

so far behind in the first four months: still I agree with the hon. member for Swan that there is nothing to be very down about in the fact that we have a little more overdraft than we ought to have. It will occur with every business just as with Western Australia. Surely the amount of overdraft, or the amount of expenditure in excess of receipts, is not going to lay us out in bankruptcy. We still have our industries although if we do not get the support and the facilities that we should get from the Government of the day, then our own industries must suffer. We must support the Government in the undertaking, knowing they are not running the State into any financial difficulties, unreasonable financial difficulties, that we would not undertake individually ourselves. Every man who has any idea of business at all will admit that he would not close his doors to business for the simple reason that his bank overdraft had run up a little more than he had expected. The Government recognise that they have certain work to do and will endeavour to carry it out, and I hope the House will support the Government in this and not feel afraid of the small overdraft staring them in the face. I am quite confident that the present Treasurer is not likely to give away the enormous grants that have been built up in the past, and I hope he will carry out his intention of straightening up the affairs of the State. Too much money has been given away in special grants and for works really not necessary.

Mr. Heitmann: What about the poor squatters?

Mr. OSBORN: I do not think the squatters ever received any special grant, neither have they asked for any. I would like to mention this fact, that the squatters in the constituency I represent do not ask the Government for assistance to exterminate wild dogs, but simply for a measure to enable them to tax themselves to pay men to exterminate the dogs. That is one feature that does not strike hon. members in this House. They do not ask the Government to assist them, but merely to allow them to assist themselves. I have much pleasure in second-

ing the motion moved by the hon. member for Swan.

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

House adjourned at 3.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 12th November, 1908.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Treasurer: 1, Amended Regulations under the Audit Act; 2, Copies of Orders in Council under Section 35 of the Audit Act; 3, Public Library—Annual Report, 1907-8.

By the Premier: 1, Return of Exemptions granted under "The Mining Act, 1904"; 2, Fremantle Harbour Trust Regulations.

By the Minister for Works: 1, By-laws of the Ashburton Roads Board; 2, By-laws of Upper Gascoyne Roads Board; 3, By-laws of Melville Roads Board.

TIMBER TROUBLE, EASTERN GOLDFIELDS.

Debate Irregular.

Mr TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I desire to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgency to deal with the Kurrawang wood trouble.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is contrary to procedure to allow a matter of this nature to intervene during the Address-in-Reply. The same thing was done last year.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is a pity, because this is a matter of great urgency, of more urgency, I think, than the Address-in-Reply. I recognised that I would not be able to do this, but I thought the House should express some opinion in view of the present situation on the goldfields, not only as affecting the Eastern Goldfields, but also on account of a similar disturbance on the Murchison. I think the Government should take some action. At least I think the House should direct the Government what to do in the best interests of the mining industry and those people directly affected. However, as the Standing Orders will not permit it I cannot move.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): As the rules of the House do not allow the hon. member to bring the matter forward, if he will lay it before me I shall be pleased to give every attention to it, and possibly may be able to take some action that might be in accord with his wishes, and that might at the same time bring about the object he has in view.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you.

Later, when the Premier had moved the adoption of the sessional order dealing with sitting days and hours,

Mr. WALKER said: In view of the ruling that nothing can anticipate the Address-in-Reply, can this motion be taken? Does not the Address-in-Reply take precedence of all other business? Having just ruled that a very important piece of urgent business cannot be taken, can this be allowed to interrupt the Address-in-Reply?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is formal business of the day that it has always been customary for the House to proceed with. It is just the same as last year when a question was raised as a matter of urgency. We have not reached the Address-in-Reply on to-day's Notice Paper: but the motion desired to be moved by the member for Mount Margaret would certainly be contrary to the rules of the House or, rather, contrary to the custom of the House.

Mr. WALKER: We have not reached the Address-in-Reply. We are now on formal business. Cannot it be interrupted by a matter of extreme urgency?

The PREMIER: I understand the motion I have made is necessary to fix the ordinary sittings of the House. Unless it be passed how can we carry on. We might go on like the brook with the Address-in-Reply unless we had some provision for future sittings.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already stated that this formal business is altogether different from that which the member for Mount Margaret wished to bring forward.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY, WILUNA, CYANIDE PLANT.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government purchased or agreed to purchase the private cyanide plant erected at the Wiluna State Battery? 2, If so, on whose recommendation? 3, What is the amount paid for the plant?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Government have agreed to purchase the plant and residues. 2, On the recommendation of the Metallurgist and Engineer, State Batteries. 3, £100.

Mr. Holman: He should be compelled to pay £100 to shift it away.

QUESTION — HOSPITAL SUBSIDIES, REARRANGEMENT.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier: 1, What are the hospitals whose usual subsidies have been stopped, and the system of paying by a grant to the doctor substituted in lieu thereof? 2, What hospitals are retained on the old basis of assistance by Government aid as it existed in 1906-7?

The PREMIER replied: 1, From 31st December next the hospitals at Nannine, Mount Malcolm, Broad Arrow, Kanowna, and Bulong will come under the new arrangement for a specific grant in aid of the treatment of indigent patients, which varies from £100 to £150, at the hospitals concerned; also the sum of £200 per annum will be paid to a medical man to in-

duce him to reside in the several districts. 2, Hospitals at Davyhurst, Laverton, Leonora, Meekatharra, Mount Magnet, Mount Morgans, Norseman, Peak Hill, Ravens-thorpe, Sandstone, Sir Samuel, and Wiluna.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST REGULATIONS.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Premier: When will the Regulations of the Fremantle Harbour Trust be placed on the Table in accordance with "The Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902," such regulations having been approved by the Governor-in-Council over 12 months ago?

The PREMIER replied: To-day.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL, ILLEGAL VOTING.

Mr. BATH (without notice) asked the Attorney General: Is it his intention as head of the Electoral Department, to prosecute those voters who were proved to have voted illegally at the recent Menzies election?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: No reports have been received from the Chief Electoral Officer. When the reports are received I shall be prepared to answer the question.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES, MENZIES.

Mr. TAYLOR (without notice) asked the Attorney General: Will he cause a survey to be made at Linden to define the boundaries of the Menzies and Mount Margaret electorates, in order to prevent a repetition of the trouble in the neighbourhood of Mount Ida during the last Menzies election?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: If the hon. member will let me know the exact locality I shall have pleasure in ordering it.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) moved—

That the House unless otherwise ordered shall meet for the despatch of

business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onward.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved an amendment—

That the words "and Fridays" be struck out.

Probably the excuse for desiring to sit on Fridays would be that the session should be concluded before Christmas. It was a great mistake to bring down important business to the House and endeavour to hurry it through in a very limited time. The general election was held two months ago, and no reason could be given why members should not have been called together early in October. It had not been the custom to wait so long, and no just reason could be given why members should be called upon to sit so many days a week in order to rush through a deal of very important business in five or six weeks. Although it was mentioned in the Governor's Speech that no matters of great importance outside of one or two which were specified would be brought before the House, still there were some important measures suggested, and members would be asked, if it were desired to finish the business before Christmas, to deal with these matters without first having had an opportunity of properly and thoroughly considering them. An instance has been provided recently of the result of hasty legislation. This was in connection with the general election. Certain opinions and decisions given by the Attorney General in connection with electoral matters, when the Bill dealing with that subject was before the House, had proved to be incorrect, for the Minister had led the House to believe that certain amendments would protect a candidate from being mulcted in costs, as had been the case in connection with previous elections. Not having had time to look into the question properly himself, owing to the number of Bills before the House, he (Mr. Holman) found it impossible to go thoroughly into that point. Now, however, owing to the Attorney General

having misled the House, a candidate had been selected most unfairly in very heavy costs. A similar position might arise as the result of other measures being carried hastily through the House. Members should not be asked to rush through in three or four weeks measures which should take three or four months to properly deal with. In the summer months it was quite sufficient for members to sit three days a week. Before long the Estimates would be coming down, and if business was to be conducted in a hurried manner many important points arising therefrom would have to go through without that consideration and discussion which was so necessary. Although it was the custom to sit an extra day at the end of the session, there was no proper reason why a new Parliament should not sit after Christmas in order to transact important and necessary business in a proper manner. The mistake had been in having the elections so late in the year. The last session should not have been held at all.

The Treasurer: What about supplies?

Mr. HOLMAN: The elections should have been held in May, and we should have cut our heads off at the conclusion of the previous session instead of clinging to our seats until the last moment. The Government should not be allowed to go into recess without having done anything to speak of during the year.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford) moved an amendment—

That the words "until eleven p.m." be added to the motion.

As members had decided to sit four days a week it was not desirable that they should be called upon to remain in the Chamber all hours of the night. He was not averse to all-night sittings, so long as they lasted all night, but there was strong objection to the practice of sitting until midnight or one o'clock and adjourning after all the last trains to the districts in the metropolitan area had gone. When this occurred members who lived out of the City were compelled to camp on the couches of the House

until the first train left in the morning. There was no reason why the House should ever sit after eleven o'clock at night. If the amendment were carried members would be able to give much better consideration to matters before the House. Last session very important questions, such as the Railway Estimates, came up for consideration after midnight, and it was strange, but nevertheless true, that the most important portions of the Estimates were dealt with either very late at night or very early in the morning.

Mr. Bath: Especially when they were matters needing consideration and criticism.

