill which the Government propose to introduce this session is that to connect Norseman with the Esperance agricultural areas.

Mr. Thomas: What do you call it?

The Attorney General: The *bete noir*.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Nothing is said in the Governor's Speech of the new areas east of the Great Southern railway, for instance, the district around Lake Grace which has been served by the extension of the Dumbleyung railway, the Pingarup country served by the extension of the Nampup railway, the Needilup country served by the extension of the Ongerup line. I am well aware that the Minister will not be able to say definitely that these railways will be built within the next twelve months, but I think he should be able to outline some scheme by which the Government would themselves let the people interested know approximately at what date they would be able to avail themselves of railway communication. There has also been no mention made of the railway

to serve the country to the west of the Great Southern. I understood from the Minister for Works a little while ago that the Government intended to outline a system of proposed railways between the Great Southern line and the coast. There is a very large settlement taking place, and settlement has also been there for many years, and reports have been made already in two instances by the railway advisory board, and naturally the people are anxious to know the intentions of the Government in regard to serving these parts with railways. Then again there is the proposed Narrogin-Armadale railway—

Mr. E. B. Johnston : Hear, hear.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : That is an important trunk line which must be built sooner or later, and which I hope the Government will not altogether lose sight of. We are told that it is all a question of finance, and I sometimes think it would have been better if the Government had put into agricultural railways the money they invested in the purchase of the trams, as well as the money which they have put into the steamer ventures. These sums would have gone a long way towards building some of the agricultural railways which are pressingly needed.

Mr. Lander : Would you not give the squatters any assistance ?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : I would give them all the assistance that is necessary, of course, but we know railways are not so necessary for the stock producing people as they are for the agriculturists.

Mr. Thomas : But steamers are.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : The State steamers up to the present have been such a disaster financially that I think Ministers and hon. members would be pleased if the money had been spent in the construction of railways instead.

The Minister for Lands : The railways are all showing a loss.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : It is not such a serious loss.

The Minister for Lands : The loss is about £60,000 a year on the new railways.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : It is just a question how that is worked out. As far

as I can see the system upon which that is arrived at is not altogether fair to the railways. These railways are great contributors to the paying trunk lines.

The Premier : Even making allowance for the traffic taken to the main lines they do not pay, and I am speaking from the point of view of the Treasury.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : There is one other matter I would like to touch upon, and it is the relationship of the assistance which the Government have given to the agriculturists to the present deficit. I would like to repeat that I appreciate what the Government have done during the past year in regard to helping those who from dire necessity, owing to adverse conditions brought about by a bad season, had to go to the Government for further aid. Ministers have referred to this matter, but there is a discrepancy between the statements made by the Minister for Works and the Minister for Lands. The Minister for Works said, I think it was at Beverley, that the amount of deferred rents, the Agricultural Bank interest and the water rates in dry areas would run into close on a couple of hundred thousand pounds.

The Minister for Lands : Those figures were for the end of April.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : The Minister for Lands afterwards quoted a larger amount.

The Minister for Lands : That was to the end of June.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : What I take exception to is the fact that Ministers are continually saying that the non-receipt of rents and the failure to pay rates on water supply have been solely responsible for the deficit.

The Premier : Nobody said that.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : The Minister for Works was pretty clear on that point.

The Premier : Oh, no.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : I do not object to the Government saying that these deferred payments are to some extent responsible for the deficit, but on going into the statement of the finances for the past year, I find that so far as the Lands Department is concerned, the Government cannot say that this help to the agriculturists was responsible for last

year's deficit. It may to some extent have been responsible for the deficit of the year before, because I find that the amount estimated to be received from rents has been collected to within £6,000,

The Premier: We estimated that we would not be fully paid the deferred rents.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Then again I find the Government spent on the Department of Lands a sum of £10,000 less than the estimate and the agricultural estimates some £9,000 less.

The Premier: Due to economies in administration.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: And at the same time we hear a great deal about the deficit being entirely due to the leniency shown to the agricultural industry. I think it would have been more correct if Ministers had told the people that the loss on the steamers and the loss on the railways to some extent contributed towards the deficit.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: There is no loss on the railways.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: We find that the railway revenue was £17,000 less than the estimate while the expenditure was £60,000 more than the estimate. It would have been only right if Ministers had referred to the loss in these departments because the deferred payments about which they said so much will eventually be paid to the Government. The Government have excellent security; they have the land which they can always realise upon, and so far as the Agricultural Bank is concerned that institution also has good security.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The deficit would not have been so much if these payments had been made.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is true, but I do not want the Minister to mislead the people in regard to last year's figures.

The Minister for Lands: We increased the vote for roads and we did not cut down the education vote.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I have already stated that I appreciate what the Government have done, but when we find that

the deficit is being attributed entirely to the agricultural industry—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Yes, entirely.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is not correct, what about the steamers? On the Premier's own showing we know there is a loss there, which does not augur very well for the other undertakings of the Government. The possibility is that we shall find the other enterprises as successful as the Government steamers have been, and it will be surprising indeed if we do not have a very much bigger deficit next year. Besides, I do not think it is a good thing for Ministers to be referring to this matter too often.

The Premier: We are obliged to when croakers like the member for Northam are going about the country during the recess.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not think the bottom is going to fall out of this country if we have a deficit. At the same time, of course, we have to see that reasonable care is taken by the Administration to keep the expenditure within bounds, and not go into enterprises which are of a doubtful character. For instance, I know that a private firm would have as much money out as the Government have this year, and I do not think there is any need for alarm. Individual private firms have had to carry as much as the total mentioned by the Government, and we hear nothing about it.

The Premier: We do not deny that fact.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: (Well, I want to assure the Government that they have nothing to be over-anxious about in regard to the agriculturists—

The Premier: We are not, otherwise we would not have done as much as we have.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Because the security is good, and only in time of dire necessity will the Government be called upon to assist in the direction indicated. A matter which the Government have not referred to is the question of immigration. Is immigration to cease altogether? Have Ministers given up all idea of immigration, and have they decided not to spend any more money on this policy?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There are no people coming in, are there?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Are Ministers ashamed to say anything about immigration? We want some reassurance from the Government. We want to know that they are going to continue this policy of immigration and bring out the people whom we want to develop this country. I desire to ask the Honorary Minister how it is, and if he thinks it wise, that instructions are issued to the local labour bureaux—since the Government have practically stopped land settlement the local land offices have become practically labour bureaux—that no immigrant shall be engaged at less than 25s. per week, and his keep. This instruction has been sent, and I think it is most foolish.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Of course it is, from some people's point of view.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I will show the Minister where it is foolish in my opinion.

Mr. Underwood: 5s. a week would be a fair thing.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Many of these immigrants are unaccustomed to agricultural work but are anxious to learn, and they are better employed on somebody else's land for a couple of years, thus gaining experience. If the Minister knows anything about it, he must know that he is stopping these men from getting into positions where they will be able to gain this experience.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): We stop them from being imposed upon.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: A great many of these men who come out are not worth 10s. a week.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Then we should stop them.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: No; I do not say that. I would remind the Minister that people who came to this country 50 or 60 years ago were probably not of any more use in the country at first than these men who are coming out to-day, but they were the pioneers of the colony, and they made good settlers. So, too, will these men be-

come good settlers if the Minister will not place such a great restriction on them.

Mr. Underwood: What would you suggest?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Some of them for the first two or three months would be hardly worth their keep.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about their wives and children?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am speaking more particularly about the single men.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But what about the married men?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: What about the man who has to keep him? The married man has a better chance of making a home for his wife and family if he gets more experience, and of my own knowledge I can say there is little doubt about these people being treated fairly by the settlers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If a man is not worth 25s. a week he is not worth bringing to the country.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not agree with the hon. member. Most of them become excellent workers, and I know of many who have started at 10s. per week, and later on have been able to demand their 35s. and £2 per week. They have to gain experience, and the Minister is only standing in the light of these people by placing such a restriction upon them.

Mr. Underwood: He is standing in the light of the big land-owners.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Anyway, the settlers will not stand them. These men are walking about the country kicking their heels, whereas they would be better off if they were getting 10s. a week and their keep.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will you send a circular to the old country saying that these men are not worth 10s. per week?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Some of them will admit that they are not worth 25s. a week.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Then they are a very poor class of Britishers.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There are many settlers who would take these men, and to whom they would be of some use, at a reasonable rate of pay.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I know of some people who want

to get them for nothing, and we have had to prosecute them to make them pay what they agreed to pay.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Another matter that touches the Honorary Minister's department is the drugs regulations, and I think that he should at this juncture give an undertaking to the House that the regulations will be immediately withdrawn and re-gazetted, so that the House may have an opportunity of discussing them before they are put into operation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You have not given any notice to discuss them.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Health Act provides that the Minister shall lay the regulations on the Table of the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They are on the Table.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: But the statutory thirty days was in recess.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): But you have given no notice of motion.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: What is the use of giving notice? We understood that the time was past, and that prosecutions were taking place under the regulations.

The Premier: Do you disagree with the regulations?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I disagree with some of them.

The Premier: If you submit a motion dealing with them we will allow them to be discussed and abide by the decision.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Will the Premier at the next sitting of the House allow this matter to be discussed?

The Premier: Not until after the Address-in-reply is finished, and private members' day is reached.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Government should give an opportunity at the earliest moment. I am glad to hear that the Premier is going to give the House some opportunity of discussing the regulations.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): We are not going to give you the opportunity. You must take your own opportunity.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Well, I am glad to know that we will have an opportunity.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You knew you had the opportunity all the time.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I would like to refer to the work done by the Agricultural Bank, and I think we might well say that this institution has done magnificent work during the last year. Perhaps the loans that have been granted have not covered everything that the people of the agricultural districts desire, but taking into consideration the financial stringency existing in the country, the bank has done remarkably well. I could hope that money was more plentiful, and that we had people coming to this country who were prepared to invest their money in the agricultural areas, so that we might have more capital available for the development of our agricultural resources. Because we must realise that to all the land taken up under conditional purchase there are compulsory improvement conditions attached, and it will take a good deal of capital to carry out those conditions within the next year or two. Unless the financial stringency is removed, I wonder where we are going to get this money, because the Agricultural Bank with its limited capital cannot meet all the needs of the settlers. Perhaps the Government might see their way clear to further increase the capital of the Bank, so that if we cannot go all the way, we may go part of the distance to meet this very great necessity. The management deserve very great credit for the way in which they have handled the affairs of the Bank during a most trying year. It must have been difficult for the management to turn down certain applications, but that of course will always occur.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The task has been made much lighter on account of the money that has been found for them.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is true, but the money does not go far enough, and the capital should be largely increased. I do not think we would go far wrong if we were to increase the capital by at least another million, because, as I have already pointed out, these improvements are compulsory, and unless the people can get money they cannot fulfil the conditions

under which they take up the land. The Associated Banks have done very well in assisting the development of this country, and one has only to look at the banking returns to understand the reason why money is not being more freely lent. The deposits in the bank have not increased in the aggregate during the year, and if we take into consideration the disturbances in the finances of Australia brought about to some extent by the withdrawal of so much gold consequent on the issue of the Federal notes, we must realise that the banks are only acting cautiously as the custodians of other people's money. On the whole, they have done very well, and we can only hope that money will be more plentiful in future, and that, with the proper development of our agricultural lands, we will be able to give a good account of ourselves, and that Western Australia before long will be able to show that she is the leading wheat producer in the Commonwealth, in regard to both aggregate and average yield per acre. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I have kept hon. members longer than I had intended, but I feel so much can be done for this country by the Parliament of the country taking into consideration all its special needs, and I can only express the hope that the Government's supporters, in looking at these matters, will endeavour in all their undertakings, to put the interests of this State first and to put party politics second.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is our usual policy.

Mr. W. L. THOMAS (Bunbury): I desire to congratulate the hon. member who has just resumed his seat for the very soothing and somewhat optimistic utterances with which he favoured us. In fact, the whole speech has been characterised by mildness of expression and a certain timid desire for information. I must admit of the hon. member, that if he does say anything unkind about the Government, which is rare, he says it in a very friendly spirit.

Mr. Underwood: He does not mean it.

Mr. THOMAS: I quite agree with the hon. member who interjected. I do not think the hon. member for Katanning does mean to say anything wrong of the

Government. I am inclined to think that he has an appreciation of the work of the Labour Government and if it were not for a fear of going back and certain feeling of loyalty to his old companions, we would have him as one of the shining lights on the Ministerial benches. The hon. member, however, made one or two remarks to which I will make special reference. He said that Parliament had ceased to be a deliberative assembly, inasmuch as all the measures coming before it were decided in a secret caucus, and that we came down here already determined by a hard and fast rule how we were to vote, that we were never divided in our opinions, and that we never made any concession whatever to members of the Opposition. It was quite useless, the hon. gentleman said, to go on with the discussion. I quite agree with the hon. member to this extent, that it is quite useless to endeavour to persuade members of the Opposition. The occasions on which they have been amenable to persuasion are hardly worth enumerating, but the same does not apply to the Government side. The hon. member for Hannans (Mr. Munzie) has been to considerable trouble to prove that the members of the Labour party were sometimes divided in their votes and the Liberals rarely. Taking the first session of the present Parliament, we find, out of 29 divisions, that the Labour party divided against themselves on 18 occasions but members of the Opposition only on three occasions, that is, the Opposition voted solidly 26 times and the Labour party solidly 11 times throughout the session, so the difference is between the three occasions on which members of the Opposition voted with the Government and 18 occasions on which members of the Government side voted with the Opposition. My friend, the hon. member for Katanning, who is always amenable to reason will, I feel sure, be sorry for the remark he made; he will realise that it is unjust and that if it has any application at all it is to his own party. If there is one thing I regret it is that members of the Opposition are not amenable to reason.

Mr. George: Ha! ha!

Mr. THOMAS: They come here like my friend the hon. member for Murray-Wellington, who has just broken out into a broad smile, with certain convictions and ideas put into their heads by their constituents, and are not prepared to depart from them, no matter what reasoning or force of argument can be brought against them. I regret that tendency as much as any other member of this House could. I have found Parliament to be a much different place from what I thought it was when I first aspired for a seat in this Chamber. I thought all questions were decided by common sense and friendly reasoning, and that justice would always find expression in this Chamber if it did not in any other part of Western Australia. How different the reality is! I find when we embark upon the Address-in-reply debate that it is on most occasions a repetition of old dried opinions about things in general and nobody seems to take the matter very seriously. I question whether it serves any very good purpose. The hon. member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) was also pleased to make some remarks about the Government support of the Federal referendums and expressed, as nearly as he could, a feeling of indignation that members of the Ministry and of the Labour party should go into the highways and byways of Western Australia and defend something that had not been brought before this Chamber. What advantage to Western Australia would that have been? I am wrong, it would have been an advantage had we discussed the referendums, as I am perfectly satisfied that after the hon. member for Katanning had heard the pros and cons thoroughly discussed he would have been out advising the people to vote yes. I believe that, irrespective of party or personal feeling, the hon. member would advocate anything he believed would be an advantage to Western Australia, and I am satisfied that if he had heard the whole of the pros and cons of the position he would have been convinced that the right thing for Western Australia was to vote yes for the referendums, as those questions touched closely and intimately the lives of the

people. They concerned a matter the hon. member himself mentioned, the cost of living, which has a very material influence on the farmers whom he represents, and I am sure that it could have been demonstrated to him effectively that if the referendums could have been carried it would have been to their benefit. I am forcibly reminded of the want of knowledge on this subject that has been exhibited by members of the Opposition. I was passing a night in Bunbury on one occasion when the leader of the Opposition and the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) were addressing the electors there prior to the Federal election. The leader of the Opposition made a very good speech, as he generally does, and the hon. member for Northam proceeded to enlighten the people about the referenda. Needless to say it was a case of confusion worse confounded, because the hon. gentleman did not even understand the rudimentary principles of the question, and his remarks had an extraordinary effect. It was one of the most interesting meetings I have ever attended; the people in the audience became very restive; they were shuffling their feet and were looking very distracted, and after the hon. member had been meandering about for some time, the mayor took him by the tails of his coat and pulled him into his seat; the hon. gentleman displayed more intelligence than I have seen him do on some other occasions, as he remained there very quietly, taking the hint from the man in the chair that he did not know his subject.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did they put the member for Murray-Wellington up then?