Mr. JOHNSON: That was so. Last session we discussed important matters when the Press were not present and when members were tired. If the amendment were carried important questions could be considered within reasonable hours, and when members were in a fit state to give them proper consideration. No time would be wasted by the innovation, for members would be fresh to the work and would consequently be able to deal with the questions in a shorter time than they could when sitting very late at night. His own case was an instance in point, for frequently he had slept for some time during the debate, and after subsequently having spoken to the question himself, had ascertained that he had covered exactly the same ground as had been dealt with by other members. Had the sitting hours been limited he would have heard what previous members had said on the question and avoided the needless repetition. There were many arguments in favour of limiting the hours of the sittings.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): No member was particularly anxious to sit all night, and Ministers never felt particularly fit for their office work the morning after an all-night sitting. It would be well for some arrangement to be arrived at on the question. The amendment proposed an entire innovation, and in the circumstances it would probably be better to refer the question to the Standing Orders Committee, who should

be asked to bring up a report as to procedure on this question in other Parliaments. The Imperial Parliament was adjourned at midnight.

Mr. Taylor: There is a limitation as to that, however.

Mr. Foulkes: No contentious business is dealt with after a certain hour.

The PREMIER: It was advisable to obtain some information on the question before adopting the amendment, and that information could best be supplied by the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. Walker: The session will be over before the Committee make their report.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): It would be unwise to wait for the Standing Orders Committee to report on a matter of this kind. The question hardly came within the purview of that committee. The committee might go into the question of the procedure adopted by the House of Commons and other Parliaments as to the limitations of the time of the sittings but it was not for them to decide a question of this sort. Under the present system very important matters were brought before Parliament at an early hour in the morning, when members were not fit to give proper and thorough attention to the work. If the amendment were accepted business would be conducted in a better manner, and far more satisfactory decisions would be arrived at before 11 p.m. than in the small hours of the morning. He was prepared even now for the House to meet earlier in the day. He had always advocated the meeting of Parliament earlier in the day, to give members the opportunity of discussing the business of the country in daylight, during the hours that all commercial houses dealt with their business. While he was not able to move in that direction at that stage, he hoped the Premier would adopt the amendment as moved by the hon. member for Guildford. He supposed later on, that members would be called upon to sit five nights, and if they sat from 2.30 until 11 o'clock, they should be able to get through the business in ample time to allow members to get to their homes for the Christmas holidays. Then it would

not be a hardship for members to return after Christmas to complete the business of the country.

Mr. Johnson: I have no objection to that.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): While in accord with the desire of the hon. member for Guildford he would point out that the matter was one that could not well be fixed up in the manner suggested. If the House desired, as would frequently occur, to sit a little later than eleven o'clock, necessary provision would have to be made in the Standing Orders to permit business being completed. If they fixed it up as the hon. member for Guildford proposed, they would be forced to automatically adjourn at eleven o'clock, no matter of what importance the business then in hand might be. If the hon. member for Guildford added to his amendment the words "unless the House otherwise decides," we might be able to carry on until the Standing Orders were altered to enable the change to be properly carried out. If the hon. member would not agree to that, he himself would move an amendment to the proposed amendment.

Mr. Johnson: I have no objection to that amendment.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): If the motion were carried, all the Premier would be asked to do was to move that the business be continued, or that the Standing Orders be suspended. Would the position then be any different from what it was before? If the Government wanted to carry on after 11 o'clock, they could do so. Repeatedly in the House the most important measures of the session had been introduced at the hour of midnight. Last session the Mines Estimates, which to him and others were of the utmost importance, were introduced at midnight, and that too after an all-night sitting and an all-day sitting previously to that. Who could say that these estimates were adequately considered, or properly debated or criticised or analysed, as they should have been? It was to prevent these surprises, to prevent important matters being kept back until an exhausted House had been obtained,

when as a matter of course the Government could not be criticised as it should be, that the hon. member wished to carry his amendment. In these great departments of the State it was not only the Government but the welfare of the country that was concerned. These Estimates involved the welfare of the country, and no Estimates should receive more careful and calm consideration than those of the Mines Department. How could members after debating in the Chamber from four o'clock to midnight, when every member was in a feverish state of mind, bring their full faculties to bear in discussing important matters. It could be understood that any business then in hand might be finished. For instance, if a speaker were on his feet at 11 o'clock, he could go on until he had finished. The object of the amendment was to prevent important business being sprung on the Assembly at midnight. He would like the motion to be a direction to the Government and to the House, that at eleven o'clock the House should rise, and the business which was then incomplete, should stand over until the next day. That was the sole object of the amendment of the hon. member for Guildford, and what harm could there be in it? He felt sure more deliberate work would be done, and there would be further consideration given to all subjects.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): It was to be hoped the amendment would not be carried. He could conceive no greater weapon being placed in the hands of a minority, than to declare that the House should close at a certain hour. The minority could go on debating until that hour, and the business of the country could be kept back indefinitely. With regard to what hon. members had said, that important business had been transacted in the Chamber after midnight, it was perfectly true that that had happened on more than one occasion, but he denied the insinuation of the hon. member for Kanowna that important business was wilfully kept back until that hour. Time after time important business had been introduced in the early hours of the afternoon, and we had

got no further than two or three clauses by midnight owing of course to the long and eloquent speeches delivered by hon. members opposite. The same thing applied to the Estimates. Estimates had been introduced early in the day, sometimes in the afternoon, or at latest, after tea-time.

Mr. Walker: What about the Mining Estimates.

The TREASURER: They came on about ten o'clock or eleven o'clock at night.

Mr. Walker: About twelve.

The TREASURER: Yes, exactly, and why? Because hon. members were absolutely wasting the time of the House by talking at length on other matters.

Mr. Bolton: And the Railways Estimates came up on the following morning.

The TREASURER: Exactly, because there was no manner of bringing them forward otherwise. If members were to sit all the year round, it would be well to limit the hours, but he did not think any hon. member wished to be kept in the House during the summer months listening to long speeches. It was quite reasonable that the Government should adjourn the House from day to day when they thought that sufficient business had been carried through. That was the privilege of any Government and he ventured to express the opinion that if the Leader of the Opposition, and his followers were sitting on the Ministerial side of the House, they would require the right to carry on business even at an early hour of the morning if necessary. It was absurd to think that Ministers would willingly keep members there to wear them out.

Mr. Bolton: They have done so.

The TREASURER: Yes, because it was one duty to see business carried through, and if there were no other means, we had to sacrifice this until the business was passed. It had been done in the past, simply because of the determination of some members to block the Estimates: that was his opinion.

Mr. Walker: That is the kind of thing that creates this talk.

The TREASURER: This talk would go on anyhow. It was just as well that

the hon. member for Kanowna should know his opinion, as he (the Treasurer) knew that of the hon. member. If the House was to close down automatically at o'clock, they would get no business through because the hon. member for Kanowna would be the first to take advantage of the fingers of the clock moving around towards the hour of eleven.

Mr. Walker: Is the hon. member in order in virtually accusing me of obstructive tactics in the House? Is he in order in imputing motives of that kind?

Mr. SPEAKER: No; certainly not.

The *TREASURER:* If the hon. member objected to the imputation—if it was an imputation—he would withdraw it, but still his opinion was the same as he had expressed at the beginning of his remarks, that it would be a dangerous weapon, which would be open to the minority in the Chamber to know that the House must close down at a given hour.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): No one in the House was in a more unfortunate position to express an opinion on that subject than the Treasurer, because one only had to recall the cause of many all-night sittings, when they would trace them to the hon. gentleman. He remembered on one occasion when the Treasurer's Estimates were introduced, the hon. gentleman sat back in his chair and absolutely declined to give one iota of information to the House, and he expected members to discuss the Estimates without any information whatever.

The Treasurer: Does the hon. member remember the message I got from the opposite side of the House?

Mr. BATH: That was the course taken by the Treasurer and repeated by him in the following session and which caused an all-night sitting on the discussion of the Treasury Estimates, and on both occasions, if he remembered rightly, the Premier was absent at some show at Kaitiaki. The hon. member for Claremont, he thought, would bear him out, when he said that on one occasion an arrangement was fixed up by which an all-night sitting was terminated.

The Treasurer: Let me correct the hon. member. An all-night sitting was

terminated when my Estimates were put through, and the Premier never interfered. The Leader of the Opposition is misrepresenting facts.

Mr. BATH: The Treasurer was not in order in saying that he was misrepresenting facts. Unfortunately he did not have *Hansard* by him, or he was absolutely sure he could prove his contention. He believed by appealing to the hon. member for Claremont he could have his statement of the case borne out. On another occasion when members representing mining constituencies were particularly desirous of dealing with the report of the Battery Inquiry Board, the only opportunity which presented itself was the discussion of the Mining Estimates. Notwithstanding that those members appealed for the consideration of the Estimates to be deferred until the next day, the discussion on that very important report had to be proceeded with in the small hours of the morning when there were no Press representatives present, consequently no facilities for making public the remarks of hon. members. These things occasioned trouble in the House and led to all-night sittings. He was satisfied that if the proposed arrangement were adopted it would lead to a better feeling between members and would facilitate the despatch of business.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) was surprised that the Treasurer should have accused members of wasting time and blocking business. It was, he thought, against all rules and precedents for one member to refer to another as wasting the time of the House, and he was surprised that the Treasurer had not been brought up with a round turn when he made the remark. On more than one occasion in that Chamber items had been adjourned so as to get to important matters and put them through at a late hour at night. Most important measures had thus been forced through that Chamber when the Press were not there to report the proceedings. He himself had on more than one occasion protested against this procedure and he had asked that important considerations should be adjourned until the next sitting of the House. If the Treasurer thought he was going to add to the atti-

tude this session which he had displayed in the last Parliament, he would find he was making a very serious mistake, for hon. members on the Opposition side of the House were not there to be dictated to by a gentleman of the calibre of the Treasurer. If the Treasurer were to give them the information they asked for in connection with his Estimates, those Estimates would go through in much quicker time. Time after time the Minister had been unable or unwilling to supply the information asked for.

The Treasurer: Absolutely wrong.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was absolutely right, and he supposed they would find the Treasurer adopting the same attitude again. If the Treasurer were able this session to give the information asked for it would be something he had never done before.

Mr. JOHNSON (in explanation): The Standing Orders it seemed had anticipated this motion. Standing Order 48 stated:—

"If at the hour fixed by Sessional order for a regular temporary adjournment or suspension of a sitting—" The Standing Order went on to state that the House could proceed with the completion of a division or other matters. The Standing Orders contemplated a motion such as he had moved, and consequently he did not think it was undesirable that it should be moved. If there were a division on when the time for adjournment arrived, the Speaker or Chairman of Committees would retain his seat and finish the business.

Mr. BARNETT (Albany): The better way would be for the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition to confer in respect to any contentious matter before the House and if possible arrive at a determination as to how far its consideration should be proceeded with.

Mr. Taylor: You would have to rope the Premier to get near him at that stage.

Mr. BARNETT: When the stage agreed upon for adjournment was arrived at, the House would accordingly adjourn. Such a course would greatly facilitate the business before the Assembly, and would obviate a lot of discussion

such has had taken up so much of the time of the House during last session.

Amendment stated and a division called for.

Mr. Holman: Is an hon. member allowed to leave after the bells have commenced ringing?

Mr. Speaker: No; but I have not yet put the question.

Amendment put, after bells had been rung.

Mr. Taylor: I desire to draw your attention to the fact that the hon. member for Swan (Mr. Jacoby) left the Chamber after the bells started ringing.

Mr. Speaker: but I had not then put the question.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	16
Noes	25

Majority against .. 9

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Bath	Mr. Swan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Heilmann

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Layman
Mr. H. Brown	Mr. Maie
Mr. Butcher	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Daglish	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Price
Mr. Hayward	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Keenan	

(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) moved:—

That on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and on Wednesday, 25th November, and on each alternate Wednesday thereafter, Government business shall

take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle) moved an amendment—

That the words "and on Wednesday, 25th November, and on each alternate Wednesday thereafter" be struck out.

Last session being so short, private members had no opportunity to bring forward business; and as this session was anticipated to be a short one, the same thing would probably happen. At the close of last session there was a large quantity of private members' business on the Notice Paper that had to lapse because there was not sufficient time to enable members to discuss it, and this session in order to give an opportunity to have private members' business discussed it was only fair that at least one day a week should be devoted to it. If the motion were adopted there would be no opportunity for anything but Government business to be done.

The PREMIER: If members desired to complete the session before Christmas (though personally he was not adverse to coming after the holidays) it was necessary that only alternate Wednesdays should be devoted to private members' business. It would be remembered that the Government had always met members to the extent that motions could be proceeded with after the tea adjournment, and no departure would be made from that principle. Every opportunity would be given for private members' business. The Government had always made a point of meeting the wishes of hon. members where it was possible to do so on matters which members considered of an urgent nature, and they would continue to do so.

Mr TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): While there might be some justification on account of the shortness of the session for the Premier's desire that Government business should take precedence over that of private members, it, however, was the only argument that could be advanced. It was the desire of Governments generally, not of this Government alone, to whittle away the privileges of private

members. Private members' day was the only opportunity members had of bringing before the House matters affecting their constituencies, and also matters of importance affecting the State, and members should be careful before allowing this privilege to be whittled away. The Premier could well allow members the opportunity of bringing forward private business on each Wednesday. Many times when private members' business came on every Wednesday there was little to be discussed from the private member's point of view, and consequently Government business went on as on other days, and it was not anticipated there would be a large amount of private members' business this session. There were times when members desired to air grievances in the Chamber, but perhaps through having to wait a fortnight the necessity for urging the Government to take some step might go by, or some calamity might occur, which, had the opportunity been given the private member of bringing the matter before the House, could have been averted. To-day, by the Standing Orders, he had been prevented from bringing forward a matter that he considered of great urgency. He hoped the Premier would consider the amendment and allow members to have the privileges they had hitherto enjoyed. Members should guard these privileges and not allow them to be whittled away.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): If the Premier met the wishes of the member for East Fremantle no great risk would be run, because later on in the session if it was found that too much time was being devoted to private members' business, more than the Government could spare, a motion could be moved asking that the whole of the time for the rest of the session be devoted to Government business. Alternate Wednesdays for private members' business meant practically that members had no opportunity of bringing forward various matters they considered of importance.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the member for East Fremantle would vary his amendment to provide that Government business should take precedence on the 1st December. That would give an

extra Wednesday for private members' business.

Mr. ANGWIN: It would not make a great deal of difference. It would not give a private member an opportunity of introducing a private Bill. At least one day a week should be allowed to private members, seeing that we were to sit four days a week.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

House Committee.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) moved—

That the House Committee for the present Session shall consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Underwood, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Price, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the House Committee of the Legislative Council.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): Had the House Committee held a meeting? What had been done by the committee in regard to rooms for the Press?

The Premier: The committee would not be elected until after the motion was carried.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): Recently a decision had been arrived at with regard to certain rooms in Parliament House. Those rooms were presumably under the control of the House, but there was some ambiguity in the minds of members as to who really controlled them. It was stated that the Premier had given permission to the Press to use the rooms, and that the Speaker when elected had confirmed the Premier's decision. It was understood that the Speaker still remained in control until defeated at the general election, or until he failed to be re-elected by the House. Therefore, what was the actual position? Who really controlled the House of Parliament: the Government of the day, or a committee appointed by the House, or Mr. Speaker, the appointee of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: It was not proper to put a question to the Chair, but if the House desired it he would say a few words on the matter.

The PREMIER asked permission to state what action he had taken in the matter. Speaking from memory he believed he was asked by the leaders of the newspaper staffs whether there was any objection to the Press occupying the two rooms in question on the opening day; and he had stated that he saw no objection to their doing so pending the election of the House Committee, because he was under the impression that when Parliament dissolved the Assembly members of the House Committee were likewise dissolved. He had therefore given this tentative permission to the Press. It became necessary for someone to give the requisite permission. Whether it should have come from the Council members on the House Committee was a question he had not considered, but he had believed he was meeting the wishes of the Assembly generally by giving it.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): For the last two or three sessions he had been a member of the House Committee. On his first appointment to the committee, he promptly proceeded to see what his duties were, and had ascertained how the House Committee had acted since the establishment of Responsible Government in Western Australia. For a long time we had two Houses of Parliament, the Lower House in Hay Street, and the Legislative Council in St. George's Terrace. At that time the Speaker had great powers in controlling the House, and the President had equal powers in the Legislative Council, and they were almost paramount. But when members moved into the present building the House Committee were appointed from the two branches of the Legislature to sit jointly and to control those in the precincts of the Chamber employed by the State. Many powers of the President and Speaker were then curtailed because the committee took up the attitude that, if they, through their secretary, issued instructions to officers of the House, and the Speaker had the power that he hitherto possessed to countermand them, a dual

control would be set up. Consequently the House Committee controlled the building outside the Chamber. With regard to the Premier having given certain instructions to the Press, a report of what he had done appeared in the *West Australian* in the following words:—

“Parliament and the Press.—By permission of the Premier, the two rooms in the Legislative Assembly from which the metropolitan pressmen were ejected last session were made available for the reporters yesterday, pending the meeting of the new House Committee. This action by the head of the Government was readily concurred in by Mr. Quinlan immediately on the election of that gentleman to the position of Speaker.”

In speaking to the question just now the Premier said he was not sure who had the power to issue instructions regarding the rooms, and whether the outgoing committee had control of the business until the new committee were appointed. The position was clear. The instructions of the old House Committee must stand until the new House Committee met and decided either to confirm or reverse them. The action of the House Committee which raised the whole question last session was based upon a resolution carried by the committee on the 16th July, 1907. It was generally believed, and had been said in the Press, that the action taken by the reporters was due to a new decision arrived at by the House Committee. That was not so, for when the trouble arose last session the House Committee were merely carrying out the terms of the resolution passed in 1907. The rooms in dispute were occupied by the Press until July, 1907; but for the rest of that session the reporters moved to the other rooms provided for them. Just before the last general election the reporters decided again to occupy the old rooms, in defiance of the instructions of the committee: and very properly they were instructed by the secretary to the House Committee—who was the proper channel through which such

instructions should be conveyed—that the previous resolution still held good, and that they would have to occupy the rooms set apart for them. That aspect of the question had not been made known to the people, as what had been said through the Press was that the committee decided last session, what in reality was dealt with 14 months previously. The Premier had gone considerably out of his way, and quite apart from his rights, in issuing instructions countermanding something done by a committee of the House. Parliament appointed a committee, and Parliament and not the Government was paramount.

The Premier: What would have happened had the members of the committee been defeated at the general election?

Mr. TAYLOR: What would happen to Acts of Parliament passed by the Moore Government if the Ministry had been defeated at the general election?

The Premier: They would remain.