Mr. THOMAS: I think the intelligence of the hon. member for Murray-Wellington would have been just about the same, judging by his knowledge on other abstruse subjects. The hon. gentleman knows I have some idea of his mental attainments.

Mr. George: I do not think the hon. member knows anything about it.

Mr. THOMAS: Generally the hon. member's expressions are not clear to anyone and I doubt whether they are clear to himself.

Mr. George: They are too clear for you.

Mr. Lewis: The most conceited man here.

Mr. THOMAS: I know the hon. member is a man with an epidermis that is proof against anything I could say. The hon. member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) raised a question about railways construction and the works carried on by the present Government. Whenever members of the Opposition bring forward any charge against the Government they generally allege that we have not done anything, or at any rate not as much as we ought to have done, and when figures are produced to show that in some cases we have done twice as much as they attempted to do, they say, "Never mind comparing yourselves with us, what have you done?" It seems that somewhere down in the recesses of their imagination they credit the Government with being builders of railways to an amount far in excess of their own. It does not simply mean that we should outstrip them and double their results, but when we have done that we are criticised for not having done more. As a matter of fact, the Minister for Works interjected with reference to railways construction, and I have no reason to doubt his word, that we have done about double what was accomplished by the previous Government in this direction, and I have not the slightest doubt that when the right time arrives and the figures are laid before Parliament showing the actual cost of construction under day labour, members opposite will realise that we have not only done better work, but have done it at lower cost.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Have you had that information?

Mr. THOMAS: Yes.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Then why have we not got it?

Mr. THOMAS: You could have all the information you require.

Mr. George: You can get it, but we cannot.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member asks a good many questions and gets voluminous replies; they do not seem to convey much to his intelligence, but that is not

altogether our fault. The Government steamer question has been discussed by members *ad nauseam*. We have heard a good deal about it and I recall the statement of the hon. member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) that we would have done better had we not spent this money on Government steamers, but had gone on building additional railways; he said the money would have been better spent upon agricultural railways than for the benefit of the people in the North-West. That seems to me to be a very selfish utterance—that everything should be done for the farmer in the other portions of Western Australia, but nothing should be done for the pastoralists of the North-West.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: The farmer has no means of communication but the man in the North-West has.

Mr. THOMAS: A very big proportion of the farmers at present have very excellent services, but we know that very little or nothing has been done in that direction to help the settlers up in the North-West. While I am in sympathy with the farmers in all their legitimate aspirations, I have just as much sympathy with the people of the North-West, by virtue of the many hardships that they have to face, their difficulties of life and their wants generally. Everything that can be done by the Government to facilitate them should be done. I claim that the steamship service has made a great improvement in the passenger traffic up there, in some cases in the freight, and in other directions has made their hard life brighter than ever it was before.

Mr. Male: Rubbish!

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

[Mr. Holman took the Chair.]

Mr. THOMAS: I should like to take advantage of the opportunity while the leader of the Opposition is present to congratulate that gentleman on his return from Melbourne. We all know very well the object of his visit to Melbourne, and we are also well aware of the frigid reception he met with over there.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you taken to going on my tracks as well?

Mr. THOMAS: No; but your attitude is always so obvious that people get to understand your little ways. I know how disappointed the hon. gentleman must be. I have heard during the tea adjournment that the appointments to those important positions have been made, and of course it is not a case of spoils to the victors.

Mr. Underwood: It is only a rumour.

Mr. THOMAS: Needless to say there is no Labour man among the appointees, and never likely to be, nor is there anyone from Western Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You cannot get rid of me like that.

Mr. THOMAS: I am exceedingly pleased to see the hon. gentleman back with us again; not that I have any very great admiration for his political beliefs, but I look upon him as one of the greatest friends of the Labour party in Western Australia. While the hon. gentleman may not be clever enough for the members of the Opposition—judging by the dissension in their ranks—I want to say that while he remains in Western Australia to lead the Tory reactionaries on to defeat, as he has done in the past, the future of the Labour party is fairly secure, and we shall be able to enjoy the Treasury benches in peace and comfort.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Until the next election.

Mr. THOMAS: I have no fears about the next elections.

Mr. S. Stubbs: I have.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. gentleman has every reason to entertain fears for the next election. I have very cheerful reports from the Labour ranks in his district and I have great hopes of the next elections.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You had a great reception last time you were down there.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes; I always do have good receptions down there, and I have rather a liking for Wagin. If I was not so busily engaged in Bunbury I would be inclined to pay attention to the hon. gentleman's electorate. But to return to my friend the leader of the Opposition: I think he will need to pay attention to his electorate and to other things. I would

advise the hon. gentleman to bestir himself; otherwise a gentleman from another sphere will overtake and beat him in the race. The hon. gentleman is drifting on to a lee shore, and if he is not careful it will be a case on all fours with the cartoon displaying the setting sun. However, I would be sorry for that, because I feel that the hon. gentleman's presence in this Chamber is worth a great deal to our party.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Do not give the show away.

Mr. THOMAS: No, perhaps I should not do so. To pass on from my congratulations to the hon. gentleman on his timely return, I wish to refer to some other little matters. In his speech the hon. member, attacking the Government, found fault with the programme put into the mouth of His Excellency the Governor, on the plea that there was only one new railway provided for the present session. I am not in sympathy with that particular railway. I have always voted against it, and I expect to have the pleasure of doing so on some future occasion.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you call it a pleasure?

Mr. THOMAS: Yes because while desirous of doing everything possible for the Esperance people I am of opinion that the advice offered by Mr. Paterson should be acted upon, and the land should be tested as to its productive capacity before embarking on the heavy expenditure involved in the construction of the railway.

Mr. McDowall: What about the people on the goldfields?

Mr. THOMAS: I am greatly in sympathy with the people on the goldfields, and generally with my hon. friend when he advocates anything in this Chamber; and I am inclined to think that if the land were put to the test it would prove successful; whereupon I, with a number of others in a similar position, would have great pleasure in voting for the railway. But until that time comes, until that test is made and the land proved successful, I must associate myself in this matter with the members of the Opposition.

Mr. McDowall: Do you not think the time has come?

Mr. THOMAS: Like the Scotchman, I hae my doots. I would like to see it proved conclusively before sanctioning the expenditure of such a large sum of money.

Mr. Green: Your attitude is that of the man who advised his son to learn to swim before taking to the water.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not see the appositeness of my friend's remarks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Do you not believe in railways in advance of settlement?

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, I do; but I want to be satisfied that the settlement will be there to build the railway for.

Mr. McDowall: What about the condition of the goldfields people?

Mr. THOMAS: I am entirely in sympathy with them in nearly all of their aspirations, and I recognise the debt of gratitude which Western Australia owes to the men of the goldfields. The position we occupy to-day is due almost entirely to the goldfields people, and the democratic party above all owes them a very great deal, and I, for one, shall not forget it. We are twitted on the fact that we have provided only one railway on this occasion. So far as I am concerned I would have been satisfied if no railway had been provided. I do not approve of the methods adopted in the past of deceiving the people by dangling before them promises of railways which cannot possibly materialise for many years to come. I consider a great deal of the poverty and misfortune which exist in the Eastern agricultural districts are due to the fact that a previous Government made promises, many of which they never had the slightest intention of carrying into effect. A number of these railways have been promised by members of the present Opposition, and since coming into power we have built them as rapidly as humanly possible, notwithstanding which we are continually blamed for not having done more. It is patent to all that the continual building of these agricultural railways out in the arid districts of Western Australia where there is a very dubious rainfall is not, at the present time, to the interests of the State as a whole. Of course, we know

that the late Minister for Lands and some of his predecessors adopted a policy of boom or burst. Like the frog who tried to swell himself to the size of a camel, the hon. gentleman boomed, and the result has been the inevitable burst. If instead of indulging in this policy of indiscriminate advertising of himself and his own Ministry to the ultimate loss of Western Australia the hon. member had adopted a sound, solid, progressive policy and settled those people who are now some of them, starving on the Eastern wheat belt—if he had settled them in the South and South-West of Western Australia where we have already most of the railways we require, and where the land is fit for permanent settlement, we would have had to-day a prosperous people on the land instead of the trouble we are encountering as the result of having encouraged these people to undertake, in some instances, a task in which they never could hope to succeed. When we had Professor Lowrie in Western Australia he informed the people that it was, generally speaking, necessary to have £500 in the way of capital before it was desirable to embark on farming in the wheat belt; but the oracle from Northam said "Professor Lowrie is wrong. You do not need any capital. I advise you to get on the land, and the Agricultural Bank will lend you all the money necessary to lead you to ultimate success." While we all recognise the value of the Agricultural Bank, particularly under sympathetic Labour administration, we recognise that one of the troubles of Western Australia to-day is the fact that people have been misled into embarking on a career of farming without sufficient capital to assist them.

Mr. Heitmann: Even so, it is better than some of the occupations they followed previously.

Mr. THOMAS: I daresay that may be so, but I think reasonable discretion should be used when placing these people on the land, and those in responsible positions should not mislead people into the belief that they will find that which they cannot and never will find. Now we have in the South-West ample land for the settlement of all the people coming to

Western Australia for a long time ahead. We have a certain rainfall, and a soil equal to any in Australia; yet the whole of this has been overlooked for years, while every effort has been made to place people on the most difficult land to settle in the whole of the State. I think the people in the South-West have a very legitimate grievance. I am sorry that previous Governments did not take up the matter more seriously, and I would like to see the present Government giving it more profound thought than they appear to be doing at present.

Mr. Taylor: How do you account for the fact that there is relatively no settlement there, although there is a network of railways?

Mr. THOMAS: It may be accounted for in many ways. The chief difficulty is that no suitable proposal has been initiated by any Government which would enable the people to grapple with the problem of land settlement in those localities. We know it is a very heavily timbered country, and although it is a very productive soil yet it is not possible for the man of small capital to settle there, unless indeed he has the advantage of a reasonable scheme provided by the Government to help him.

Mr. Taylor: What is your solution of the difficulty?

Mr. THOMAS: I think this: that we should settle people first upon the land which will make good homes for them, even if in small areas. We know that if the problem were tackled properly—and I believe the Premier intends eventually to deal with it—if the problem were tackled seriously and some assistance were given, we would have our people settled there on 50 and 100-acre blocks, happy, content and prosperous. And the immigrants coming out from the old country would be better suited in this important respect, namely, the climate of the South-West approximates more closely to what they have been accustomed to than any other of the several climates to be found in this great State.

Mr. Underwood: You would give them a chance.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, I would give them a chance, though not the chance favoured by the member for Katanning, who suggested that they should be given a chance to work for 10s. a week. If we cannot bring out men worth more than 10s. a week they must be wastrels of the worst description, and therefore should be allowed to remain in the old country, but I am not of that opinion. I am of opinion that while some of them are not quite up to the Herculean standard many of them will make excellent settlers and all of them are worth at least more than 10s. a week. While on this question it brings me to touch on the question of irrigation. It must be said and admitted that the present are the only Government who have really made any legitimate attempt to bring about an irrigation settlement in any part of Western Australia. We know that last session a Bill was introduced into Parliament for the purpose of giving certain powers to the Government to enable them to embark upon several irrigation schemes. I regret that that Bill met with a certain amount of opposition and, although I may be unkind to say it, I am firmly convinced that a large measure of the opposition against that Bill was due to an ignorance of its provisions. It may seem a hard and ungenerous thing to say, but if hon. members will take the care and trouble to peruse the Bills passed in the other States of Australia, not by Labour Governments but by Liberal and Tory Governments, they will find there is not one provision in our Bill that is any more drastic than the measures passed by the Legislatures of other States; and in Victoria, particularly, which the Western Australian Bill most resembles, the Act has been in operation and has caused no inconvenience whatever. I sincerely hope and honestly believe that a better feeling will prevail in future. A better understanding has come about on the part of those interested in the Bill and I am inclined to think that it will be passed through all its stages without any serious amount of opposition, and I sincerely hope that however high party feeling may run on other questions, however keen the dividing line might be on matters of policy, all sections of the House and com-

munity will join together in the one object of bringing about this desirable consummation. We have heard about the enormous sums of money going out of Western Australia for dairy and other products—it amounts to something like one million pounds per annum. This has gone on year after year and notwithstanding the fact that the Liberal party have proclaimed that they are the friends of the farmers and settlers and are anxious to do everything possible to make their lot prosperous and happy, while they had the power and opportunity for years and years they did nothing, and when we tried to do it they opposed us, and effectually to the extent of having the Bill thrown out. If this Bill is carried, an era of prosperity will set in in the South-West and the question asked by the member for Mount Margaret, (Mr. Taylor) will be practically settled. I am of opinion that in a few years the million pounds per annum we are sending out of Western Australia will be largely earned and retained by the people in the South-West. One irrigation scheme alone when carried to its limits, if I have worked out the thing properly, will enable us in the South-West, near my own electorate, to irrigate 40,000 or 50,000 acres of land, and the best judges I have been able to come into contact with tell me that 50 acres of land, and a reasonable portion of it irrigated, would provide a home and a prosperous living for any man. If such is the case, and I am referring to men who thoroughly understand what they are talking about, what a prospect there is ahead of us if we can only persuade the people to accept this measure? I do not think there is need for very much to be said on this question because I am satisfied that ultimately common sense will prevail and that we will be successful. I wish to take exception to the Government on one little matter or rather to the Minister for Lands. It is possible occasionally for a Labour man to disagree with one of the Ministers and in some cases with all of them.

Mr. Monger: I am surprised to hear it.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member may be surprised. I refer to the agricultural

implement works. The Minister for Lands has decided, after a good deal of delay, that the agricultural implement works shall be established somewhere in the vicinity of Fremantle.

Mr. S. Stubbs: They should be at Bunbury.

Mr. THOMAS: That is my opinion, and I will explain why I think so. I have heard the Minister for Lands on many occasions on the platform eloquently advocating the policy of decentralisation. I have heard many other Labour men doing the same thing. I have heard them say that the future of Australia—

Mr. Heitmann: He even adopted that policy to the extent of suggesting another port at Esperance.

Mr. Green: And a railway there.

Mr. THOMAS: It has been said, and I heard the then Prime Minister, Mr. Andrew Fisher, when speaking at Bunbury, say, that many of the misfortunes of Australia were due to the unfortunate policy of centralisation and, notwithstanding the fact that we have had Ministry after Ministry advocating the principle of decentralisation, we never find any one of them prepared to put it into effect, and what has been the result all over Australia?

Mr. Green: They favour it in regard to the Esperance railway and you are against it.