Mr. TAYLOR: And so did the instructions and actions of the House Committee until a new committee was appointed. The latter would then have the power either to confirm or to rescind the decision previously arrived at. Any action by the committee must hold good until it was altered. In speaking of the action of the Premier he was not accusing him of doing something for his own personal gain, or with the object of worming himself into the confidence of the Press. But to say the least of it he had been guilty of bad taste and had shown a want of knowledge of the Premier's functions. It appeared that the grievances of the Press existed for some time, having gone back so far as 1904. It was well that the member for Swan (Mr. Jacoby) was again a member of the House, for he would remember what happened at the time he occupied the position of Speaker. That gentleman had some difficulty with the Press, and the reporters were so incensed that they issued a circular to members setting forth their grievances in plain and unmistakable language. It would afford information to members if he read portion of the circular, of which he had a copy and which

was issued by the Press to members of Parliament. The circular read:—

"Grievances of representatives of the Press whose duty it is to attend at the New Parliament Houses. Speaker's order that they should enter by the side (public) door, which means that they cannot have access to the building until after prayers have been read. This is most inconvenient by reason of the fact that it will not allow of the ordinary preparations being made for the day's work. Speaker's order preventing the reporters proceeding from one Chamber to the other without having to go out of the building. Speaker's order prohibiting reporters from using precincts of Chambers on ground floor, where it is daily found necessary to interview Ministers and members. The entire absence of sanitary arrangements for reporters. The arrangement made by the Speaker whereby he would have reporters go to servants' quarters for meals. There are many vacant tables in the dining room, and the majority of members would have no objection to the representatives of the daily Press using one of them, if necessary, screened off. Foul-smelling and inconveniently situated room given to reporters in which to write up copy, unhealthy and unbearable in summer. Gallery—lack of conveniences; desk uncomfortably narrow; no drawers for papers. Necessity for telephone in a more conveniently situated reporters' room."

Evidently it was a very heinous offence in the eyes of the reporters that they should be compelled to have meals with the servants of the House. The circular clearly showed the truth of what he had said, that in the earlier days the Speaker was clothed with much greater powers than he possessed now. At present the joint committee issued instructions, not through the Speaker as formerly, but through their secretary. Since the period referred to in the circular the House Committee made arrangements for the Press to use the telephone under the gallery in the ground floor. Now, however, after the receipt of further complaints from the Press, the House Committee had or-

dered a telephone for each of the two rooms set apart for the reporters. The main contention was that the rooms set apart for the Press were too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. The committee had screened the windows with curtains to prevent the rooms from getting too hot; and in order to relieve the cold atmosphere in winter a fire heater had been purchased. The complaint was then made that the heater had an objectionable smell. He wanted to point out that the House Committee had dealt fairly by the Press. He did so in view of what had been said about the House Committee, and he invited members of the House to view the room set apart by the committee. He would also ask the public of the State who found the money for these rooms to come along and have a look at them, and see whether the representatives of the House on the committee had not done a fair thing by the Press. He had been informed that in some of the Eastern States if members of the Press desired telephones in their rooms the Government put the telephones in, but the Press had to pay for them. In this State the committee had given them a telephone in each of the two rooms that had been set apart for them, and one of the rooms was unequalled in Australia. He had been in most parts of the Commonwealth, and there was no room set apart for the reporters in any of the Parliamentary buildings which would compare with this particular room. The committee recognised that they could not make any better provision for the Press in the second room other than by making a door in the southern wall in order to bring the pressmen into closer touch with the gallery, but they emphatically declared that they would not have this room. The committee had had an estimate of the cost of this work prepared, and it was something like £12. That room was only four or five paces from the Press gallery; it was one of the rooms adjacent to the rooms occupied by *Hansard*, and it was the largest room in the temporary building, and the best ventilated too. The *Hansard* staff were compelled to work longer hours and more laboriously, but they

were the servants of the chamber, and they were the staff upon whom the people of the country relied for accurate records of the business of Parliament. The rooms which they occupied were not all they should be. The committee had discussed that aspect of the question repeatedly, but until the Government were prepared to vote a sum of money for removing the temporary structure of wood and iron now occupied by *Hansard*, the committee would not be able to assist the Press or *Hansard*. He wanted the public to know the excuses of the Press in this matter. The most remarkable thing about the difficulty was that the Press made a strong point of the distance of one of these rooms from the gallery. But what did they find? They found that through the whole of the session before the last the representatives of both the newspapers occupied the one large room farthest away from the gallery. That in itself removed the ground for complaint in regard to distance. If the Press had been consistent on that subject they would have taken the room which was closer to the gallery, but they went to the one that was farthest away. Certainly it was the best room, but the difficulty arose owing to the Press instincts of Mr Ramaciotti, the then leader of the *Morning Herald* Staff. This gentleman recognising that the instructions issued by the House Committee would have to be carried out, promptly proceeded to the better of the two rooms, and with his staff took possession of it. Of course, Granny Hackett's crowd naturally got angry, because there was nothing left for them but the room in the wooden structure, "covered with tin and cardboard." As a matter of fact, this room was covered with galvanised iron, like most of the buildings in Western Australia. The *West Australian* staff were somewhat angry at the action of the *Morning Herald* staff in securing pride of place. It was suggested to him that the *West Australian* staff should have the right to pick their room. He promptly wanted to know why. The rooms were set apart for the Press, and the Press decided for themselves. The *West Australian* in a lordly way de-

clared that they should be allowed to do what they liked and pick their own room. Of course, they would not go into the room adjoining those of the *Hansard* staff, and eventually they took possession of the larger room with the staff of the *Morning Herald*. Subsequently, Mr. Romans, who became leader of the *Morning Herald* staff, pointed out that it was impossible for the two staffs to work in one room, because the life of the Press depended on competition and the activity of its reporters and paragraphers. It was necessary for them to be apart, and each to have a telephone. The House Committee recognised the rivalry between the two staffs, and that they should be placed a good distance apart; but unfortunately they had no other choice with regard to rooms but to give them the large one and the other adjoining the rooms of *Hansard*. He was sorry that the Premier had taken it upon himself to interfere with the decision arrived at by the House Committee. When they came to think of it that the Premier of the State took up an attitude of that kind, the position became hopeless. The Premier stated that he did not know what was done by the outgoing House Committee, but there was the President of the Upper House to consult, and the whole of the committee was intact. The Premier could have gone to the President and asked him what attitude had been taken up. No; off his own bat he gave the reporters permission to use the other rooms, and then pleaded innocence. It was a fair and reasonable plea, but it would not go down with him. No matter what the Premier thought, Parliament was paramount, and Parliament through its House Committee had done what it thought best. If the House did not think the action of the committee satisfactory it had power to alter the personnel of that committee. He had served for a considerable time on that committee, and had devoted considerable time and energy to the work, and he was pleased to say that if they looked through the records it would be found that the committee had done very useful work.

'They had' effected many improvements, and they had not increased cost. They had found that there were seventy-two lights being used in the Refreshment Room : now that room was lighted by twenty-seven lights. On the electric light bill they had saved in the last six months, as compared with the previous six months, no less a sum than £140. Hon. members would thus see that the House Committee had done something.

Mr. Angwin: Is that the reason why many of the members are wearing spectacles?

Mr. TAYLOR : It was rumoured that many Fremantle members were wearing glasses to hide their identity. He had a report from the secretary of the House Committee which showed what the committee had done in the way of effecting improvements. It was found that strangers coming to the Strangers' Gallery had to go through the building. The committee had put a staircase outside to enable strangers to enter the gallery without passing through the building and wandering about the House. The committee had also arranged a dining room for *Hansard* and the Press reporters, and a staircase had been built to this place. It was a most remarkable fact that whilst they found all these complaints from the Press, as soon as there was a vacant position on the *Hansard* Staff those very pressmen, who would not enter the rooms which the committee set apart for them and which they (the pressmen) considered were very objectionable, at once accepted the *Hansard* position and entered into possession of the rooms which they as pressmen condemned and which he (Mr. Taylor) would even declare to be infinitely worse than one of the rooms set apart for the pressmen in the temporary building. The rooms of the *Hansard* Staff were very much smaller, and the members of the Staff had to remain in them much longer and do much more work, and he could not help repeating that it was a most singular thing that the very men who objected most strongly to enter those rooms, immediately hopped into a Government position when it was made available.

and accepted the hovels to work in. He was justified in calling them hovels because they were nothing else, and he was sorry that the Government could not see their way to provide a sum on the Estimates which would enable the committee to arrange proper rooms for their servants to work in, and enable them at the same time to allocate rooms to the Press which would be more congenial to them. When they found those very Press representatives willing and anxious to accept Government positions it made one look around. He would like to ask the public if they thought that the Press had been badly treated by the House Committee. He would give the public a cordial invitation to visit the House and inspect the rooms that had been set apart for the pressmen, and let them inspect the dining room also which had been set apart for them and say whether there were any grounds for complaint.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member was a little out of order. The discussion was allowed on account of a question asked by an hon. member, and he thought the hon. member might be given some latitude.

Question put and passed.

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

Other Committees.

On motions by the Premier other Sessional Committees were appointed as follow:—

Library Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Draper, and Mr. Walker, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

Printing Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Scaddan; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for the printing of Returns and Papers presented in pursuance of Motions made by members, and all Papers laid upon the Table whether in answer to addresses or otherwise.

Standing Orders Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Foulkes, Mr. Collier, Mr. Hudson, and the Chairman of Com-

mittees, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second day.