Mr. THOMAS: I will not be against the Esperance railway when the hon. member brings forward satisfactory proofs. What is the use of advocating a principle if, when the opportunity comes along, Ministers are not prepared to put it into effect. In my opinion the Minister for Lands made one very serious blunder when he said that the question of the site for the agricultural machinery works should be decided by the machinery expert himself. I have the very greatest admiration for Mr. Davis, the manager of this proposed undertaking, and I am satisfied that in selecting that gentleman the Government have selected an officer capable of fulfilling his duties successfully, and I am satisfied that he will create a great bene-

fit for Western Australia. But while that gentleman may understand the question of manufacturing machinery, he is not the individual who should decide the policy of the Government. He is not the best judge of the position in Western Australia where agricultural machinery works should be established.

Mr. Foley : He never even visited Leonora.

Mr. THOMAS : No. Notwithstanding the deputations which waited on the Minister for Lands he continually reiterated the statement that he would be bound by the decision arrived at by the manager of the works. I am not going to say that Bunbury is the only place that has any claims for these works, but I will say that the evidence that I placed before the Minister for Lands is absolutely convincing that it is a better place than the site selected. We took the trouble to cable to London to ascertain from the shipping companies whether they would land the raw material at Bunbury as cheaply as they would land it at Fremantle. There was previously some misunderstanding and Mr. Davis was under the impression that it would cost five per cent. more to land the material at Bunbury. We received a cable from the combined shipping companies saying that they would land the raw material at Bunbury at the same price as at Fremantle. The shipping charges at Bunbury are less than they are at Fremantle. In some cases a very considerable sum less. This is point No. 2. The cost of living, according to the Commonwealth statistician, is five per cent. cheaper in Bunbury than it is in Perth. Then there is ample land on the sea shore where the material could be dumped ready to establish the works. There are acres and hundreds of acres of vacant land ready for the establishment of workers' homes and the industry could be carried on under peaceful and happy and successful conditions.

Mr. George : And the climate is suitable.

Mr. THOMAS : And, as the hon. member reminds me, there is a suitable climate which conduces to the successful

working of any industry, and yet, in the face of all these things, the works are to be established at Fremantle.

Mr. S. Stubbs : Move a vote of no-confidence.

Mr. THOMAS : And a nice hope there would be of success in carrying it; besides, I am not so one-eyed as that. While I may have my grievance and reserve my right to ventilate it in this House, I recognise the many other great services which the Minister has rendered to this country and to his party, and I should want something more serious before I thought of moving a vote of no-confidence. But I say in the face of all these facts I am entirely at a loss to know why the works are being established at the proposed site. I am told that something like 500 men will be employed in these works. Perhaps that will be in the somewhat distant future but I am very hopeful of the success of these works and I look upon the undertaking as a great boon to Western Australia and I hope to see a large number of people employed. An addition of 500 workmen to Bunbury would have made for the prosperity of that town, and would have enabled us in shipping transactions to import from the other States and from the old Country at a lower rate than we can do to-day. It would have relieved the congestion in Perth and Fremantle to the benefit of the South-West and its port. Yet what is the benefit derived from establishing the works at Fremantle?—a mere drop in the ocean.

Mr. Heitmann : I hope the benefit will be cheap agricultural machinery.

Mr. THOMAS : But I am at a loss to see where it is coming in.

Mr. S. Stubbs : So am I.

Mr. THOMAS : Another point is that the agricultural machinery will be needed in the Eastern wheat areas and after going into the question thoroughly, we find that even the major portion of the wheat areas are in closer touch with Bunbury than with Fremantle. Narrogin and all beyond Narrogin, Wagin and many centres in that part are nearer to Bunbury than Fremantle.

Mr. Heitmann : To say nothing of the Midland line.

Mr. THOMAS : Yes, we can reach the Midland line as easily from Bunbury as from Perth. Allowing all these things where do the prospects for settlement in the future lie ? Where are we going to settle our thousands and hundreds of thousands of people on the land in the future ? Why, in the South-West and on the Great Southern. Then, if we are to have agricultural implement works to manufacture the machinery they require, where should those works be established but at the nearest spot to the point where they are likely to be used.

Mr. E. B. Johnston : Bunbury ?

Mr. THOMAS : Bunbury is the spot and the only spot in my opinion. The time will come when the works will have to be removed from where they are being established to-day and there will then be all the additional expense. I have done with that point. I am reminded that I have something I desire to say with regard to the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George).

Mr. George : Let brotherly love continue.

Mr. THOMAS : There is a bond of very strong friendship existing between the hon. member and myself and we always like to exchange compliments when the opportunity offers. I noticed that the leader of the Opposition dealt at some little length with the question of the Premier's land scandal, as it is termed, I think, and after the leader of the Opposition, the echo, or his man Friday, whichever hon. members like to call him, must necessarily follow suit. And in the course of a long and somewhat verbose utterance the hon. gentleman dwelt, among other things, upon this question, and he said he did not blame the Premier, and then after going on those lines he said he did blame him for something or other. He first sat on one side of of the fence for a while and then he sat on the other side of it and then he sat on it, and then left us in doubt as to what he actually meant. He is often in that state of ambiguity, but on this occasion it was more pronounced than ever.

I have read in the Press, and I have listened to the leader of the Opposition and to my friend, the member for Murray-Wellington, dilating on this question, and even now I cannot understand what is the charge that they are trying to make out against the Premier. Where does the charge lie ? I have been electioneering on many occasions and people have said to me, "What right have you to stand for Parliament; you have no stake in the country?" I replied, "It is not my fault; it is my misfortune." But when other members of the party get a bit of land my friends opposite say, "You have no right to it; it is against your principles to hold land; you talk against holding land and then you have the audacity to take it up yourselves." It reminds me of the story of the old man and the ass. First he tried to lead the ass, then he was told that he ought to ride it, and then he ought to carry it, and then he tied a stick between its legs and got someone to assist him to carry it, but the stick broke and the man who took everybody's advice and believed no one lost the use of his ass. If the member for Murray-Wellington tries to believe the members of the Opposition he will find himself in the position of the man with the donkey. The Premier is showing his confidence in Western Australia when he is prepared to invest his hard-earned savings in a little bit of land.

Mr. Gardiner : And it is only leasehold.

Mr. THOMAS : That is so, and it is what the Labour party have advocated, and yet some of our friends opposite have said that the Government have acted adversely to the laid-down principles. I would ask some of the hon. members opposite when they speak to be a little more lucid and to let us know exactly where the charge lies and let us know also what wrong the Premier has perpetrated, and then perhaps I will join them in the condemnation with the remainder of their supporters.

The Minister for Mines : That is the one point they have avoided.

Mr. THOMAS : Yes, and by some little innuendo they have hung a tag of sus-

picion on the actions of the leader of the Government.

The Minister for Mines: Like the Federal election charges.

Mr. THOMAS: I shall have something to say about those a little later on. I say honestly, as a supporter of the Labour party, whatever rule there may be for the members of the Opposition to question the wisdom of the policy of their opponents, there is no man in this country or elsewhere who has a right to impugn the Premier's personal honesty.

Mr. George: No one has done so.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, both indirectly in this House, by a section of the Press of Western Australia, and by some hangers-on who advocate the Liberal cause.

Mr. George: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. THOMAS: It does not suit the hon. member to recognise the fact. He is prepared to take the benefits that come from those insinuations, but he is not prepared to take the blame or the opprobrium that attaches to such doubtful conduct. The leader of the Opposition being hard pressed for matter, in his milk and watery indictment against the Government, descended to the old principle of making further charges, and he even accused the Honorary Minister of having appointed the manager of the State steamships because that gentleman had been a supporter of his at the last State elections. I wonder what we are coming to. I wonder if the Prime Minister of Australia has been taunted and accused by members of the Labour party of selecting the members of the Interstate Commission because they assisted him at the last elections. I wonder if there is one of them who did not vote the Liberal cause at one time or another. No one would take exception to that. A man would be a very poor creature indeed if he did not have some political opinions. He must be on one side or the other, and if you do not appoint a partisan you must appoint a political chameleon, a colourless sort who sits on a rail, and who has no politics because he has not intelligence enough to form a political opinion. I take no exception to the Federal Government appointing whom they like, but I do object

to this continual use of the muck rake. Surely someone should be free; surely these charges without a fragment of suspicion or a shadow of foundation will not go on for ever; surely the sense of decency of hon. members should in time rise above such things.

Mr. George: Hear, hear!

Mr. THOMAS: I only hope the hon. member who says, "hear, hear" will cease to use the muck rake and will hold his head up above the average level.

Mr. George interjected.

Mr. THOMAS: I am going to do my best to help the hon. member to retire. I have given him some little assistance on one or two occasions, but I hope on the next to be able to spare a little more time for him. We had the spectacle here the other day of members of the Opposition complaining because the Government intended to re-introduce the Public Works Committee Bill. I saw some mention in a newspaper, and I think the Premier read it the other evening, that one of the matters upon which the Federal Liberals hoped to be elected to Parliament was that it was their intention to support the introduction of such a measure.

The Minister for Mines: And it was a charge against Mr. Fisher that his Government did not do so.

Mr. THOMAS: That is so. The Liberals want this Public Works Committee appointed, they claimed, to check the reckless expenditure of public funds upon works which were not needed, and they stated that it was going to bring about the political millenium. Hon. members in this House supported those Federal Liberal candidates according to their varying abilities.

Mr. McDowall: The whole policy of the Liberal party was a policy of boards.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, and after subscribing to that platform they come to this House and find fault with the present Ministry because it is their intention to introduce a Bill which is apparently in keeping with their own principles. I wonder how far this principle of fatuous criticism is going to be carried. Like the hon. member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) I look forward to the day when

hon. members will rise above this sort of thing, when we will be able to have measures presented to Parliament and criticised upon their merits, and if they are good for Western Australia let us have them no matter from which party they may come. I was present recently at a political address when one of the members of the Liberal party was speaking, and he spoke in most—I do not know what sort of terms to describe it in—and said that the proposed Public Works Committee Bill was to be introduced purely and simply as a sort of spoils to the victors, and that some of the poverty-stricken Labour men, not content with the munificent salary they were receiving now, were discontented and wanted seats on the board. What is the position? I believe the Government have been so open-handed and generous as to propose to give the chairman of that proposed board £2 a day and the other members one guinea a day. A man would have to work a long time before he became affluent on such a salary. If that was the speaker's idea of giving spoils to the victors, a man would need to grow as old as Methuselah before he could save up enough to take a trip to England. I trust hon. members will see the error of their ways, that they will realise the position is untenable, that they are unwise and are reflecting against themselves by going counter to their leader's views. After all they take their inspirations from their more important brethren of the Federal party and they are unwise in adopting their present attitude. I hope they will realise this and that they will see the wisdom of supporting the measure when it comes before Parliament. We have also heard about the question of the non-alienation of land; I think it was mentioned by one or two of the speakers opposite. The hon. member for Katanning said that the falling-off in connection with land settlement in Western Australia was due to the fear of this bugbear, and that non-alienation of land was ultimately going to deprive them of their holdings. What do we find in connection with the Federal Government? Notwithstanding the fact that the Labour party have gone out and that there is a Liberal party in power, they have ex-

pressed their intention of carrying out the policy initiated by the Labour party in regard to the Northern Territory, and no land is to be alienated there. They also said that on account of the rush being made for settlement there that they had to put on a number of surveyors to cope with the work, and all this under the iniquitous system of non-alienation of land. It does really seem that the State Liberal party are at total variance with their wiser brethren of the Federal Parliament, who, with all their faults, are endowed with breadth of view, and are prepared to guard the future birthright of the people of Australia by adhering to the principle of non-alienation of Crown land. Future generations will therefore have their birthright in the Northern Territory reserved to them for all time.

Mr. George: They are welcome to it.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member's greed for land would impel him to oppose it. I hope the time will come when he will make full and proper use of all the land which he holds.

Mr. George: I am making good use of it now, and I am giving more employment than you are ever likely to do.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not think the hon. member is capable of making proper use of anything in particular. The only big proposition that he ever tackled proved, according to his friends and supporters, such a failure that they fired him out, and if the hon. gentleman has succeeded in his private venture this has been due more to good luck than to good management.

Mr. George interjected.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member has always been vulgar in his interjections. He is always conspicuous in two things, coarseness of mind and insufferable ignorance. The hon. gentleman has always been conspicuous for both.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you were sworn brothers a minute ago.

Mr. THOMAS: For your information I may tell you that that remark was purely ironical. I have never entertained a spark of any other feeling towards him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. THOMAS: I am sorry that I momentarily departed from that rule.

However, the hon. gentleman serves a useful purpose. We have in the Speech some mention of electoral reform. I have not the pleasure of knowing exactly what is in the minds of Ministers, but I presume it will take the shape of a redistribution of seats of some description. I am convinced that if we have a redistribution of seats it will be conducted in a manner which will not occasion this Parliament to blush for shame. I am satisfied with the promise of Ministers to every member of the party that if we do have another redistribution of seats, it will be on principles laid down by Parliament, and the work of allotting the electorates will be handed over to a commission free from Parliamentary influence. If that is done, it will not be possible to allege that the present Government have been guilty of attempting to feather their own nest. If it does come about, the leader of the Opposition will be in need of our sympathy.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will have your seat then.

Mr. THOMAS: You can never win that. If the hon. member was the only politician ever likely to compete for my seat at Bunbury, I would be able to sit there till doomsday. I am thinking also that if we have a redistribution of seats, my dear old friend the member for Murray-Wellington will have a very uncomfortable time; because he is in very close proximity to Dwellingup and Holyoake and I occasionally hear the hon. gentleman speaking in disparaging terms—

Mr. George: Never.

Mr. THOMAS: There will come a day of reckoning when the hon. member will be hurled back on the dust heap of obscurity. Once we get a fair distribution of seats in Western Australia the hon. member and his friends will all make their exit, and the places which now know them will know them no longer. However, there will possibly be an opportunity on some municipal council or roads board for the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You are a great prophet to-night.

Mr. THOMAS: Water always reaches its level and so, too, with you and your ability.

Mr. George: You are down at the dead level.

Mr. THOMAS: No, I rose above the dead level when I wrested from the Liberals a seat held by them ever since Responsible Government. And with an opportunity of less than three weeks I ran their leader to within a very few votes of his seat; and if I had had a week more, I would have had it from him.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There are many "ifs" about that.

Mr. George: You did not get on very well in the council election.

Mr. THOMAS: No, I did not succeed in the council election. They evidently do not need men of my opinions in the council. You were evidently under the impression, when you indulged in that loud guffaw, that I was going to say men of my ability, but I had no such intention. I sincerely hope this session will not go by without that Bill being introduced, and I have no doubt that if for no other reason than that of common decency or shame's sake the Bill will be passed through both Houses. Then we will have a Parliament elected on the genuine voices of the people without any of the jerrymandering which has gone on in the past. We read in the newspaper the other day an effusion by Mr. James Gardiner, at one time Treasurer in a Liberal Ministry, a gentleman who more recently tried to wrest a seat from one of my friends, but was unsuccessful. Speaking at the Farmers' Conference he went sour, to use a popular expression, on the Liberals, and said the difference between the Farmers' party and that of the Liberals was a want of sincerity on the part of the Liberals. If Mr. Gardiner does not know, he ought to. He is one of them, and without reflecting on Mr. Gardiner, we know that it is a good thing to set a thief to catch a thief, a good thing to set a Liberal to catch a Liberal. Evidently he knows the ways of his fellow Liberals and has decided that they are insincere. He does not believe in their honesty of purpose, or that they propose to live up to their professed intentions. He believes the Liberal party has outlived its usefulness and that it is time a more honest party was put forward to take its place. Whether the other party will do

that I am not sure, but we have often heard in connection with Labour politics—

Mr. S. Stubbs: That caucus runs them.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, that caucus runs them, and that we stand for class legislation.

Mr. George: Well, do you not?

Mr. THOMAS: No, we do not. I claim that the Labour movement is as wide as it is possible to be, and as broad as the needs of humanity. But what can the new party they are trying to form do if it lives up to its professed intentions, what must it be but a simple advocacy of class legislation? If it is so reprehensible as alleged against the Labour party, surely the remarks apply to the farmers' party as well. I do not hear any of my friends opposite denying it, so it must be accepted as right. Apparently they have become convinced that class legislation is necessary. But I do not think that the Liberal party look on this new association with any too kindly an eye, and as a matter of fact I am of opinion that underneath the apparently calm and unruffled surface there is a great deal of disturbance, irritation mixed with a lot of fear. Because I am satisfied that when the elections come along, and there is a doubtful seat, doubtful as to whether it should be Liberal, or farmer, we will have the farmers' and the Liberals' candidates swearing eternal allegiance. They will be opposed again by the Labour man. At the outset everything will go on smoothly, until those little personal differences inseparable from elections spring up. The farmers' representative will have reflected on the Liberal, and the Liberal will have retaliated by reflecting on the farmers' nominee, and in a short time they will be at daggers drawn. And we know that when a certain section of the community fall out, honest men get their due; and so the Labour man will come into his own, because we know that when things are reduced to their first principles the only genuine representatives the farmer has are the members of the Labour party. I do not think the farmers' representatives will ever be returned in sufficient numbers to produce any particular—

Mr. S. Stubbs: Are you going on forever?

Mr. THOMAS: Whenever the hon. member addresses the House I am a respectfully attentive listener; because I know he is a graceful exponent of oratory, and in those moments when he is illuminating the Chamber with his scintillating eloquence, I like to sit at his feet and listen.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You are too personal.

Mr. THOMAS: I am not in the least. I have the greatest admiration for the gentleman's transcendent abilities and his excellent personal qualities.

Mr. S. Stubbs: I should be sorry to have yours.

Mr. THOMAS: But I think the hon. member would shine to greater advantage as a member of a municipal council. However, I assure my hon. friend that this is only a little joke; but if the hon. member will reflect on me to the effect that I am making a long speech, it must be expected that I shall retort.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You are so sincere.

Mr. THOMAS: I try to be, and I believe I am. If the hon. member can prove I am otherwise he is welcome to do so. Whatever I may say against my friend, I have never doubted his sincerity nor his honesty of purpose. Now, I would like to say two or three words about the State mills.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Two or three words!

Mr. THOMAS: I notice the leader of the Opposition spoke at some length upon the question of State mills, and drew a very doleful picture about the ultimate result of our contract to deliver sleepers to the Federal Government. I notice that his jaundiced view of the situation has been reflected in some of the Federal Ministers in Melbourne. They have been so foolish as to take the hon. gentleman at his own valuation and accept him as an expert. I would never think of accepting him as an expert on these matters, because I have found him at fault so frequently. There was a time when the hon. gentleman posed as a financial expert, a heaven-born financier. But during the regime of the Moore Government, when the finances were drifting to leeward,

after the hon. gentleman had attempted to effect an improvement and failed, his chief was compelled to take the finances out of his hands and take charge of them himself. After that some little improvement began to manifest itself. And so it goes on with other things. I believe the hon. gentleman was at one time associated with the timber industry, and if the reports I hear of that matter are correct, the hon. gentleman ran the show on to the rocks.

Mr. George: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. THOMAS: And phoenix-like from the debris he arose to be considered a great authority on the question of sleepers and mills in general. I do not think his remarks will carry much weight. I am perfectly satisfied the mills will be a success. I am satisfied, too, that a want of patriotism was displayed by our friends in not at least giving a cheerful pat to the Government on their efforts to exploit the karri forests and thereby create a new industry that will in time supersede the jarrah industry.

Mr. Heitmann: They never knew we had karri forests until recently.

Mr. THOMAS: No, probably they did not. I have very little more I desire to say.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have not said much; anyhow.

Mr. THOMAS: Well, I will go on a little longer. I know the hon. gentleman likes listening to me, but he and the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) always look so uncomfortable when I am speaking that it gives me a great deal of comfort. One of the great problems of the future that will face present and future Governments is the question of the civil service. I am not going to say very much on this particular point, but I think it must be obvious to members on both sides of the House that this problem of the rapid growth of the civil service, and the apparent lack of proper control, has to be faced and faced effectively sooner or later. On two recent occasions when I was at the Government offices, on one occasion at 10 o'clock and another occasion at 11, I walked into two different offices and found two young lady typists

sitting back in tilted chairs and reading the *West Australian*.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Is that the morning you stopped there a couple of hours?

Mr. THOMAS: If I were a gay Lothario, like the member for Forrest, who has had so much experience in these matters, that might be excusable, but at my time of life I have long since given over those experiences. I am getting into the sere and yellow leaf and the attraction of these young damsels is not so strong as it used to be. I was going to say that if we take any one of the various Government departments, it seems to me that in the buildings each of the little sub-heads, or heads of departments, has got a little office hidden away in a wall off a corridor, and if one goes along he can generally startle somebody into activity by popping his head round the door suddenly. It is my belief that before this or any other Government will get from the service a reasonable return for a reasonable remuneration, these rabbit hutches of offices will have to be done away with, and the officers in one department will have to be collected in one big room in a large building with a central office from which the whole may be supervised. I do not wish to cast any reflection on honest officers, and there are many of them in the service, but I am satisfied that there is many thousand pounds of public money being wasted by men who will never make any attempt to earn it.

Mr. Broun: That is a serious charge.

Mr. THOMAS: I say many of them. I give credit to those who are giving honest and loyal service to Western Australia, but it is not fair to them that others should be given an opportunity of escaping their just share of work.

Mr. George: That is a charge against the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. THOMAS: No, nor is it a charge against any Minister, because I believe that they are doing all that is humanly possible under existing conditions, but those conditions will need to be altered before a better state of things can come about. I hope the time will be hastened when the officers can be put into one room and properly supervised, so that they will

do a fair day's work in return for a fair day's wage.

Mr. Gill: It would not be a difficult matter to pull a number of partitions down.

Mr. THOMAS: Well, if that were done, we would get increased efficiency. There is one measure referred to in the Speech with which I would like to deal briefly, and that is the Initiative and Referendum. Hon. members opposite have expressed the desire to have an opportunity to appeal to the people. They look forward with anxiety to the time when they will have to go to the country and obtain an expression of the will of the people. If members of the Opposition will assist us, we will be able to carry through this Chamber and another place a Bill providing for the Initiative and Referendum, and we will then give to the people, and to ourselves, if need be, the power to initiate a referendum on any question of importance. If the members of the Liberal party have such overwhelming confidence in the people, and are prepared to trust the issue in their hands at all times, and look forward with faith to the result, we shall have them advocating this principle. In my opinion, if we carry that one measure, we will have attained to something approximating to what the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) longs for, and that is to do away in some measure with the intense bitterness of party feeling. Once we give the people this power to take a hand when Parliament goes beyond its limit, and we are able to bring a man to a halt and say, "In the last appeal of all the people themselves shall answer the questions," there will be a lot less of party bickering and bitterness of spirit, because members will know that they can only go in the direction that the will of the people directs. This principle has been adopted in some of the States of America and in Switzerland, and has worked excellently; and it is claimed by the President of the United States to be one of the finest pieces of legislation that has ever been passed through any Parliament in the world. He claims that it has done away with graft and the Tammany Hall principle, that it has brought about

many additions to reform and that it is desirable in every respect. It would give back into the hands of the people some of the power that they entrusted to Parliament, and it must be recognised by all that in the principle of handing back to the people some of their power we are basing our legislation upon the very bed-rock of democratic principle itself. For that reason I hope that, though everything else fails, this measure will find itself before the session ends upon the statute-book of this State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): In contributing a few remarks to the debate this evening, I feel somewhat diffident in following the member for Bunbury, who has just concluded, seeing that in the recent Federal campaign he was described by no less a light than the leader of the Opposition as practically the finest speaker in the Labour party.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did I say that?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, at Bunbury. I take it that if the Address-in-reply serves no other useful purpose, it at least gives an opportunity to members on both sides to air any grievances that may come under their notice, and to claim some recognition of the requirements of their respective electorates. The Government might be congratulated on the improved prospects that at the present time loom up, because after all it is some consolation to know that, if the deficit is growing to some extent, our crops are growing also, and with a season such as we anticipate, the anxiety that has dogged the footsteps of the Government ever since they took office will be at an end. Dealing with some of the proposals that have come before the House during the debate, I may mention a few local matters that have received some little attention at the hands of the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George). One of these is the proposed Lake Clifton railway. From the report and observations of experts, who alone are competent to speak there are in this locality such magnificent lime deposits as will warrant the early construction of a spur railway from Waroona, or somewhere on that line, to be eventually extended into the valuable

tuart forests there, and I believe that the Government should take this matter in hand at once. I do not claim preference for this line over those which have already been authorised by Parliament, but seeing how much such a line would mean to our settlers, particularly those in the wet districts, by providing them with a most valuable product for the sweetening of their soil, I believe the Government would receive the commendation of the people if they made an honest effort at once to give that district railway facilities. Perhaps, one thing that will stand in the way of the consummation of this project is the agitation for a coastal railway. I do not think, however, that public opinion or the advice of experts will favour that proposition, and, consequently, I would like to see put in hand at once a short spur line of some 14 miles to open up these deposits which our farmers require so much.

Mr. Bolton: The coastal line will not be antagonistic to the spur.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Whether that be so or not, neither the experts of the Government nor the people of the State will be likely to give approval to the building of another railway that is parallel to the sea-coast and parallel with the railway from the metropolis to Bunbury at the present time. We notice in the Speech that the Irrigation Bill, which has been so much talked of in this House and elsewhere, is about to be reintroduced, and I sincerely hope that the common sense of the elected representatives of the people will this time prevail, and that a measure of so much import to the South-West will receive a speedy passage. I can endorse all that was said by the member for Bunbury in regard to the possibilities of the South-West; with its assured rainfall, it is verily a land of rain and sunshine. The settlers find a difficulty, however, in the dry summer months in carrying on intense culture, owing to the lack of facilities for the storage of the water that runs into the sea during the winter months. I am sure the Bill will meet with approval in this Chamber, and I hope that in another place there will be no opposition, so that the South-West portion of the State may soon enjoy the benefits of that

measure. I have also a grievance against the Government in regard to a railway that they started in my electorate and which was handed over to the Working Railways to-day, the Pinjarra-Hotham line. It has been under construction for a considerable time, and I believe that sections of it should have been opened long ere this. I want to express my opinion that the Government have too long delayed in handing it over to the Railway Department, or, if it was not economical to hand it over, and I believe it was not, a reduction of charges might have taken place.

The Minister for Works: We made a reduction.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: A very slight reduction was made, but the reduction was nothing compared with what it should have been. The rate was an impost not only on settlers at the other end, but on the timber men in the immediate vicinity, and I hope that the Minister for Works, when replying, will prove that the reduction was of some substantial benefit to the residents along that particular line. I have, in my possession, instances of the rates which were charged, and I venture to say that the line was too long delayed in being handed over. I want to express my opinion in regard to our railway construction, that I believe a different method will have to be adopted. I believe the administration of the Railway Department is getting rather too much for one Commissioner.

Mr. Bolton: They are increasing it now by giving him charge of the trams.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I consider that an effort will have to be made in future to try to bring about a better system whereby a board or an additional Commissioner will be appointed. I, in common with other members, have had opportunities for observing the system carried on in this State, and I say that there is a great lack of facilities. Trains are not running to time, and the facilities provided in the compartments are not what they should be in an up-to-date railway system, and while I do not wish to blame the powers that be to a great extent, I do say that the system in this State is getting out of hand.

I venture to say that a good deal of the blame lies at the door of the preceding Government in regard to the matter of spur railways, or, at any rate, in regard to some of the spur railways. If the Government will agree, I intend to call for a return showing the expenditure on some of these spur lines. There is one railway over which I travel fairly frequently—the Dowerin-Merredin railway—and I desire to have a return covering the period since the department took over that proposition, showing the cost of ballasting and of putting the line in order. I say, without fear of contradiction, that it is the worst spur line in Western Australia, and that it is absolutely a curse to travel on it. It is a common experience to be hung up at railway sidings for twenty minutes, and to cover the 130 miles from the City occupies from 7 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. I say that this is due to the fault of the late Government in taking over the railway from the contractors without insisting upon the line being up to the standard. If that was not so, why the necessity now for spending scores of thousands of pounds in ballasting and putting the line in order so that trains can creep along at a little better rate than 15 miles an hour.

The Minister for Mines: A sum of £25,000 is required to put that line in order.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I intend to call for a return showing the cost of that railway since it was taken over, compared with the expenditure on other spur lines which have been carried out, though perhaps with a little more delay, under departmental supervision. Even if we have to wait a little longer for a railway to be built by departmental construction and put up with some delay, we get better material and have a better proposition to hand over to the Working Railways Department. Dealing with the criticism which has been levelled against the Government, owing to the fact that they have launched out upon State enterprises, I noticed that the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) while speaking the other evening, disclosed a remarkable dis-

covery which he had made. It seems to have emanated from his colossal intellect that the reason why the Government are going in for State enterprises is that they might fix a certain wage for the employees in these enterprises, and make that wage a common rule. I wonder how this ever occurred to that hon. gentleman.

Mr. George: Is not that so?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: How did the hon. member make this great discovery? The Labour party have never concealed the fact that in pinning their faith to State enterprise they not only have a chance of improving the conditions of the working people but of giving the public the benefit of a better commodity that might be produced by State enterprise.

Mr. George: They have not shown it yet.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I challenge the hon. member to frame an indictment against State enterprise and to point out from one end of Australia to the other where a State enterprise, once in the hands of the people, has gone back into private hands. So far as I know only one has reverted to private hands, and that is the small ice works in Adelaide, and it was done under the administration of a Liberal Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And a State copper mine in South Australia is going back into private hands now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That might be so, but it is remarkable that after all the condemnation hurled during recent months against enterprises carried out by the Federal Government and by State Governments, when Mr. Cook took his place in Parliament, he intimated that he does not propose to repeal or alter one piece of legislation which was passed by the Fisher Government, except in the matter of one or two little details.

Mr. George: You do not know what he will do yet.

Mr. Munsie: And Mr. Cook does not know, either.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There is one matter to which I wish to refer, and I would like to say that I have never before talked about roads and bridges in this House. This is a small matter but there are occa-

sions when one possibly is justified in dealing with a matter of minor significance. I find that there is a proposal on foot by the Works Department to abolish the only local governing body in my electorate, namely, the Jarrahdale Roads Board. I will point out the necessity, or the apparent necessity, for taking that step. The Public Works Department cannot show me where any saving can be effected, or where the pruning knife can be applied, because the cost of the administration under the amalgamated board will be the same as it is to-day. We have this fact to put forward, that now that the board have double the rating power they have an immense area of country to supervise, and if they are allowed to continue, they will double their revenue under a decision given by the Supreme Court not long ago. The department propose to take action, though they will not do so if I can prevent it, owing to the fact that the concessionaires, having got their hands on to a quarter of a million acres of country refuse to encourage settlement, and refuse to allow people to take up country which is within 30 miles of the metropolis. There is not much to be gained by crying out or locking the stable door after the horse has escaped but paternal Governments have given a company a lease extending over 50 years, of a quarter of a million acres of country at £50 a year rental.

Mr. George: No, they pay £50 for the first ten years, and then £500.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am satisfied that I am correct, and I am prepared to prove exactly what I say, that £50 a year is the rental. I am not going to speak on a proposition of this kind without having a full knowledge of the figures.