Debate resumed from the opening day, 10th November.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): In addressing myself to the debate on the Address-in-Reply at this the opening of a new Parliament I feel that I cannot allow the occasion to pass without expressing the pleasure which I myself and my colleagues feel at the fact that the result of the general election has increased the representatives on this side of the House. When the whole of the members are here—and I may say that several are away seeking to maintain the party at the number announced in the Press—we shall have only one vacant chair on this side of the House. And I believe that not only is it a matter of congratulation for representatives of the Labour party, but I believe also it is in the best interests of the people of this State, because there can be no doubt that the experience that members and the people have had of Parliament as constituted during the last three years with the large majority, has led to the belief that the subservience shown during that time was demoralising to parliamentary institutions and opposed to the best interests of the people. Of course we have not filled up the aching voids which we have had on this side of the House during the last three years without causing some pangs of bitterness to the Premier and his colleagues, and since the results of the election were made known, not only the Premier but other Ministers have remarked upon the result of the election in some disparaging terms. I wish to say that however strenuous that conflict may have been—and I believe it was one of the most energetic election campaigns ever fought in Western Australia—we fought it on political principles, and, I have yet to have it

pointed out to me where I departed, or where members supporting me departed from criticism of legislative and administrative acts of the Government in order to deal with mere personalities and abuse. We sought to avoid that, and I think that in spite of the heat of the campaign, we did avoid it. We know the results, and we can say this, that both sides placed their case before the people. The people were fully acquainted with the views of both parties. A great deal of platform work was done, and the verdict must be accepted as the deliberate vote of the electors of the State. And it must be remembered too that there was a large increase in the percentage of electors over that of any previous campaign. There has also been a great deal of talk as to what would occur when Parliament met. We have heard it said that the Government, in spite of the fact that they have a majority of six, would find difficulty in carrying on the business of the State, because there were certain gentlemen, who, I understand, to use their own language, have reserved the right to criticise actions of the Government which they might consider wrong. Reservationists I think they were termed by the *Morning Herald*. So far as Parliament has proceeded, judging by the harmony which is said to have prevailed at the opening Ministerial meeting, there is still some hope as far as the Premier and his colleagues are concerned, that the position is not as bad as was predicted by a great many people. And the Premier himself is apparently seized with that idea, because in His Excellency's Speech he expresses the hope that the stability of Government will continue to be assured for another three years. In fact it seems that the Reservationists are getting rid of their reservations, which are melting away like snow in the summer sun, and we find the member for Swan, one of the Reservationists, moving the Address-in-Reply, and in the friendliest possible fashion taking upon himself the task of improving the members occupying the Ministerial benches. And even in a more fluent and generous way we find

the hon. member for Roebourne, who is also credited with being a Reservationist—

Mr. Hopkins : A member of the Labour party.

Mr. BATH : Yes. In spite of the fact that the Premier and his colleagues put their own money on another horse for the Roebourne contest, we find the hon. member in the most generous fashion bestowing a whole bundle full of hints upon the Ministry.

The Premier : You tried hard to capture him.

Mr. BATH : It really reminds me of the old nursery rhyme about the ten little niggers sitting in a row. We find there were six Reservationists, but in view of the attitude taken up by the member for Swan and the member for Roebourne they are reduced to four. The member for Beverley and the member for Greenough, who are also credited with being Reservationists, have preserved a sphinx-like silence, and from all appearance the Government are assured of a majority of five, so far as the present Parliament is concerned. There is this to be said, that I fail to see any possible reason.—in fact it would be a reflection on members of this Parliament if it were not possible for a Government with a majority of five or six to carry on the affairs of this State. But the unkindest cuts have come from those newspapers—and they are many—which supported the Government during the last three years, and during the election campaign. We have had these saying because of the inattention of Government members, it would be impossible, even with that majority, for the Government to carry on. No less a journal than the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, a consistent supporter of the Government, we find using these expressions—expressions even more severe than anything that has ever been said by a member on this side of the House. It says:—

“Some of the other supporters of the Government are just as unreliable. The Ministerial supporters are mostly men of affairs who have their own businesses to attend to and they cannot always be depended on to be present.

Some of them are old and weary and perhaps would sleep more comfortably at home than on the benches in the House. Moreover, a few of them are far from being ardent followers and they will probably hesitate before giving up their whole time to watchfulness in order to prevent a defeat of their so-called party, perhaps by a catch vote. There are two or three ambitious men among them, and they may want to know where they come in if so much is to be demanded of them. Taking them on the whole those on the Ministerial side of the Chamber are somewhat of a job lot.”

That is pretty severe criticism coming from a Government journal but I hope that during the deliberations of this Parliament it will not be proved to be true. I hope that on whichever side of the House members sit they will sufficiently realise the fact that they have been sent here by the electors to transact the business which may be brought before the House by the Government or members of the House; and that their own private business will not be placed above those duties they are sent here to perform. If that be so, I cannot see where the Premier has anything to fear as far as this Parliament is concerned. Coming to the Address-in-Reply, we find that there has been very little in the shape of prediction or a statement of what is to come in the future. It can be regarded as somewhat of the nature of looking back on the past, in fact rather as a prospectus which some lecturer (Wallace Nelson, for instance) might be preparing on his way home to advertise the possibilities of the State. So, taking the cue from the tone adopted in the Address-in-Reply, I am going to look backward to a few of the recent happenings since last Parliament was dissolved. In the first place we have a matter that I believe should be ventilated at the earliest possible opportunity in Parliament, and I am availing myself of this debate on the Address-in-Reply in order to call attention to it. I refer to the way in which the Minister for Mines has hung on to the portfolio after having been defeated in the constituency for which he

sought election. Of course there is a polite fiction that Ministerial office is something in the gift of the Crown, but it is after all only a fiction. It would be a bad thing for representative government if we gave it any weight more than the weight of fiction. Ministerial office in Western Australia or any part of Australia is contingent upon the holder of it maintaining the confidence of the majority of the electors in some constituency. On the 11th September the electors of Menzies, a majority of them, said that they did not have confidence in Mr. Gregory; and for that gentleman to continue to hold his office is opposed to the democratic principles we wish to see obtaining in Western Australia, or in Australia for that matter. Further than the verdict of the Menzies electors, we have the opinion of the majority of the electors in every goldfields constituency in Western Australia, with the exception of Kalgoorlie; and that verdict, even more emphatic than the expression of opinion given by the electors of Menzies, was in opposition to the reactionary policy that had been instituted in the administration of the affairs of the Mines Department; also that verdict has been given by greater majorities than were ever previously recorded for members representing goldfields constituencies, and it has been given not alone by one class of individual, not by the working miners only, but by the prospectors and the leaseholders from the southernmost part of Western Australia to far Pilbara. For instance, let us take the constituency of Pilbara. The hon. member informs me that there are only 20 trades unionists in Pilbara, the bulk of the electors being prospectors and leaseholders. We have the same position in Dundas and in other constituencies, for instance those represented by the members for Murchison and Mount Magnet; and the verdict of these electors has been plainly in favour of a change in the policy that has ruled in the Mines Department for the past few years. That being so, I think Mr. Gregory should have held on to the portfolio no longer than was necessary to make way for the successor decided on by the Premier in his stead; but to hold on to it in the way

he has done is, as I have already said, something entirely opposed to the opinion of the majority in the goldfields constituencies of Western Australia. Moreover, the fact that he has retained the position has given him an undue advantage in connection with the circumstances surrounding the Menzies contest and the election appeal which followed. For instance, we find that under the guise of a Ministerial visit to his constituency the Minister for Mines had placed at his disposal the Government motor car to tour the constituency in his own interest.

The Minister for Works: When?

Mr. BATH: Prior to the election taking place.

The Minister for Works: How long prior to that?

Mr. BATH: On the occasion, well known to the Minister for Works, when the Minister for Mines completely toured the Menzies electorate.

The Premier: And the whole of the goldfields.

Mr. Heitmann: Yes, electioneering.

Mr. BATH: We not only found the Minister for Mines doing that, but when the election contest was in progress we found the Colonial Secretary utilising his Ministerial position to the fullest extent in order to go round and assist Government candidates. It is true that the assistance was much more in favour of members of the Opposition than in favour of those Mr. Connolly sought to assist; but the fact remains that, although he was very careful to publish in the Press that he had hired this motor car at his own expense, a special train went over the Midland line drawing the Ministerial car containing Mr. Connolly and a truck upon which the motor car was loaded. This was considerable expense to be put to merely to enable Mr. Connolly to go upon an electioneering expedition. It proves that there is a tendency to get beyond a fair thing in electioneering contests, when Ministers use all the opportunities they possess for all they are worth in electioneering campaigns. There are circumstances surrounding the Menzies campaign which need to be ventilated at the earliest possible moment. In the first place we find the election upset because certain

votes were recorded which were declared to be illegal because through absence from the electorate for more than three months voters had ceased to hold the qualification as electors in that constituency; and we have the added fact given in evidence in the Court that votes of members of Mr. Gregory's committee were recorded in his favour and yet were used for the purpose of upsetting the election.

Mr. Bolton: Disgraceful!

Mr. BATH: This absolutely places a premium on irregular, if not corrupt methods in electioneering campaigns. So far as that contest was concerned, my advice tendered personally and by letter to Mr. Buzacott was that he was to find out every one of those voters whose names might be retained on the roll although they had lost the qualification, and to object to every one of them; because so far as candidates from the Opposition were concerned, it was not worth their while, in fact they could not afford to run the risk of an election appeal on matters of this sort. That advice was tendered in circulars issued to every constituency where a candidate was run on our behalf, and it was acted on by Mr. Buzacott and his committee; because a list of those names was submitted by the scrutineers and objected to, but the objection was overruled and the votes admitted despite every effort on Mr. Buzacott's part to have the contest decided on a clear issue only by those entitled to vote. And now we find that he not only loses the seat, which may be a right conclusion according to the law, but he has also to bear the additional burden that he is mulcted in the whole of the costs of the petition.

Mr. Hopkins: He could have escaped that.