Mr. George: I think you are incorrect.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The point I wish to make is this: that I consider it is absolutely a reflection on past Administrations that in all these fertile valleys, a quarter of a million acres of country, within a few hours' run from Perth, a settler cannot take up the smallest holding. The concessionaires refuse to encourage settlement, the mills are cut out for the greater portion, but the concession will not be

abandoned, and the concessionaires steadfastly refuse to encourage settlement. If we had the numbers we could pass a measure compelling them to allow some of this country to revert to the Crown, but to do so would carry an obligation on the part of the Crown to compensate them on any claims which they might put forward. I regret that such a deal was made in the past, that what is absolutely a principality has been given to this company, and to-day in what should be one of the best districts in Western Australia, carrying a population of hundreds of families, some of the best orchard land to be found right through our hills within a few hours' run of Perth, settlement is arrested and not one settler is allowed to go on this land. I mention these facts to point out the difficulty we have brought upon ourselves by being so generous in the past, and the difficulty we shall bring about in future if we adopt the policy of the member for Murray-Wellington by giving further consideration to these companies who to-day snap their fingers at public effort, and are absolutely devoid of patriotism in pushing the country which has treated them so well.

Mr. George: There are different conditions to-day.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If administrators in the past had had sufficient foresight to see the development which would take place they would not have allowed the concessions and the big permits to be given to enable these companies to denude the country of its timber, and after having done that, to withhold the land from settlement. When they got the country at a peppercorn rental to cut timber on the slopes of the Darling Range, they took the land for the timber, and once the timber is removed the State should be allowed to step in and settle its own people there, without having to pay enormous sums by way of compensation.

Mr. George: Nearly everyone who tried it went bankrupt on it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That statement of the hon. member is extraordinary, because in the very same district settlers outside that concession have established them-

selves and made prosperous homes for themselves.

Mr. George: I am speaking of the timber companies.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They are not losing money now.

Mr. George: That is another thing altogether.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is a remarkable thing that these people who lose money and who keep on losing it, do not go out of the business.

Mr. George: They went bankrupt, and the concession changed hands.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: When the concessionaires have denuded these areas of their timber they want a paternal Government to step in and give them a lump sum, or else provide another area of country for them to operate upon, and we have this experience, which I regret, and I begrudge every penny that the late Government had to pay in order to buy back the Denmark estate, a proposition that was worthless to the concessionaires. Yet the previous Government paid £50,000 for two streaks of rust and some scores of thousands of pounds have since been spent in trying to settle our people there, and owing to enormous losses, to bungling administration, and a lack of experience, the taxpayers have to bear a burden of £30,000 and interest charges written off by the present Minister for Lands. It is hopeless to expect settlers to subdue nature, and make profitable holdings if they are burdened down with a debt contracted owing to the fact that liberal conditions were in the past given to these companies. Not only did the late Government give £50,000 for the Denmark estate, but the present Government were compelled to take over the Karridale concession a few weeks ago. The member for Murray-Wellington almost sobbed in the House the other evening when he spoke about the closing up of the Karridale concession, and stated that 250 families had been removed from that area. In reply to his statement, I wish to say that for years past only one mill has been cutting on that area and that mill had a capacity of 40 loads a day. If the hon. member can tell me that a 40-load

mill can keep 250 families going, then there is something peculiar about it.

Mr. George: That is different from the information given to me by some of the people who had to shift.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then the hon. member's information is wrong, and he should be careful to have an authoritative statement before repeating it in Parliament. I am prepared to wager that 250 families have not been on Karridale for a long time, and I will go further and say that if applications have been turned down by the present Government for additional country in the Karridale district, it is owing to officers of the Government having reported against it. I hope the member for Murray-Wellington will take this fact to heart that when this particular concession was being cut out, the member for that district for six years was the leader of the Opposition. The member for the district was even Premier, or second in command of a Government, and if these people had had a genuine claim and had lodged it before him they would have received the extra territory to operate on.

Mr. George: Some of you might have charged him with having had his palm greased.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What an estimate of human nature and of public morality to say that, because the head of the Government or the second in command had approved in Cabinet of giving an area of country, provided it was justified, to enable 250 or even 50 families to make a living, there would be a charge that the Minister had had his palm greased! Only one with a guilty conscience would utter an interjection of that kind.

Mr. Lewis: The hon. member judges people by his own standard.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In regard to Karridale, the action taken by the present Government in purchasing the line and the available freehold land also was the only action that could be taken. I regret that it had to be taken, but a number of small settlers have been allowed to locate themselves in Karridale during recent years and the same applies to other concessions. When the companies are about

to cease operations, they encourage a few settlers, and when the timber is cut out there is an agitation for railway facilities, and a paternal Government have given away this country and given the right to operate it over a couple of decades, and then, by the payment of public cash, they have secured the facilities and improved them as time went on. I say it is time that this State cried a halt. I am going to ask the Minister for Works to stay his hand with regard to that local governing body; at every possible opportunity I am going to direct the attention of the taxpayers of Western Australia towards what has been given away to these concessionaires, a thing that will prove an obstruction to the people in this State. Referring to some remarks made by the leader of the Opposition with regard to State sawmills—I have his speech here, but need not read his remarks—I notice that he ventured the opinion that the State would not be able to complete its order in view of the fact that there was so much delay in construction, that we would be woefully left, and that possibly there would be a claim against us for non-fulfilment of the agreement. I am in fairly constant touch with the district where the State sawmills are being erected, and I know the gentleman under whose auspices they are being erected, and he is one of the most practical men in Western Australia, so far as mill building is concerned.

Mr. George: To whom are you referring?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Mr. Properjohn.

Mr. George: A very good man.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am glad that the cry of "spoils to the victors" does not come in there. The works being erected under Mr. Properjohn's supervision consist of three mills of the rated capacity of 45 loads of sawn timber for every eight hours, but the manager is confident that he can turn out more. The output of Trans-Australian railway sleepers will be 30 loads a day and the balance will be scantling. Two of the mills working double time would have a cutting capacity equal to five mills, and this will mean an output of 150 loads of sleepers, and 75 loads of scantling, which is at the rate of

60,000 sleepers a month; and even if there is a slight shortage, even if these 60,000 are not sufficient, the orders for scantling could be cut down to some extent to provide for a greater output. Our opponents will immediately say that this is where the difficulties of the Government are going to arise, and that we are not going to get a market for the scantling, but so far as I can learn—and we will have the full facts when the powellising agreement is discussed on the specific motion—I understand that inquiries are coming in from all sides for these scantlings, and even local firms are negotiating for the supplies that will be available. Apart from that, the cost of the mills and plant will not, as was alleged by the leader of the Opposition, be over £250,000, but the authorities are confident that it should be possible to erect, equip, and have them in working order for less than £150,000. So far as these mills are concerned, they have not been under way for the length of time alleged by the leader of the Opposition. The siding for one was started 14 months ago, but the actual building did not commence until last spring, while with regard to the other two mills at that picturesque locality, Big Brook, they were started only in February last, and are rapidly nearing completion. I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the State saw mill enterprises are going to achieve their purpose, and that the department are going to supply their orders, also that they are going to demonstrate that this new industry can be brought into active life, and that a large population will follow in the wake of the axemen in that region. May I point out to those gentlemen who propose to condemn this industry, and when they say we should utilise jarrah, the proved timber, that if we wanted to make out a case for karri, we could say that reports from Port Augusta show that in some instances the ants have attacked jarrah that has not been treated. We are reminded that jarrah has got the world's market, and is the best hard wood timber produced to date, but I want members to concentrate their attention on the fact that our jarrah export is falling. Last year our export figures for oversea fell by £70,000. There

was a £70,000 reduction in the produce of that commodity sent overseas, and we have to ask ourselves where is this serious decline going to end? As the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) claims to be a practical man, I ask him whether it is not a wise policy if we can demonstrate the efficacy of this powellising treatment, and give this karri industry a chance to settle 5,000 men where there are 500 to-day, and put on to the world's markets the £20,000,000 worth of karri standing there to-day.

Mr. George: I practically said that last session.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Well, the hon. member is making a big noise this session.

Mr. George: Only as to the wisdom of the agreement.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the hon. member has gone into the expert's opinions, both for and against the efficacy of the powellising treatment, it is his duty as a patriot to give his State the benefit of what little doubt there is, instead of upbraiding the authorities because they have secured a sleeper contract in connection with the great national project.

Mr. George: That is not the point; it is that the agreement is not a wise one.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not propose to go into the merits of that agreement just now. We will have a full chance of doing so when the motion is discussed next week. I want to ask the hon. member when he is condemning State enterprises, and telling the people that we are wasting money in establishing State saw mills, whether he is prepared to go to the full extent of moving a vote of censure in that respect, and whether he wants it to go out into the highways and byways of the State that he considers this Government is doing wrong in powellising the karri. Let me refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), who a few weeks ago addressed a letter to the electors of the district of Forrest, advising them to awake, arise, and annihilate the candidate who was seeking the Labour suffrage. When the hon. member for Northam was sitting on the Treasury bench he took the then Premier (Hon. Frank Wilson), the Attorney General (Mr. Nanson), and the Minister for

Mines (Mr. Gregory) into the district on a previous occasion.

Mr. Bolton: What about the hon. member for Murray-Wellington?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He was silent on that occasion. Mr. Nanson and the Premier went to Nanga Brook where the Labour candidate polled 81 votes to 4, and Mr. Gregory and Mr. Mitchell went to Mornington, where the voting was 92 to 3, so possibly the hon. member for Northam in sending a letter that day asking the people of Forrest to do their duty, thought his written appeal would have more effect than the spoken word. I want to ask the hon. member for Northam, who is not in his place, when he states it is a heinous offence for the present Government to give the right to cut over those 15,000 acres of country, what value does he place on this 15,000 acres? I have reason to believe that not one tree on that 15,000 acres will be cut owing to difficulties confronting that company, but I ask the hon. member for Northam where is his consistency, because while he was sitting there as Minister for Lands he authorised the sending of gangs into that country and the ring-barking of thousands of acres of the finest forest land a man could set eyes on, and declaimed by sending destroyers into the country that it was worthless. I ask the hon. member for Northam, or any other gentleman who likes to support him when he is talking about disaster following the footsteps of the Government, to put the facts before the people, and ask them whether they approve of public cash being spent in the destroying of forest only to see another one growing up before the settler can get a footing there, or do they approve of making that country a hive of industry by sending down there within the last few months 500 wage earners who are blazing a track for 5,000 to follow. Even if there is some slight doubt that the treated timber will not last the number of years the experts say it will, we are justified in giving the State the benefit of that doubt, and in attempting to make this place the Warrnambool of Western Australia, enabling the people to build up homes for themselves, and establishing a permanent population in the district. I want to re-

fer now to the hon. member for Murray-Wellington, because if ever there was an egotist who found his way into Parliament it is that gentleman. I do not mind him telling us about the number of canals he has constructed, the mileage of railways he has built, and so on—

Mr. Heitmann: And the 110 years he has lived.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I remember in reckoning up the number of years he has been engaged in various industries and displaying his great business acumen, that I saw in some paper that this gentleman had taken part in the construction of Noah's ark, and had been a pannikin boss at the construction of King Solomon's temple. If he has taken that part in big enterprises that he says he has taken, then I think he is too old to be in Parliament. The other evening the hon. member for Murray-Wellington said I received a good amount of criticism in my electorate because of the actions of this Government in giving a certain tract of country to the South-West Timber Hewers' Co-operative Society, Limited. I want to point out in the first place that the society came into existence in 1904, when a body of workmen thought they could get a better result from their efforts by entering into the timber trade. The Daglish Government gave them about 17,000 acres of country which in four years they cut out. The Moore Government in 1908 granted them 20,000 acres for a reserve. They have spent up to the present £40,000 on this area. In 1912, an area of 38,000 acres north of Muja was made available, or at least it was granted. Experts had come and inspected the country, but it was not get-at-able, and not possible to be reached by railways except at great expense, and this particular company acquired that area, and not being in a position to equip their plant and not being allowed to do the same as other companies had done in the past, that is, put a few sheets of iron on the land, together with a donkey engine and let it remain there for years, they had to look for fresh country, because in the area granted at Holyoake there was not sufficient reserve for hewing purposes to enable the mill to keep going. It will be understood that in giving a sawmill

permit in this case there was an area reserved for the mill so that the mill should work out its own cost. On representation being made to the Government they granted 5,000 acres and this was settled with 200 families. The member for Murray-Wellington states that at the time the Government granted that area a large number of sleeper cutters were put off.

Mr. George: I did not say that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member declared that I had not come through the criticism scathless.

Mr. George: That is right.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In regard to that area the Public Works Department were operating there with 250 men. When this Government came into office they found railway material lacking and there was such a condition of chaos regarding cutting that immediately 500 men were put on to procure these timber supplies, and after getting depôts established, that camp had to diminish, with the result that 200 or 150 men had to seek fresh fields. I ask the member for Murray-Wellington would he have kept the camp cutting timber if the market was not there? The only thing they could do was to cry a halt and that was cried not only by the Works Department but by the railways, because the Commissioner of Railways had then a quarter of a million sleepers stacked in the Brunswick railway yard. The member for Murray-Wellington was referring to quite a different proposition. He referred to the fact that 38,000 acres of virgin bush was given in the Holyoake district. The area of 38,000 acres is 100 miles away from Holyoake. There was 100 miles of Holyoake country given, and while it was virgin bush, it was of such a poor character—

Mr. George: That does not make my statement incorrect.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am putting the position right. The hon. member said that the society had received favoured treatment at the hands of this Government and the inference is that other territory was not granted to other companies. That is not so. Let me point out to hon. members what has been granted during recent times. I want to make the position clear. I for one do not favour the

granting of these areas, but they were granted in spite of my protest. It shows that no favoured treatment is meted out to applicants for land as far as the present Government are concerned. Since the Government came into office the Kauri Timber Company of New Zealand secured 58,000 acres. The Minister for Works has applied through the department for 1,727 acres; Mr. A. S. Mann, of Collie, applied for 8,000 acres; the South-West Timber Hewers, 5,000 acres, and Mr. Robert Bunning, 8,000 acres. Hon. members will see that areas of from 58,000 acres down to 8,000 acres have been taken up by private firms since the Government have come into office. Hon. members should not run away with the idea that I have supported the granting of these areas in every case. I want to make it clear that I am not able to stop this kind of thing. If departmental officers recommend the applications for approval, the Minister gives effect to the recommendation.

Mr. George : You are missing my point.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : I do not think I am. If there is a point I have failed to see it is because it is so blunt.

Mr. George : Why make fish of one and fowl of another?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Is it doing so when this company takes 5,000 acres in the vicinity of their original area and the New Zealand Kauri Company get 58,000 acres; Mr. Mann, 8,000 acres; Mr. Bunning, 8,000 acres; and the Minister for Works, 17,267 acres. Millars' also applied for a small acreage.

Mr. George : Of jarrah?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Yes.

Mr. George : Why not karri so as to keep all these people going?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Why did they not apply for it? There is ample karri country available from Manjimup right through to Denmark. Twelve years ago I worked in the karri industry when the sawmills there employed 600 men. When that was worked out, why did they not apply for more? They have applied since, but the State

has said, "We can get a better return for this commodity." As far as the granting of areas is concerned, the society has not had any favoured treatment. I want to say that as a body of working men they have not been given opportunities that were not given to others. They have, however, increased the rate of wages to the hewer and they have lifted the minimum to 9s. a day, while the other companies, the powerful and wealthy, which have always adopted a dog-in-the-manger policy, are still paying the minimum rate of 8s. per day. If the Government have recommendations before them for the granting of country when a small concern, operated by 300 men and employing 500, puts in a reasonable claim and they show that the conditions are such that their employees are more satisfied than the employees of others, I believe then, if there is any preference to be shown they should get it.

Mr. George : It was not the preference which was questioned.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : The hon. member asked why the society should have had favoured treatment. I have exploded that argument and he is now getting on to another track.

Mr. George : I have not touched it at all.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : That reminds me that as far as the question of the timber industry is concerned, I want to express disappointment that up to the present time no conservator has been appointed. I have blamed Governments in the past and I am not going to cease blaming them until they do their duty. I am not saying anything against the present occupant of the position, but if he is fit for it he should get the salary provided; if not he should make way for another man. It should be possible to get a man with a knowledge of forestry matters to put the industry on a proper footing and get the return from it that the people have a right to expect. We have dawdled on under this administration, but the responsibility rests with the Government to say whether the gentleman who holds the position now is fit to occupy the

higher position of conservator. If he is let him cease being acting inspector general and make him conservator and put on him the responsibility for a forestry policy. If he is not fit for the task, let us utilise the amount passed on the Estimates year after year and get an officer who will fill the post and who will lay down a policy which will bring the best return. If the Government do not take action I will return to the question when the Estimates are before the House and I will have sufficient material on which to take a division if the Minister is not prepared to give effect to the policy he said he intended to follow twelve months ago, when he made provision on the Estimates for the increased salary. Again, I want to bring under the notice of the Government the absolute necessity for the appointment of an inspector of sawmills. Representations have been made to the Minister but they have not been given effect to. I hope, however, that in the near future some action will be taken, because the number of accidents which occur through defective machinery and gear is appalling.

The Minister for Mines: Provision is being made in the Factories Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope effect will be given to it on the passing of that Bill, or if the Bill should not go through that the Minister will take independent action. I can assure the Minister that a vast amount of money is being paid by the various friendly societies and a number of the powerful unions operating in that industry, and I think it is a fair proposition that we should endeavour to minimise this expenditure. If it is a fair thing to appoint experts and inspectors to discover grubs in orchards, and inspectors also in connection with other industries, it should be a fair thing to appoint an inspector who will bring a little more safety into this industry and prevent the large amount of human toll which is extracted from the industry to-day. I sincerely trust that the Government will not lose sight of the urgent necessity for making provision in that regard. I have referred to the settlement of the 250 families over which the member for Mur-

ray-Wellington shed crocodile tears the other evening when pleading for them, and I now just want to deal with one other matter, the question of the Forrest election on which the member for Murray-Wellington also dealt at considerable length. I thought it remarkable that when the Liberal party, which threatens to be absorbed by the new organisation of the farmers and settlers—the hon. member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) may shake his head. Opposition members will have to sink their Liberal principles.

The Minister for Mines: It will not be a very big load to sink.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I venture the opinion that some of the electors on the Great Southern railway will show allegiance to the farmers and settlers unless the Liberal members will endorse their platform. If 15 farmers and settlers' representatives find their way into this House, I can assure them they will not get any more for that industry than Parliament is prepared to give them to-day.

The Minister for Works: They will not get as much.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Theirs is a selfish policy which should not be encouraged. I want to express the opinion that when a new party is born in a country they generally come into the public eye with a broad national policy, something that will appeal to the higher nature of the community.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Gardiner says of the Liberals that they are not sincere.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: At the same time, if I were a farmer or a settler I would not pin my faith to the new party. I would pin it to the old, no matter if I knew they had all the faults we know they possess to-day. As far as the new association is concerned, it threatens to cause considerable trouble in the near future, but we on this side of the House need not worry about that.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You will worry at the next elections.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I can assure the hon. member that no member on this side of the House is losing any sleep about the result of the next elections.

Every party that is introducing new legislation which has a tendency for a time to disturb conditions will receive a setback. But I would ask the hon. member for Wagin not to build up too many hopes. We may lose a seat or two, we may gain a seat or two, but as to the general results I am convinced the people of Western Australia will pin their allegiance once more to the party at present in power. The member for Murray-Wellington made a good deal of capital out of the fact that in the Forrest electorate the Premier got a shaking when the nominee of this Government had a pretty hard tussle in the recent election. It is significant that when the Liberal party, whose sincerity is challenged, sent a young man and a novice into the field to carry their banner, they did not rally around him. If he was good enough to be sent into that electorate he should have been good enough to be accorded some support. This, however, can be said of the gentleman who was chosen, that while he was not much of a speaker, he was rather a good singer and when his audiences did not like his speeches they thoroughly enjoyed his singing. He opened his meetings with a song, and the organiser played, while at the conclusion of each meeting they reversed the performance. Occasionally the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) came in with a little fireworks. The member for Murray-Wellington is the only gentleman officially representing the Liberal party who thought it worth while to go out through the electorate and preach his party's policy. Surely if the other members of the party are convinced that the principles of the party are sound, and go to the bedrock of our industrial ills, they ought to have gone out and spoken a word on behalf of their candidate. The member for Murray-Wellington went to several places and assisted the song and dance artists.

Mr. George : That is not right.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Well, he spoke and waved his arms at half a dozen centres, and has since taken exception in the House to my having sent a wire to Jar-

rahdale to the effect that I was going there to speak. Although I had represented Jarrahdale for five years, I had only spoken there twice. On the last occasion I took with me the Minister for Works in order that he might discuss with the roads board the abolition of the roads board, which was to come about in three or four days' time; and because I sent a telegram ahead asking a certain gentleman to take the chair for me, the member for Murray-Wellington takes exception, on the score, I can only think, that I was trespassing on his preserves. Something was said of the votes I got at the last election, as compared with those I secured at the Federal election. At all events I got more than half the votes which I won at the Federal election, whereas my opponent did not get half of those cast for the Liberal candidate at the Federal elections.

Mr. George : However, he saved his deposit.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : What a noble ideal, what a hope for the future, what magnificent possibilities when an election in which the member for Murray-Wellington takes a prominent part stumping the country, when in such an election the Liberal candidate saves his deposit.

Mr. George : You reckoned we were going to lose it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Nothing of the sort; I knew there would be difficulty in respect to the rolls, and I said so; that was all. Over 1,000 names were missing and there were on the rolls names of persons who had not been there for five years. I want to warn my friend that if he thinks, as Mr. Tuckfield thinks, that it is going to be a Liberal seat when the timber is cut out, he will require to put on a lot of armour and keep his ammunition perfectly dry. I am convinced that when the next State election takes place, if I am again selected by my fellows to represent them, instead of the Liberal candidate getting one in five votes he will not get one in ten.

Mr. George : We will have a try.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : So long as the member for Murray-Wellington comes down, I will be satisfied. I want him to

come into my electorate, because he causes a lot of amusement, because, as the Minister for Lands remarked the other night, he is an amusin' cuss. So far as that last election is concerned I have been subjected to adverse comment. Some of the poisoned paragraphs of the provincial Press have not given to the public a very high opinion of me personally. But any member of the public might be subject to this sort of criticism. I do not mind it so long as I am conscious that the men and women of the timber belt, who have known me for the last ten or twelve years, still have confidence in me. Given that, I am not concerned about what the Press or the member for Murray-Wellington may say of me. They say I have showed contempt for the people who stood by me. I do not take on any big contract in reference to my electorate without the approval of my electors, and no matter what paragraphs may have found their way into the Press, I am here to-night after having won an election by a majority of 1,000, having spoken at three places out of 22, and with the rolls in the worst state of any in Western Australia. I take that verdict, and I say to my Press friends who have written me down, "The people in the Forrest electorate are the best judges, and I take their verdict to be a sufficient reply to all criticisms." Now, ladies and gentlemen—

Mr. Heitmann: I thought you were on the stump all right.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Mr. Speaker, before concluding I wish to make one or two observations in regard to a couple of items in the Government policy. In respect to the public works policy I wish to express my admiration of the activity shown by the Public Works Department in carrying on a stupendous policy of rural development. There is no doubt in my mind that when people cry for more haste they are crying for something which the country cannot give them. The population is too small. We have a growing revenue, it is true, but in a new country where so many pioneering difficulties present themselves we have also a growing expenditure. We have to depend, to a

great extent, on loan funds, and although the Premier has been deservedly congratulated on the success that attended his efforts at the hub of Empire we must admit that notwithstanding the success of those efforts we have borrowed an immense amount of money. We will have to borrow in the future in order to meet our commitments, and I say it would be a foolish policy to go beyond what we are going to-day. People are crying out for more facilities. I have four brothers farming in this country, some of them on the route of a railway sanctioned by Parliament, but in respect to which there is no immediate prospect of its being built, and I am prepared to frankly admit the difficulties of a small community carrying out a huge constructive policy and these big expensive works which are the natural corollary of trade development. Therefore, I am satisfied that the Governor's Speech should contain reference to only one railway. I believe that it is quite sufficient for this session. I have never seen the Esperance country, but I have been through the Lake Grace country, which is very good; I have been through the Gnowangerup district, which I regard as the best in Western Australia, bar none; and I believe the Esperance country is within the influence of the coastal rains. That being so I do not believe that we are taking any very great risk in giving Parliamentary authority for the construction of the railway.

Mr. S. Stubbs: For an east and west line.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That would be a selfish move. Why drag the settlers up the line a couple of hundred miles when the port is within 50 miles of their holdings?

Mr. S. Stubbs: A port that will require an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If that money has to be expended I will rejoice, because the harbour will only be developed as the hinterland requires it. Even the member for Wagin would not suggest that it would be necessary to spend £30,000 in building a harbour before any produce at all could be taken away through it. I take it that a

great deal of the produce could be shipped through the harbour without any great expenditure, and if, as the development of the land proceeds, an expenditure of even £50,000 was warranted for the development of the harbour, then it should be approved by the House. I do not wish to see the Esperance district the Lazarus of West Australian districts. I believe that a great deal of that country is within the influence of the coastal rains, and I trust the representatives of the people—representatives who have always given their sanction to the provision of facilities for other districts—will recognise the claims of those Esperance settlers. Just a word in regard to another big expenditure which the Government will have to face, namely, that involved in improving the harbours, particularly those of Bunbury and Albany. I believe the Government are sincere, and that before this Parliament reaches its close those works will have been undertaken; and I trust that expedition will be shown. It is perhaps, unnecessary to reiterate here what has been said before, namely, that owing to lack of facilities those ports are congested. As a growing trade is in evidence I hope that, even if it means expenditure from loan funds, the Government will give an opportunity for the economical marketing of products grown along the routes of our railway system. Now just a word in respect to the reference made by the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) in regard to our immigration policy. I was astounded at hearing such a statement from one whom I regard as the most fair-minded on the Opposition side. The hon. member said that immigration should be pushed on with vigour, and that we should encourage by every possible means the bringing of people to these shores. I want to ask those gentlemen who are so enthusiastic on the subject of immigration, what they are prepared to do to give the immigrants something like a fighting chance. The member for Katanning objected to a regulation issued, or to be issued by the Minister, to the effect that no immigrant shall be employed at less than 25s. a week. Even the farmer who is crying out for his rights—and in my

opinion he will get as much of his rights from the present Opposition as he will get from direct representatives—would in many cases sweat these employees. The member for Katanning said that some of them were not worth 10s. a week. Presumably, in such case, he would pay them 5s. a week.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: They admit they are not worth 10s. a week for a start.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It shows a decay in the British race. It is a poor old spirit for a Britisher to adopt when he admits he is not worth 5s. a week. I am sorry to think that such an individual should ever be brought to this State.

Mr. Heitmann: When first making a start many farm labourers are worth practically nothing.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Everybody should support the Government in discriminating and getting the best class of people in England as immigrants.

Mr. Heitmann: We all want that.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Let them make a start at a lower rate.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Let an immigrant arrive here to-morrow and the member for Katanning will approve of giving him 5s. a week until he gains experience. Suppose that man be married, and leaves his wife in Perth with three or four children while he goes out into the country to make a living; in the meantime what is the position of the wife with her three or four children depending on his efforts?

Mr. A. E. Piesse: The farmer cannot be a philanthropist.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, but he need not be the other thing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The immigrant is to be one.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The immigrant is supposed to keep up a home. When the member for Katanning was speaking he said that the immigrant need not be a married man, he could be a single man. We want the immigrants to bring their wives and families with them. It is better that they should do so, because there are hardly sufficient women in Australia to meet local requirements. The male population is far in excess of the female, and I think that the object of this

or any other Government should be, if we are going in for immigration at all, to encourage the families of the immigrants who are coming, and if they do bring their families we do not want to see them starve when they arrive. I do not believe that many of the farmers want to pay these men 5s. per week, and I do not think they would employ any men if they were useless, but if they do object to paying them 25s. I am content for them to form their own party and see if they can get a better deal. The Honorary Minister has handed me a facetious telegram sent to a member of the House from the Nor'-West, asking that of 50 domestics who were arriving in the State 100 should be sent up there!

Mr. Heitmann: Where is that from?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Roebourne. That just bears out my argument. So far as this proposition is concerned, I hope the Government will not take heed of the member for Katanning, when he sets up a proposition that because these men whom we are bringing in with public cash are only worth 5s. per week they should be paid only 5s. Something has to be done, and if there are others dependent on their efforts, and they are not worth 25s. a week, the Government should cease bringing them in. As I said before, he is a poor Britisher who will admit that he is not worth 25s. a week, and I ask what hope is there for that individual if he attempts to make a home for himself and those whom he thinks something of. Before concluding, I want to express my keen appreciation of two State institutions which in times of stress have been doing excellent work. About the Agricultural Bank much has been said and much can be said, but when some of the private banks adopted Shylockian methods in increasing the interest rate and calling up mortgages, the Agricultural Bank gave assistance to those who were hard pressed, and I am pleased to know that it has responded to practically every call. We have heard a good deal of the unemployed trouble. I will admit that there are many genuine unemployed in our midst, and there always will be until our social system is altered—and it takes a long

time to make the alteration—but while they exist we must try to do something for them. The present Government have done something; they have made every possible effort to render assistance in cases where it is needed, and I believe that every member of this party has given his share of help. Another State institution to which I desire to give my share of praise is the State Labour Bureau. Through the agency of that bureau, and the courtesy of the officer in charge (Mr. Hitchens), thousands of men have been able to go into the country districts where work is more plentiful, and consequently have found their way into avenues where employment is more readily to be found. I have not heard of many genuine cases being turned down, and desire to give my word of appreciation to these two institutions, and to express my belief that so far as the other State institutions are concerned, there is a desire on the part of an overwhelming majority of the men in charge to give a fair deal to the taxpayers who are their employers.

Mr. LAYMAN moved—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion negatived.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): I was not aware that the Government desired that the debate should close this evening, but I cannot allow the occasion to pass without making some reference to the points that have been engaging the attention of the House during the last few evenings. It is a well-known fact that for the last eighteen months at all events, the business in Western Australia has not been such as was promised by the leader of the Government when they assumed the reins of office. I leave it to any business man engaged in the country or the city to say that business has progressed in this State during the last one and a half years or twenty months. I do not for one moment suggest that the Government are responsible for the stagnation that exists in Western Australia, but I will challenge anyone to say that business is what it was two years ago. I also venture to say that the State enterprises which the Government have embarked upon are partly

to blame for the present condition of affairs. When the Government were on the hustings they made the price of meat and a cheaper food supply one of their chief cries, and it was largely on their pledges in this connection that they were returned to office. I have waited patiently for two years to see a reduction in the price of any articles that they promised would be reduced.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where is the cheap fish?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The fish that the people of Perth were to be supplied with at cheap rates is something like the Government cheap meat.