Mr. BATH: No; it was impossible for him to escape. In the first place what would have been said by nine out of every ten electors in Western Australia if Mr. Buzacott, before he knew the case that was to be submitted against him, had resigned, as it was said he could do in order to contest a new election? The first thing people would have said would have been, "He must have been guilty of some improper practices or he would

not have resigned." Again, although reference was made to the rules adopted by the Court of Disputed Returns, they were not adopted until the 9th October, and at that stage it was impossible for Mr. Buzacott to have resigned in order that the expense might have been obviated. But if the utterances of Ministers in this House are to be regarded as at all reliable, Mr. Buzacott had their assurance so far as freedom from action on the Menzies roll was concerned under the Electoral Act which the Attorney General introduced and which was passed. In the course of the second reading of the Electoral Bill, in his explanation of its provisions, the Attorney General made these remarks:—

"We have made one attempt in this Court of Disputed Returns to save candidates from being unnecessarily harassed and possibly being made the victims of circumstances over which they have no control, by providing in Clause 160 that the Court shall deem the roll conclusive evidence that the persons enrolled were at the date of the completion of the roll entitled to be enrolled. The provisions for making up rolls make it necessary for every roll to be dated—the original roll and the supplementary rolls; and this provision in regard to disputed returns is that the Court is to take the roll on the date it bears on the face of it as being the correct roll. That is the intent of the existing Act, but it is badly phrased and is open to another interpretation. I think it is only fair to the candidates to say that when the department issues its roll and dates it at the date of issue, they can rely that on that date—they do not of course take responsibility for anything subsequent to that date—the parties enrolled were entitled to the franchise. Of course this carries the matter somewhat farther, from this point of view, that provision is made in this Bill whereby any person who leaves a constituency is entitled for three months after he has left the constituency to exercise the franchise. Therefore, if any member here were a candidate and it became necessary for

him to assure himself as to whether some person was entitled to vote or not, he at least could assure himself to this stage, that if the person's name appears on the roll that was printed within three months of the date of his inquiry, that person was presumably entitled to vote."

That was the assurance given by the Attorney General when introducing this Bill: and yet we are told, according to the opinion of the Chief Justice, there was nothing in the deliberations of Parliament on this measure which gave any weight to Clause 161 in the Bill by which it was held that the roll prepared and dated by the Electoral Office was conclusive evidence of the right of those persons to vote. I say that the protection which the Attorney General said was to be given to candidates against being unnecessarily harassed is evidently not in existence, because we have the rolls questioned in the same manner as those which were prepared under the Acts which this last Act repealed. Now take the other point in which it was sought to upset the election, that of neglect on the part of the Electoral Department to accurately delimit the Menzies electorate, and upon that point I would like to know upon whose authority and at whose expense the survey of that electorate was made after the Electoral Department had practically given assurance to those whom they enrolled that they were within the boundaries of the Menzies electorate and were therefore entitled to vote. If these persons were outside the Menzies electorate it is clearly an evidence of neglect on the part of the Electoral Department, and yet in the bill of costs submitted to Mr. Buzacott we find inserted an amount of £10 which he is called upon to pay for the survey made by an officer of the Mines Department on the instructions of the Under Secretary for Mines.

Mr. Carson: About the same experience I had. I was forced to pay to Brown.

Mr. BATH: I will deal with the member's case, which has been quoted as a precedent, and will show there is a difference between it and the Menzies elec-

tion. The surveyor who carried out the work said it was done in his time as a surveyor of the Mines Department, and that he had received instructions from the Under Secretary for Mines. Mr. Gregory says it was done at his expense. The bill of costs says it was to be done at Mr. Buzacott's expense. If there was any neglect the expense involved should be borne by the parties responsible—the Electoral Department. Further it was contended as a justification for this course being followed, that a precedent had been established by the petition lodged against the return of Mr. Holmes for East Fremantle in 1905. Mention was also made of the Geraldton and Coolgardie petitions. The East Fremantle case provides absolutely no parallel, for this reason, that the irregularities in that connection were, I believe, made by the member declared returned at the election, Mr. Holmes. If not actually committed by him, they were the work of his supporters and of the committees acting on his behalf. To quote an instance: in one place a very prominent gentleman in Fremantle, who held the position of a postal vote officer, took the vote of one gentleman who was in bed, and who, on the evidence of his medical officer, was mentally unfit to record his vote. This is one of a number of instances in which the postal vote, which is the source of corruption in all these cases, was used by the gentleman who was declared to be returned, and it is only in keeping with the justice of things that the man who used to the fullest extent all the opportunities for irregularity that present themselves under the postal vote provisions, should be made to bear the cost. The same remarks apply to the Geraldton and Coolgardie cases. I believe, however, that in neither of these cases was the member who was elected, and subsequently unseated on these votes, himself responsible for the misuse of the postal votes, but it was his supporters and committees. In the present instance we find that Mr. Buzacott, and those acting on his behalf, did everything in their power to object to those postal votes being counted in the election. That being so, it seems to me the verdict which placed the burden of costs on the shoul-

ders. Mr. Buzacott simply offers a premium to dishonesty in elections, and makes the man who tries to run honestly foot the bill for the whole transaction. So far as these postal votes are concerned, I have said before that the provisions in the 1904 Act provided the chief blot in that measure. We sought in the last Electoral Act, and I give the Attorney General credit for having endeavoured to hedge the provisions round with further conditions, to prevent the provisions being used in the manner adopted in the past. But we found in the late campaign that the postal vote provisions offered such facilities to those having a large sum of money to spend that it is clear there will be no freedom from corruption and irregularities in elections until either we make it known to those using the votes that if irregularities are proved the votes will be open to scrutiny after the election, or that we wipe out the provisions altogether, even although this might impose some disqualification or disadvantage on a small percentage of the electors. Some reference has been made by members to-night to the whittling away of the rights of members of this Parliament, and there is a good deal in the contention. In recent years there has been growing in Western Australia an opinion among Ministers that they are not only an administrative body, but that they also to a large extent should fulfil the functions of Parliament. We find an effort made to squeeze the deliberations of Parliament into the smallest possible time, and the recess lengthening out to an inordinate degree, and we also find a disinclination for the discussion of very important matters in this House. I would like to say to members on both sides of the House that they have but few opportunities to bring forward matters in which they are interested. On many occasions members who had introduced a measure and perhaps had been given an opportunity to have it read a second time, found that owing to the adoption of this squeezing process they were never given another chance to have further progress made with the Bill. There is also a tendency to cut down the discussion on

the Estimates. Apart from the Address-in-Reply the discussion on the Estimates is practically the only opportunity a member has during the sittings of Parliament to discuss matters of vital concern to him and his district. The questions of mines administration, construction of roads, lands administration, and other matters immediately under the control of the different Ministers can only be brought forward on the two occasions I have mentioned, and if the opportunities to discuss them then are curtailed, the member desirous of seeking information, or making his views known, loses the opportunity of bringing the matter forward. We find that the session just before the dissolution of Parliament, which some members have referred to as being practically useless, offered very little opportunity for members to deal with these matters, and from just before Christmas in 1907 until the end of July, when Parliament met, Ministers were practically free from the control or the criticism of members. It would not be so bad if the recess had been devoted to administrative work, but so far as the first half of 1908 was concerned, the time was utilised by Ministers in touring the country and electioneering, in preparation for the general elections, which they knew would ensue.

The Premier: The longest tour they had was with you.

MR. BATH: Under the circumstances, therefore, administration has been lacking, and has suffered. The administration of the State batteries suffered, and that is one reason why the Minister for Mines has found a very considerable change of opinion, not only in Menzies but also in other constituencies, where the leaseholders and prospectors are largely dependent for their livelihood on the State batteries. We have the report of the State Batteries Inquiry Board, but there has been no comprehensive attempt on the part of the Ministers to remedy the condition of affairs disclosed by that report. In fact we had the position of superintendent of these batteries going to a gentleman who had proved by his neglect of the

State's interests, in the sale of the smelters at Ravensthorpe, that he was not fitted to be entrusted with the office. A very severe loss was occasioned to the State by the sale of matte and slag which contained many thousands of pounds' worth of metals. In June or July of this year applications were called by the Public Service Commissioner for the position of Superintendent of State Batteries. I understand that the Public Service Commissioner has made his recommendation, and if he has not done so he is not fitted to occupy the position he holds. We have, however, the applicants strung on month after month and no satisfaction afforded them as to the appointment. Thus there is neglect in the administration of the Mines Department, and this neglect is characteristic of the state of affairs in the other departments. We have only to take the disclosures in regard to the Tender Board to show there has been a lack of control on the part of the Treasurer in that particular department, and I intend to move at an early date for the production of the papers in connection with the inquiry into the administration of the board. Next we have the Police Department. In spite of the promise made that some alteration and reform would be effected in this department there is not one paper in the State, be it a Government or an Opposition paper, which is not calling attention to the unsatisfactory state of affairs, and to the many grievances under which the police labour. It is surely time that attention was devoted to the work of administration, and that this dissatisfaction was alleviated to some degree. Now we come to the question of finance. Of course we will have an opportunity when the Treasurer introduces the Estimates and makes his Budget speech to deal with this at greater length, but the only point to which I wish to refer now is that at a time when the State is travelling backward in the manner it is doing, something more is called for from the Treasurer than a mere assurance that there is no cause for alarm. We want some assurance that the Treasurer himself is alive to the position and that he has some effective remedy to suggest for the drifting position of the

finances. At the recent elections there was an almost universal expression of hope by men of all shades of opinion throughout the country that the electors of Sussex would reject the Treasurer. That was the wish of men who supported the general policy of the Government, but who say we shall never have effective financial administration and reform in Western Australia until someone else, even if it be a man from the Government side, occupies the position of Treasurer. In support of this I need go no further than to quote the case of the gentleman who occupies a seat on the Government side of the House—the member for Beverley (Mr. Hopkins)—who gave public expression to those views during the recent campaign. We have the fluent expression of opinion from the member for Roebourne (Mr. Osborn) that things are all right, that there is no necessity to worry over a deficiency of a mere £350,000, and that matters will come out all right in the end; but we must bear this fact in mind, that the position of the State finances is a barometer of the condition of the general commercial and industrial life of the State. It is certainly not an incentive to private effort if the finances of the State are in the condition they are in at present. Then we have the position of the railways. In spite of the fact that we have had 300 miles of additional railways constructed since 1905-6, the railway revenue has fallen off to the extent of £132,000, or in these two years at the rate of £66,000 a year. Granted we cannot expect these railways recently constructed to pay from the jump, surely we can expect that they will contribute something additional to the railway revenue, and that it will not go back as it has been going during the past two years. I certainly think the position is one worthy the attention of members. Of course we have as usual the blame placed on the shoulders of the Commonwealth. We are told we are being deprived of revenue, and the whole blame for the financial position is placed on the Federal authorities. This brings me to the question of our relations with the Commonwealth. I have no desire to discuss this subject at length at the pres-

ent time, because when the Premier submits his motion there will then be the opportunity of dealing with it at much greater length; but I do wish to express this opinion—and it was confirmed by the statement made by Mr. Gregory in accounting for his defeat in the Menzies election—that there is growing up, throughout the goldfields constituencies at least, a feeling in favour of Federation and in favour of the Federal Parliament.

The Premier: He said in favour of Unification.

Mr. BATH: He said what I have said. Anyhow I am taking it at the moderate expression in favour of the Federal Parliament and Federation as it exists at present: and there is no doubt Mr. Gregory has accurately gauged the opinion of the goldfields. And as long as we are content to drift as we are doing at present, so long is that feeling going to exist. Those who are advocating State rights at present: calling upon us to preserve home rule for Western Australia; calling upon us to resist the encroachments of the Federal Parliament; as long as they maintain that position, under the existing limitations, are merely blindly groping in the dark, for so long will the electors on the goldfields, as in the other parts of the State, and indeed Australia, look towards the Federal Parliament because it is based on a democratic franchise. I say that the Premier could do more for the preservation of home rule, of autonomous powers here if we were to deal with the question of Upper House reform instead of introducing the motion which was carried at the conference of State Premiers. But so long as we are content to labour along under our antiquated Constitution, so long will the attention of the people be turned to the Federal Parliament. The promise was made here that this measure of Upper House reform would be introduced in the first session of this Parliament; that this reform would be one of the first measures submitted. The failure to carry out that pledge is one more nail in the coffin of the State Parliament; one more reason for the electors to look with contempt on us, and look to the Federal Parliament for their salvation. Now a good

deal has been said, and there have been many speculations in the Press, as to what would be the attitude of the Labour party on the assembling of Parliament. I do not think there should be any need for speculation in regard to the course which we as a Labour party are likely to adopt. We have demonstrated during the past three years, on more than one occasion, that we are not here as an Opposition merely for the sake of opposing anything suggested from the other side of the House. On more than one occasion we have voted for measures that the Government have submitted, and given them our cordial support when they have gone some distance on the road we were pursuing. We are here looking for legislation which will benefit the people as a whole, and looking for just and equitable administration of that legislation, and as long as that is forthcoming we are ready to support the Government. We are here as a Labour party in this House, pledged to certain definite principles, and during the last elections there was ample evidence from nearly every constituency at present represented by a labour member, that these principles have been taken to heart more and more by the electors as a whole, who showed that they were firmly committed to them. It is our duty as a Labour party, therefore, to push forward those principles at any and every opportunity, to justify the trust that has been placed in us as advocates of those principles in this House. It is frequently urged that there is very little difference between the policy of the present Government and that of the Labour party. I say if that were true it would be a very good reason why some more vigorous and progressive party should take our place on these benches; but it is not true. There is a very wide and vital difference between the policy of the Government and the policy of the Labour party. I need only point to a few instances. Discussions during the course of last Parliament showed the wide difference that exists. I need only point to the discussions on the Electoral laws, on the question of Upper House reform, on taxation, on education, and on measures of labour legislation, to

show that there is a wide gulf between the views advocated on the Ministerial side and the views of Labour members. It is true that individual Ministers have at times expressed themselves probably in favour of democratic ideas; but even when some measures in the direction of reform have been introduced it has been plainly evident, to me at least, that it is not so much the policy of Ministers themselves, but the policy of Ministers limited by the conservative influence on the Ministerial side of the House which have obtained as the Ministerial policy in this State. We have in Western Australia problems which are pressing for solution, and to which in the past, as far as administration is concerned, very little attention has been given. Throughout the recent elections there was evidence, not so much that we wanted to boast of how many million acres of land we have alienated, or how many miles of railway we constructed, but that what we needed was that the land should be dealt with and that legislation and administration should be so framed and so directed as to secure greater measure of comfort and happiness to the many, and not to the few, as in the past. If I were asked to show the difference between the policy of the Ministry and the policy of the Labour party, I would point to the respective attitudes of the two parties on this question, where the collective energy and the control of the people is brought into play in connection with our industries. It may not be recognised by hon. members on the other side of the House—those of them of a conservative turn of mind—but it is nevertheless true that, in Western Australia and in Australia, and in fact all over the world, there is growing stronger and stronger a feeling in favour of the people—that is, the collective energies of the people directing these things for the advantage of the people as a whole. That is called socialism, and however much the name may frighten hon. members on the Government side of the House, they have to bear in mind there is a new generation here as elsewhere to which the word bears no terrors whatever. We have in Western Australia ample evidence given by Ministers themselves

that when they want to protect producers in this State, whether producers in the mining or agricultural districts, against exploitation—you can call it robbery if you will—the remedy which is advocated by them is socialism. We find for instance that recently we have developed deposits of natural manures in the direction of Geraldton, and I believe it is to be the policy of the Government that these deposits shall be retained in possession of the State, and that whatever advantage accrues from the ownership of these deposits it shall be retained by the people of the State and not by the few who might otherwise be expected to exploit them. This is socialism. To go farther, we have the question of the operations of the meat ring which has been exercising the minds of the people of the State, and the one remedy suggested by the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department, although he disclaims being a socialist, is that the State should erect public abattoirs in various centres in order to deal with the position; and freezing works at Wyndham also. It was evidenced at the recent elections, no matter how strongly the Premier and his colleagues advocated the loan of money to private capitalists to enable them to erect these works, that the feeling of the people was against such a proposal. I have only to recall a meeting addressed by the Premier in Balkatta. He pointed out how they had hedged with restrictions those people who were going to start the freezing works, in order to protect the interests of the producers and consumers, and yet after he had finished, the member who was standing for the electorate got up and said he was entirely opposed to the loan.

The Premier: And that lost him his seat.

Mr. BATH: I fancy it was the hon. member's advocacy of the loan, because other people whom the Premier went to assist lost their seats. However, there is this position, that the people were of opinion that if the matter were left in the hands of private enterprise, no matter what regulations or restrictions we might im-

pose, we could not prevent them exercising control of the industries and robbing producer and consumer alike. And there is very good ground for this opinion. In America for years and years past the cry has been to regulate the trusts; not to do away with them, but regulate them. But the more they sought to regulate the trusts the more the trusts have regulated and corrupted the Government. And not only is this so in America, for the conditions that have obtained there have obtained all the world over. In this instance, as in others, in the matter of freeing the producer from the operations of the private money-lender, it is to the State's collective effort that we have to come in order to give them money at a reasonable rate of interest. Another instance of State collective action is shown in the Savings Bank, where we go to get the people's money that the State may lend it out to the farmers to improve their holdings. In all these things we see collectivism working, and in my opinion it is the only possible remedy for many of these difficulties under which we labour. We have also growing up in Western Australia an evil which at the present time they are feeling most acutely in the old country, an evil which is exercising the minds of Britain's statesmen to deal with at the present time; it is the one absorbing problem to which the attention of the Prime Minister and his colleagues is being given to-day; that is the question of the unemployed. There they have their millions; here in Western Australia we have our thousands, and it is a commentary, and a sad commentary, that in a young community like Western Australia, with unlimited resources yet undeveloped, that in this early stage that evil should be growing up in our midst. I say that the verdict of the future will not depend upon how many railways the Government have built, or how much land they have alienated, but will depend upon what the legislation has been; upon whether its tendency has been to still further fasten the exploiter upon us, and to build up predatory wealth on the one hand and human misery on the other. It will depend upon how we have gone about

solving those problems to improve the condition of the people in this State. That is the problem before us, and whether it be the Government or the Labour party, it will be the party that considers the interests of the people as a whole and not the few that in future will win the support and approval of the people. To-morrow, if the Premier were to free himself from the restrictions of conservative members, if he were to recognise that the best political policy lay in getting away from the methods of the past, and if he were to undertake such a policy, he would be the one who would win the approval of the people. I believe, of course, there are difficulties in the way. There is the matter of social influence. There are the influences which can be brought to bear by those who at present support him which prevent such a consummation, and I believe it will be left to this party of the rising generation to carry it into effect. However, the members of this House can rest assured of this, that the Labour party is here, not to play the game of ins and outs; not to plot and conspire with members on that side of the House to gain the reins of office. They are here pledged to certain principles, and they are here to do their best to carry those principles into effect.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I did not anticipate that I would have had the pleasure of following on the hon. member to-night who has set a very good example in the way he curtailed his remarks. At the same time I must congratulate him on the very temperate way in which he has put forward views which he has always consistently advocated since I have had the honour to be associated with him in this House. I do not propose to extend the usual pious wish to him in regard to his position as Leader of the Opposition, but would like to congratulate him upon being elected again as Leader of the Opposition which is an evidence that he has secured and retained the respect of those gentlemen associated with him. The hon. gentleman has referred to the recent elections, and has expressed pleasure at the increased representation that he has secured as the re-

sult of the recent election. Now it has been claimed by some people that it has been a victory for the Opposition. I certainly cannot agree with that view, although I realise that the hon. members have increased their numbers from eighteen to twenty-one.