The Premier: During the last few months the people have been getting as much tinned fish as they wanted from your party.

Mr. S. STUBBS: And the Premier has added to the lustre of his party by throwing back as much mud as was thrown at him.

The Premier: You admit that mud was thrown at me.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Premier's interjection gives me an opportunity that I wanted. I was glad to hear him say the other evening that he challenged anyone inside or outside the House to say that his dealings in the Eucla lands were anything but clean and above board. If the Premier had made the position clear at the time there would not have been half so many things said against him.

The Premier: What do you mean by at the time?

Mr. S. STUBBS: When it was stated that the Premier had formed a syndicate, I heard it said in the street next day that artesian water had been found by the Government in the vicinity, and that Ministers were in possession of information which was not available to the public. That was the reason why charges were made against the Premier, but in the House the other night, he definitely stated that the public were in possession of the whole of the information to the same extent as the Government were.

The Minister for Works: Artesian water was obtained there years and years ago.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I was glad to hear the Premier make that explanation and as long as I am a member of Parliament, no one will hear me making statements regarding the personal honour of any member.

The Premier: It was known as far back as November that I had taken up that land, but nothing was said about it till the Federal election campaign.

Mr. S. STUBBS: There were thousands of references made to it long before the Federal elections.

The Premier: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It was common talk.

The Premier: In the Liberal club?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Not in the Liberal club. In the street it was common talk that the Government were in possession of information that the public were not possessed of regarding artesian water in that locality.

The Premier: Common talk in the circles you move in.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Premier is always making remarks about the party to which I belong, and I do not think it was nice of him to refer to the electors who sent me here as Liberal rabble. It does not redound much to the credit of the Premier to make statements such as that regarding the political opinions of men who are just as honourable as he is and who have never charged his party with being rabble.

The Premier: Oh.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am speaking of the electors who sent me here.

The Premier: I am speaking not of the electors, but of members sitting in opposition.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I will endeavour to show to the House that the Premier has not carried into effect anything like a tenth of the things he said he was going to do. Therefore, in my opinion, the Government should be taken to task, and will be taken to task, by the electors when next they go before them. There was to be no stagnation. The Premier said everything would be carried on in the same way under his regime as it was under the previous Government.

The Premier: That would mean stagnation. I never said that.

Mr. S. STUBBS: How is it that when the Liberal party went out of office and gave place to the Labour party, there was no deficiency in the Treasury? The Liberal party had a huge deficit to wipe off and they wiped it off very well.

The Premier: You want to tell the roads boards and municipalities that.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The next role the Premier appeared in was when he stated that he had heard on good authority that the civil service vote had put the Liberal party out and had put his party in.

The Premier: Who said that?

Mr. S. STUBBS: We heard it hundreds of times that it was the solid vote of the civil service that had ousted the Liberal party and put the Labour party in power. The Premier said that public servants should have full political rights and as soon as they got them and a few endeavoured to block Mr. McCallum from winning the Perth seat in the Federal Parliament, the Premier, at Mr. McCallum's social, taxed the civil service with having done something they should not have done.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am going by what the Press said.

The Premier: You heard what I said the other night.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Press distinctly stated that the Premier took them to task.

The Premier: If you believe the Press you are quite welcome to do so.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Premier evidently felt hurt at the action of the civil servants.

The Premier: Not for voting against Mr. McCallum. I never complained about that.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Premier left it until Mr. McCallum's social to make that reference and one could only draw that conclusion.

The Premier: Did you see the poster in the Civil Service Association's journal?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No.

The Premier: Then you should have.

Mr. S. STUBBS: A number of the civil servants acknowledged that they had voted against the Wilson Government to put the Labour Government in power, because the Labour Government had promised to give them privileges which they thought the Liberal Government had overlooked.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They have done it, too.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If they continue to do it in the same way as they have done it in the past, where will Western Australia be landed? Each year sees a growing civil service and a building up of Government employees at the cost of the country, and sooner or later the citizens of Western Australia who pay the piper will wake up and find that they cannot afford to foot the bill they have to pay.

The Premier: Now you are showing the true Liberal colours.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am endeavouring, as a citizen and a taxpayer of the State, having little return to show for the taxes I have paid during the last few years, to point out that the time is fast coming when we shall not be able to continue to pay so much as we are doing for the administration and government of this State, and the sooner the Government wake up to the fact that we are building up a huge civil service which few people in this State, outside of those who take an interest in what it is costing, have a knowledge of, the better.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is entirely in the hands of Parliament.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It is largely in the hands of the Government who are running the country because if they continue on the lines they advocate with State brick works and other things, why presently they will be starting State farms.

Mr. McDowall: We have them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government will be running everything presently, and in a few years we will be wondering why the deficit, instead of being nearly £400,000, is double that amount, unless a halt is cried and the Government take a more serious view of the finances than they appear to be doing now. It is my opinion as a business man who has had a good deal

to do with finance during the last 20 years, and I say—

The Premier: You are dealing with generalities; why not deal with facts?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government have a deficit.

The Minister for Works: You want to sack the civil servants.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No.

The Premier: To sweat them, then.

Mr. S. STUBBS: A member of the Government stated the other day that the Ministry would have to face the position of a number of civil servants who were not giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

The Premier: What did he suggest for a solution?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am not running the Government or the civil service. If the Minister cannot see the position, I am not going to show him a way out of the difficulty. I will wait until the time arrives and I can say something to the constituents who sent me here to represent them. I am only just criticising the actions of the present Government and referring to the splendid way in which they have handled the finances of the State during the last 20 months.

The Minister for Works: And objecting to our giving a fair day's pay to the civil servants.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, I never in my life once challenged the Government on paying a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

The Minister for Works: You said the deficiency was due to the civil service.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I said we have a civil service that is far too big. I do not say, as the Minister for Works would like to have recorded in *Hansard*, that I suggested other than a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and I hope I will be able to live long enough to prove that I am in favour of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. I can afford to let that go for later on I will be able to show to the country that the Minister for Works is not administering the affairs of the country in respect to many public works to the best advantage.

The Minister for Works: The civil service again.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I will refer in a few minutes to the policy of the Minister for Works in building railways, if he will first allow me to finish what I have to say in regard to the finances of the State. The most serious part of the business before the House at the present time is the amount of money which is being piled up monthly representing over-expenditure in comparison with revenue. Surely if the Premier considers that the last season was a bad one in the agricultural districts, it is strange that our exports of wheat and cereals have been greater this year than ever in the history of the State.

Mr. Foley: Do you think it was a good season last year?

The Premier: Are you asserting that the farmers are in a position to pay?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, I do not say they are in a good position, but one of the cries from Ministers has been that the deficit is due principally to concessions granted to the farming community.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): So it is.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am going to try to prove that the grain exported during the past season was larger than in any previous season in the history of Western Australia.

The Premier: So it might have been.

The Attorney General: There was more land under cultivation.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The average per acre was nearly as great as any we have had in the history of the State, and surely if we had this good season, the revenue that should have been derived by the carriage of this grain on the railways should have made up a great portion of the deficiency that now exists.

The Premier: There is only a margin of profit from running a trading concern like the railways. What about other payments carried over?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The greatest revenue producer the State has is the railways and if we have carried this enormous quantity of grain over the railways the

profit from the railways surely ought to have been greater. There must be a screw loose somewhere.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They carried a lot of water at a very little cost.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do not think that the Government have much to crow about regarding the carriage of water. They need not have gone half the distance. If they had spent £20,000 or £30,000 they could have got in my district a river of water enough to supply the whole of the southern districts. I am referring to the Arthur River. Instead of that they took water practically from Perth to Albany and the amount that was spent in haulage would have built a line to the Arthur River. The Premier has witnessed the huge sheet of water situated 16 or 17 miles due west from Wagin.

Mr. Foley: What would the farmers have done while the line was being built?

Mr. S. STUBBS: They could have put down a light line in a few weeks. The Government were carrying water from Tambellup for eight or nine months. If the Premier had been alive to the fact that the water supply was so serious, it would not have taken much to have got Cabinet to pass an order instructing that a light track should be put down to this large pool of water, which is miles in extent, and from 10 to 20 feet deep. This would have given a large supply of water, both for the railways and for the towns in the Great Southern district as well.

The Minister for Works: Why did not the Liberal Government do it?

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is no answer to the charge against the present Government.

The Premier: We must have the authority of Parliament before building a railway.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If it cost so much money as to mop up the profits from the carriage of wheat on the railways a great deal of that money could have been saved by a little foresight on the part of the Government or their officers

in regard to the water supply in the Great Southern districts.

The Premier: You do not suggest that we should have built a railway without consulting Parliament, do you?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Parliament last session agreed to the construction of a line due west from Wagin, and a few miles further on the water I have referred to could have been tapped, a magnificent supply of water equal, if not larger, than the quantity the Premier inspected a few months ago.

Mr. Green: That is a crack-brained scheme of yours.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Everybody knows what a brainy individual the hon. member is, and there is nothing for me to say beyond that I leave him religiously alone, and the Esperance railway with him. The Government have indicated the introduction this session of a Bill to deal with only one line of railway, namely, the Esperance railway. A few weeks ago the Minister for Works was paying an official visit to the district of Wagin, and among other places he visited was a centre which has for the last three or four years had a fair number of settlers, particularly English and Scottish families. During the past few months the Government have thrown open a block of land, on Sheet 4 I think it appears, and a great number of applicants applied for that land, and the portions of land set apart by the Government were quickly grabbed by many persons in this State, and not by immigrants at all. I understand that the late Minister for Lands was the first to cut up these areas at Lake Grace. These men have been battling against fearful odds, spending the capital they brought out—some of them brought a fair amount with them—and others have been largely assisted by the Agricultural Bank and I was surprised to hear from the Minister for Works the other day that there would be no new lines of railways brought in this session owing to the fact that there are more lines authorised by Parliament than can be handled for a considerable period. My point is that the Minister for Works would be better advised if he called tenders

for the completion of the works now in hand other than those he has started departmentally.

The Minister for Works : I have more respect for the finances of the State than to waste money in that direction.

Mr. S. STUBBS : That was the policy of the Minister for Works during the time of the previous Administration. The present Minister for Works is always dead set on contractors except when he is out of office and is contracting for himself. To mention contractors to the Minister for Works seems like holding a red rag in front of a bull.

The Minister for Works : I say that contractors cannot compete with us in railway construction. The leader of the Opposition knows that.

Hon. Frank Wilson : They can do the work more expeditiously.

Mr. S. STUBBS : At the opening of the line of railway from Katanning to Nampup I had the pleasure of riding on the back of the train with the Premier when we were travelling from one end of the line to the other, and at the terminus of the journey, if my memory serves me rightly, the Premier made an excellent speech in which he congratulated the contractor on the splendid way in which he had carried out his work.

The Minister for Works : Did he say anything about the supervision and the bungling we had in that respect ?

Mr. S. STUBBS : He did not say anything about that. The engineers in charge of the work were evidently satisfied or they would not have passed it.

The Minister for Works : They took fine care to see the work was put into it.

Mr. S. STUBBS : If we have contracts and a Minister of the Crown says those works have been badly constructed, there must be a screw loose in the fact that the officers of the department are not seeing that the work is carried out.

Mr. Heitmann : What is the necessity to have such supervision when the department can do the work for themselves ?

Mr. S. STUBBS : Because it is part of the policy of the Government to construct these works departmentally, I am not going to say you cannot do good work departmentally, but expedition is the essence of building lines of railway for land settlement.

The Minister for Works : That is exactly why we are building them departmentally.

Mr. S. STUBBS : To carry out some of the works that are now approved, let the Government get some of the unemployed that are hanging round the streets of Perth to-day and let them start with a contractor.

The Minister for Works : Why did your Government limit construction to 200 miles per year ?

Hon. Frank Wilson : That is not true.

Mr. S. STUBBS : I have it from the leader of the Opposition that that is not true, but even if what the Minister for Works has stated in regard to the Liberal party's policy were true, is that any reason why his Government should not build 400 miles a year if it were possible, but it suits the Government to carry out the work by day labour, and that is where I think they are wrong in their administration.

Mr. Green : Day work prevents jobbery.

Mr. S. STUBBS : Because I have that opinion, surely I am entitled to express it. In the opinion of the majority of electors who sent me here it would be in the best interests of the country to have the railways constructed by contract, if the Government cannot do the work fast enough with the plant they have.

Mr. Heitmann : The contractor as a rule borrows his plant from the Government.

Mr. S. STUBBS : Could not a condition be placed in the contract that he must provide his own plant ? That is a poor argument for the Government's reason for not pushing on with the railways.

Mr. Heitmann : You have not got a good grip of this question.

Mr. S. STUBBS : I know, at all events that the present method of settling

people on the lands of Western Australia is a wrong one for this country, and the Government should realise in respect to the lines of railway passed by this House that the districts concerned are languishing at present, and sooner or later the Government will be called upon to make adequate compensation to these people, or bring them back to some land nearer to railways than they are at present. That will be a matter for Parliament to decide in the near future. There are 30 or 40 families in one district that I know of, and only a few weeks ago more than a hundred people assembled at Lake Grace nearly 40 miles away from the present terminus at Kukerin, to do honour to the Minister and point out the necessity for building a railway, only to hear from the Minister's lips that it was not the intention of the Government to pass an Act authorising that railway. Whether it was a Liberal or a Labour Government that sent these people out there, it is a fact that they are in a deplorable position at the present time. In that district there are hundreds of thousands of acres of really splendid wheat-growing land, and between three and four thousand acres at the present time are under wheat, but what these people are going to do with that wheat when it is grown this year I cannot tell, as it is impossible to cart it to the head of the line and make it pay.

Mr. Heitmann: You must admit that there is a limit to the expenditure of loan funds.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes, if the money is going to be spent in the buying of iron tubs to bring down meat from the North-West. If the Government had spent only a quarter of that money in the building of agricultural railways, it would have paid better than trying to bring cattle from the North-West and compete with private enterprise.

The Premier: How many miles of railways would that have constructed?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government have spent about £200,000 on the steamers.

The Premier: Go easy.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the Government have not spent £200,000 on the purchase and running of the steamers, they have spent nearly that amount when one considers the capital and the fact that nothing has been written down for depreciation in connection with these old tubs; and I have no hesitation in saying that if the verdict of the country were taken to-morrow on this question it would be against the action of the Government in expending that capital on State steamers.

The Premier: At the last elections it was a part of the Liberal policy which you supported.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If it were a part of the Liberal policy it was not a part of my policy anyhow. I never advocated it and I never will. The Premier's reference to "the rabble now called the Liberals," was worthy of the Premier and of the party to which he belongs. The Premier has not answered the charge levelled against his Government of having neglected to use every possible means of expedition for the lines of railway authorised by Parliament. The Premier asks how many lines of railway would have been built if the State steamships had not been bought? We could build a good many miles of railway with the money which the country will have to find for this costly endeavour.

The Premier: If your Government had not sunk £250,000 in a dock.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is another matter which I spoke against and voted against; I was dead against it from the jump. That charge, as far as I am concerned falls to the ground, as I was never in favour of the dock at all. The fact remains that this country is fast drifting on the downward track as regards its finances and unless some steps are taken by the present Administration to stop this drift, before another twelve months are over—

Mr. Heitmann: What do you suggest?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I suggest that a better hand be kept on the expenditure than is being kept at the present time. No effort is being made to stop the drift.

Mr. Heitmann: What authority have you for backing up that statement?

Hon. Frank Wilson: The only remedy is to sack the Government.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am going by the figures presented at the first of the month. When the Premier first went into office I realised that the drought had a marked effect upon the revenue, but this year he has not made the slightest effort to reduce the huge expenditure over and above the revenue of the State.

Mr. Foley: Where do you reckon the drought was?

Mr. S. STUBBS: It was in a direction where I heard a gentleman say to-day that the farmers had been sent and had no business to be sent.

Mr. Foley: Yet you reckon last season was a good season.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I was speaking of 18 months ago.

Mr. Foley: Do your books show that it was a good season?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am endeavouring to point out the seriousness of the position which members on the other side fail to realise, that if any private business were to be conducted for 20 months on the same lines as the Government of the State of Western Australia has been conducted, the proprietor would soon be called upon to face the insolvency court.

The Premier: I know of a good many that have been so carried on.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The business of the Government should be to try to make both ends meet and try to square the ledger at the end of each financial year.

Mr. Lander: Do the big storekeepers in the country do it?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, because many of the storekeepers have been financing the farmers as well as providing them with food and clothing.

The Premier: In doing so some have shown a deficit on the accounts.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes naturally they have.

The Premier: The Government have done exactly the same thing.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government are in this position; they have a first mortgage over the farms and the storekeepers have only a second mortgage.

The Premier: Did we not give the storekeepers better terms than we accepted ourselves in the arrangements we made with the Seed Wheat Board?

Mr. S. STUBBS: You may have in some districts but I know of cases where the Seed Board refused to supply genuine applicants with seed.

Mr. Lander: Many cronk applicants, too.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Lander: I have been amongst them as much as the hon. member during the last recess.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Mine is practical experience, the hon. member's is not. My idea is that we should build railways in order to assist the people who have been sent out there, no matter whether by Liberal or Labour Governments. That fact does not alter the position, which is serious at the present time. I think the Government will be well advised if they can introduce measures this session which will eventually give relief to the people who need it so urgently, those people who have been sent out to districts which are not served by railways. I think the Premier ought to reconsider the decision which has been arrived at by Cabinet in that direction.

The Premier: I candidly admit that it is a matter of money.

Mr. S. STUBBS: But if we build railways we do not build them out of revenue.

Mr. McDowall: We must find interest and sinking fund.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The agricultural railways, or those I am considering at the present time, will pay from the very jump. I know what I am talking about. The agricultural railway serving the Lake Grace country and the land around Dumbleyung has always paid. I am right, I think, in making that statement.

Mr. Heitmann: You have to find your loan funds first.

The Premier: You cannot build railways, you know, by issuing greenbacks.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have yet to learn that the British money lender would refuse to lend money to this State, even though we have borrowed a fair amount

during recent years. All we have to do is to show that the districts the railways are going to serve are really first-class cereal growing districts.

Mr. Green: What about South Australia's experience?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I think South Australia is at the present time passing through a dry season. Western Australia has, with few exceptions, never seen in the agricultural districts a really dry season, and the prospects this year are better than they have ever been in the history of the State. Therefore, I have unbounded faith in the building of every one of these lines, believing they will be the salvation of the State. In years to come the mining industry which has done so much for the building up of Western Australia and making the State what it is to-day, will give place to agriculture. Take Victoria. That State in the fifties and sixties depended entirely on the production of gold.

The Premier: We have a greater mineral belt than the whole of the State of Victoria.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes, but in time the mines must peter out. This is the difference between mining and agriculture. If we take an ounce of gold out of the ground that is so much gold less to be won, but if we break up ground which is now forest and cultivate it judiciously, we are going to earn from that land a lot more than we would if it were left in its virgin state. The Government should have come out with a bold railway policy and I am certain they would have had the support of every right thinking person in the State, while the money I am sure could easily be found. If the Government are going to pin their faith to the day principle in connection with these works, stagnation will follow in the agricultural industry. Reference was made by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) to the good work performed by the Agricultural Bank. I welcomed the speech of the Minister for Lands last year when he stated that the Government intended to give the trustees of the bank larger powers in connection with loans to be granted to farmers, and, if my memory serves me correctly, the

sum of £2,000 would be available at the discretion of the managing trustees, if the farmer had security to offer. I think, however, that amount has never been given. So far as I know £850 has been the maximum advanced by the trustees, and I regret that more money is not available for the bank to distribute among farmers. I may unhesitatingly say that the Agricultural Bank during the last 12 months has helped many people in this State. It has tided many storekeepers over difficulties and I congratulate the Government and the Minister for Lands on what the bank has been able to do in this direction, but I would like to see the bank have power to handle an even larger sum. If necessary we could borrow half a million to further assist the industry through the bank.

The Premier: We found over £600,000 last year.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It could do with another £600,000 and it would be money well spent. The bank has done splendid work and the officers of the institution have kept pace with it by working night and day.

The Premier: Compare that with what your Government found.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I think the Premier has the other Government on the brain. It is about time that was finished up with. [We are discussing things as they appear to-day. The other Government that the Premier so often refers to did good work; they may have made mistakes, but the present Government, too, have made mistakes, and no doubt will continue to do so.]

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You admit that the Agricultural Bank has done good work.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have said so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is owing to the Government finding money. Your Government could not have found it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I think that is an ungenerous statement to make. The Honorary Minister thinks that the Labour Government only can find money. Of course, he is welcome to that opinion. If the Govern-

are going to borrow money, and still pile up a bigger deficit than they have now, they certainly will be criticised. It is not the spending of loan moneys that I am criticising the Government for, because the money must be found and spent; but I say they are on wrong lines when they start running steamers and sawmills, and brick yards, and butchers' shops. They have never yet convinced anyone that they have brought down the price of anything which they had started in to bring down.

Mr. Bolton: Nonsense.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It is not nonsense, it is true. They have never yet brought down the price of meat. They may have convinced the members on that side of the House that they are going to do so, but they have not yet accomplished it.

The Premier: Have you purchased at any of our stalls?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No.

The Premier: Then how do you know?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am only going by what I see in the Press.

The Premier: In the *Sunday Times*, your official journal?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Well, the *Worker* is your official journal, but it is not mine. No newspaper dominates me. I say unhesitatingly that as a member of the Opposition if I think the Government are not making satisfactory progress it is my duty to convince the people, or those that will listen to me, that the Government are not making the progress they would like people to believe.

The Premier: You do not adduce any evidence.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I adduce the evidence that business in the country has fallen away 50 per cent. from what it was 18 months ago.

The Premier: Absolutely incorrect.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I can prove that what I say is absolutely correct. In the country districts trade has fallen away very considerably.

The Premier: I say it is absolutely incorrect, and I challenge you to prove it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Well, just now it is only one statement against another, but I can produce facts.

The Premier: The *Statistical Abstract* will show you that you are absolutely incorrect. But of course you are taking it from the *Sunday Times*.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, I am taking it from my own books, and the books of other men will back me up in the statement that business has fallen away very considerably. In Perth, probably, owing to the fact that the Government are carrying out large undertakings, sewerage and drainage, water supply, the undergrounding of telephone lines, etcetera, the volume of business in the City may be as large or even larger than it was twenty months ago; but in the agricultural areas the reverse obtains. If anyone on the other side disputes what I am saying he can verify it by writing to any reputable business man in the country towns.

Mr. Green: Due to want of competition.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No. Due to want of confidence in the Government. The Minister for Lands in his zeal, and to carry out an election pledge on the hustings, and to trap so-called St. George's-terrace farmers, issued in October, 1911, a manifesto that had the effect of putting a damper on land settlement in many directions.

Mr. Gill: On land speculation.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No. Admitting for the sake of argument that there may have been two or three men who, the Minister suggest, were trafficking in land, how easy to catch those two or three without frightening thousands legitimately operating the land. The regulation was to the effect that no transfer would be allowed to go through unless the conditions under which the land was originally taken up had been strictly carried out.

The Attorney General: Was that not right?

Mr. S. STUBBS: But up to that time there had been many Governments in the State, including a Labour Administration, and in no single instance was the regulation in connection with improvements asked to be strictly ob-

served by any of the successive Ministers controlling the department. If there were three or four men alleged to be trafficking in land and living in St. George's-terrace, what were they in comparison to those men who might legitimately wish to transfer a block? It had the effect of preventing legitimate transfer; and further than that it had the effect of inducing the associated banks, who up to that time had been assisting many farmers by granting them advances, to stop giving assistance, because they were uncertain as to what would happen in the event of some transfers not being approved. This famous manifesto had the effect of buttoning up the pockets of people who had been in the habit of advancing money to farmers. . . .

The Premier: They denied that the other day. . . .

Mr. S. STUBBS: The fact remains that many of them stopped lending money shortly after those regulations were issued. . . .

The Premier: I made the statement in your constituency and it was denied.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I assure the House that it was the impression everywhere, that it was owing to the fact that the transfers might be blocked from going through that the banks closed up. I have since had it on very good authority that the Minister for Lands never attempted to block any legitimate transfer. His desire was to prevent trafficking inland, and a very good object too, but there was a better way of doing it.

The Attorney General: Why do you not blame the bank managers and the others who were so foolish?

Mr. S. STUBBS: For some years there was a general impression that men could transfer, provided they were legitimate farmers and were going to settle. If there were a few, who, through being in the know, obtained land from the land board to the disadvantage of legitimate settlers, those men could easily have been got at by the Government, and I admire any Government who would stop transactions of that kind. But in my opinion the real reason for the slump in land

settlement was the issue of these regulations in October.

The Attorney General: Was it not a subterfuge? Did they not make it an excuse for the prosecution of storekeepers and others?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am not in a position to say that the Attorney General is right in his assumption, but I do know that it had a serious effect on the storekeepers and everyone connected with the farming industry.

Mr. Underwood: Did the drought affect the storekeepers?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Possibly the drought had something to do with it, but the Minister for Lands had the lion's share of the responsibility.

Mr. Heitmann: In the eastern agricultural areas one never hears of these regulations and yet the settlers are as poor as poor can be.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Did not the Minister for Lands say that he would not put any transfers through?

Mr. McDowall: He said that certain improvements had to be effected.

The Attorney General: He simply stated that the law would be put into effect.

Mr. S. STUBBS: At any rate I am of opinion that these regulations had a very marked effect upon land settlement.

The Premier: You did not move to disallow them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The mischief was done in a very short time and the Premier knows it. Members on the Government side realise that the regulations were a mistake. . . .

The Premier: You should have moved to disallow them; you neglected your duty. . . .

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Minister made a mistake from which his party will suffer a good deal at the next election.

Mr. Gill: Do not worry about the next election.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am not worrying about the election, but I am worrying as a business man about the effect which these regulations are going to have on the State.

The Attorney General: Do you say he has committed a crime by enforcing the law?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I say he made an error of judgment from which his party will suffer in the near future. I say also that it would be in the best interests of the State if a bold policy of immigration were entered upon, notwithstanding the statement of the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) that it would be better for the Government to go slow in immigration matters. I do not think for one moment that the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) desired to say that an immigrant was worth only 5s. a week.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: I said many were worth 25s. and some more.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Many of the immigrants who come into Western Australia have not had any experience of Australian conditions, and no farmer can afford to give an inexperienced hand the same wages as one who has had several years' experience.

The Premier: Your party have been congratulating the Government on the re-appointment of Sir Newton Moore, and the Agent General has definite instructions to select only farm hands.

Mr. S. STUBBS: When the Premier was at Home he made several public utterances to the effect that Western Australia was crying out for population.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Probably the Premier was incorrectly reported again. But the Premier said we had the land and we wanted the people.

The Premier: I say that if the immigrants are not of the proper class the Government are not to blame.

Mr. S. STUBBS: All I can say is that many of the immigrants who have arrived in the State during the last two or three years have not been able to give a fair return for the ordinary wage of an agricultural labourer in this country. The conditions of farming in England are totally different from the conditions out here. Farm hands in England have no more idea how to go about felling a tree than a five-year old schoolboy has, and a farmer cannot afford to

give 25s. a week to a man who does not know how to fell a tree, but who may be fairly experienced in growing cereals or vegetables at Home. The Agent General is not to blame for these men coming to Australia. If a man says he has been employed for a number of years as a farm labourer in England the Agent General is justified in accepting him, and we cannot blame the farmer for not giving that man 25s. a week to start with.

The Premier: The member for Katanning inadvertently stated what you have been asking for for a long time, cheap labour.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is unworthy of the Premier because I have always given a fair day's wage for a fair day's work.

The Premier: I am not referring to you individually, but to your party.

Mr. S. STUBBS: My party have never been in favour of cheap labour.

The Premier: I say they have.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I say unhesitatingly they have not. I have never belonged to a party who desired to see cheap labour in this State, because no State can be prosperous where labour is cheap.

Mr. Foley: What about your leader who said he thought 6s. a day was enough?

Mr. S. STUBBS: That has been denied so often that it ought to be dropped; it is very unfair to be continually charging him with that statement after it has been denied. It appears to me that no matter what might be the views of a member on this side of the House, if they are not in accord with the views of caucus representatives on the other side there is as much notice taken of them as there would be of his Satanic majesty if he came into the Chamber, and it appears to be only a waste of time to endeavour to make members on the Government side see that the State is not on the high road to prosperity as the Premier and members of his party would have the House believe.

The Premier: There you are, stinking fish again.

Mr. S. STUBBS : There is no stinking fish about a straightforward fact like that. The State of Western Australia has immense possibilities and in the future, no matter what party might be in power, it will be proved to the world that this is one of the best States in the Commonwealth, but that will not be so under the present Administration.

Mr. Munsie : Bad luck that, for it will have the present Administration for another six years at least.

Mr. S. STUBBS : That remains to be seen. At all events, in conclusion, I desire to say that I hope the season that is coming will be a prosperous one for everybody, but until the present Administration attempt to make both ends meet with regard to revenue and expenditure, then so long will I from my place in the House and from every platform from which I speak point out that the Government are on wrong lines and I will endeavour, as long as I am able, to show that the sooner the country gets rid of them the better.

On motion by Mr. Underwood debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 6th August, 1913.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY : 1, Public Works Department—Municipal Corporations Act, 1906.—By-laws No. 122 of the Municipality of Coolgardie.

2, Public Service Act, 1904—Amendments to Public Service Regulations. 3, Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department.—Roebourne Water Supply By-laws. 4, Audit Act, 1904.—Orders-in-Council under Section 35.

URGENCY MOTION—ELECTION FOR WEST PROVINCE IN 1912.

The PRESIDENT : I have received the following letter from the Hon. M. L. Moss :—

I propose to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgency, namely, to call attention to a gross violation of the Electoral Act which is alleged to have occurred at the election of a member for the West Province of the Legislative Council in May, 1912, and which was for the first time made public in the speech of the Hon. Mr. Lynn on the Address-in-reply last evening.

Though the matter is of undoubted gravity, I fail to see that there is any colour of urgency in the proposal. Procedure by motion for adjournment should not be used except where there is a definite matter of urgent public importance. If, however, under Standing Order 58 four members rise in their places to support the mover, I will allow the motion to proceed.

Four members having risen in their places,

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West) : I was well aware of the circumstances which Mr. Lynn mentioned yesterday, because the statement he made as to having informed me of the occurrence when it took place is perfectly correct, but for many reasons it was impossible for me to make use of the information communicated to me last April 12 months. There can be no doubt that any interference with the well grounded principles set forth in the Electoral Act, and certainly anything to interfere with the secrecy of the ballot, is a matter of great importance to this House, to another place as well, and to the community at large, for if the ballot is to be a secret ballot the thing ought to be observed to the very letter. There