Mr. Taylor: Twenty-two.

The PREMIER: But I would like to say that I have made a few little analytical calculations in regard to the way the electors of this great State voted; with this result, that I find that although the Opposition this year has gained as far as units in the House are concerned, yet on closer examination it will be found that as far as the number of votes recorded are concerned, they were cast in practically the same proportion as they were in the 1905 election. I have gone into this, and I find that at this last election a good many of the goldfields constituencies polled as high as eighty-eight per cent. of their electors, while the agricultural districts did not poll nearly as heavily as on previous occasions.

Mr. Taylor: What did they poll?

The PREMIER: Something like sixty per cent.

Mr. Heitmann: They polled very unwisely.

The PREMIER: That is largely due to the fact that although they were not in favour of the Labour party, yet at the same time they did not approve of an action which the Government deliberately took, as it seemed to them in the best interests of the State, and that was in the imposition of the Land and Income Tax. Undoubtedly, I say this had a great effect on the agricultural constituencies.

Mr. Taylor: That was going back on your hustings speeches.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort. In 1906 I said it was my intention to introduce a Bill for a tax on unimproved land values, and as hon. members are aware it was only after three sessions that we were able to secure approval of that measure. —(We have heard a good deal of the excellent work the House Committee has been doing: we had something like half an hour of it

before tea, but the only thing I can congratulate them upon is that they have removed that light two feet from the perpendicular, so that it will miss me if it does come down.)—That only something like 60 per cent. of the electors in the agricultural constituencies voted in favour of the Government was due largely to that fact. We were aware that it was not likely to popularise the Government in any degree, but we recognised it was absolutely necessary in the best interests of the State that this tax should be imposed, and as a result we lost a considerable number of our voters. Of the effective votes 44,380 were recorded in favour of Ministerial candidates, while 22,762 were recorded in favour of Labour candidates. Of course, I am aware in this connection that nine members were returned unopposed; and that of these five were representatives of Opposition constituencies and four of Ministerial constituencies. In the five seats represented by the Opposition members, these constituencies contained 13,258 as against 8,652 in the seats represented by Ministerial supporters. Now if we take the vote that is most favourable to the Labour party and assume that all the electors of these mining constituencies would have voted for the successful candidate, we still find that the Government obtained 12,000 more votes than the Labour party; a very large proportion when it is recollected that in all only some 70,000 effective votes were recorded. I do not wish to labour this point in any way, but so much has been said of the great victory that has been secured by my friends opposite that I would like to make it clear that notwithstanding they had the benefit of the selection ballot and of the application of party funds, because it is all very well to say that the Labour man has not the same advantage as the other, we know perfectly well that while one man is supported very largely by the funds of the party, as a rule every man on the Government side of the House has to pay his own expenses.

Mr. Heitmann: Who paid Dyke's election bill?

The PREMIER: I do not know.

Mr. Heitmann: I do.

The PREMIER: I know that my friend Mr Holman was very generous to a friend in Bunbury, and offered, I understand, to pay his expenses if he would come out against me. He offered him a pound a day, I believe, and all expenses.

Mr. Holman: I would like you to name him.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows him. It is fortunate for the hon. member that he saved his money. However, notwithstanding also the certain loss of popularity, the Government knowingly sustained through the introduction of direct taxation, if the figures I have given are worked out it will be found that for seven electors who voted for the Labour party, eleven voted for the Government and in the circumstances the Leader of the Opposition can understand that I am not feeling at all uncomfortable just at present. I think there are worse things than being turned out of office, because I can assure hon. members that it is not all beer and skittles—Ministerial office. The hon. member has referred to the fact that much of the recess has been spent in touring constituencies; but the most comprehensive tour I have had in my Ministerial experience was when I was accompanied by eight or ten members of the Labour party. They all seemed to thoroughly enjoy it. They were all guests, and I was only too delighted that they should have an opportunity not only of making themselves acquainted with the district over which they travelled, but also of partaking of the hospitality of those districts—a hospitality proverbial to Western Australia. But that is by the way.

Mr. Taylor: You were in good company that time.

The PREMIER: Needless to say the member for Mount Margaret is a host in himself; I do not mean to say in a consuming capacity, but from the point of view of being good company. However, to be serious again, it is interesting to note that the great majority of members on the Government side of the House were recruited from agricultural and coastal constituencies, while almost the whole of the Opposition members

were returned from goldfields electorates.

Mr. Bolton: At the last election the additions to the Opposition were not from the goldfields.

The PREMIER: It is significant that if we compare the number of electors in 1905 and the number in 1908 we find there has been an increase of electors in the coastal and agricultural districts of 16,204; and of this increase 11,296 took place in agricultural and pastoral centres, while the number of electors in goldfields constituencies decreased by 1,926 in the same period. At least the Government have the satisfaction, that in those portions of the State where the population has increased they have practically secured the whole of the representation.

Mr. Bolton: You lost four metropolitan seats. How do you make that out?

The PREMIER: Hon. members will have an opportunity of speaking. I merely desire to make a few comments, and it is more in sorrow than in anger that I rise to follow the Leader of the Opposition; and surely members opposite will allow me to make these few remarks without any unseemly interruption. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the fact that at this juncture possibly it is not as well to go into full details in regard to financial matters, inasmuch as the Treasurer hopes to be able to bring down his Budget within ten days, so any remarks I have to make on this subject I will defer to that occasion except to just briefly reply to what the hon. member had to say in connection with this subject. He has rightly stated that the financial position at the present time demands the closest attention, and the Treasurer realises this as much as any member in this House; but at the same time we recognise that the mere fact of having a small overdraft is no reason for us to be at all despondent. I know my own overdraft has gone up very considerably lately, but I do not know that possibly my prospects have not improved. If we are able to expend money in advancing and developing the various industries of the State the fact that we have a small overdraft is not a matter that calls for very serious comment.

Mr. Gill: The question is what is the cause of the overdraft?

The PREMIER: I can very soon give the hon. member the cause. The hon. member is aware that so far as the returns from customs and excise are concerned, they have gone down considerably. As a matter of fact, for the first four months of this year we received something like £57,000 less than during the corresponding period of last year. It is a serious matter; but bearing in mind the accuracy with which Sir William Lyne has on previous occasions forecasted his estimated revenue, there is every likelihood that, instead of going back at the same rate so far as the Commonwealth revenue is concerned, we shall receive something like £8,000 per month more than we have had in the first four months. The year before last the estimated revenue was £770,000, and we received £780,000. Last year Sir William Lyne's promise was £755,000; and in the first eleven months the actual return was £753,000. His estimate of customs revenue was remarkably close. The figure was £830,000, which was within £3 of the amount received. Of his estimated remarkable surplus for this year of £697,000, for the four months we have received only £211,000, which is £57,000 less than for the corresponding period of last year; but there is an important recuperative feature which should not be lost sight of. The anticipated decrease for the whole of the year has been made in the first four months of the financial year, and it is reasonable to suppose, bearing in mind the Federal Treasurer's estimate, that he will return £8,000 more per month on an average than for the past four months. In addition, it is anticipated that, provided the slight amendment is carried in connection with the Land and Income Tax so as to enable the tax to be collected in one moiety, we shall receive before the 30th June next some £90,000 from that source. If that amendment be carried, and the Commissioner's estimate is realised, that will be the second recuperative feature, our second proposal for restoring the equilibrium of the public finances. In the next place Ministers have realised that they must set their faces against any advances other than for purposes that are abso-

lutely necessary. We realise that while in the past grants have been given for various objects which might almost be termed luxuries, we must now absolutely refrain from anything approaching the nature of a luxury, and confine our attention to those works that are absolutely necessary for the development of the more remote portions of our State, and for the comfort of the people settled in those districts.

Mr. Heitmann: What about those motor cars?

The PREMIER: I am not aware of any reference to any motor cars; but now the hon. member has mentioned it, it has been said that Ministers took advantage of the fact of having a motor car to do certain electioneering work. I am only sorry that the hon. member did not have to pay the piper for the motor cars that were hired, and he would probably realise that it is a luxury which is very expensive.

Mr. Heitmann: I know the people are paying for motor cars that the Ministers used in electioneering.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is making a misstatement. A motor car was used by Mr. Gregory prior to the election when he made a tour of the whole back goldfields portions of the State, and it was only possible for him to do that by medium of a motor car. It would have been impossible for him to do it with horses and traps in the limited time at his disposal.

Mr. Heitmann: You used them in the city of Perth.

The PREMIER: I defy the hon. member to prove that I have ever used a motor car in connection with an election without paying for it.

Mr. Heitmann: I am not saying you did.

The PREMIER: Let us know what charges are being made.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not keep on interjecting.

The PREMIER: With the limited means at our disposal it necessarily increases the difficulties of paying our way, and it necessarily follows that administrative expenditure must expand in certain well defined directions no matter how ur-

gent the demands of economy may be. My fourth and last remedial expedient must of necessity mean increased taxation. I have already said in my policy speech that we do not propose to impose any increase to the Land and Income Tax ; but there are other sources of revenue that will be outlined when the Treasurer presents his Budget. Members will then have an opportunity of passing opinions on the suggestions the Treasurer has to make in regard to raising revenue, and the details of the proposals for carrying on during the forthcoming year must be postponed until that occasion. Now in regard to deficit, I have already said that there is no reason for any great alarm, and I can hardly agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the size of the overdraft is generally an indication of the prosperity or otherwise of the State. If we look back for some few years, it will be found that in some of the most prosperous times of Western Australia we had deficits. In 1898 the Government started with a surplus of £315,000, and ended with a deficit of £186,000, or an actual shortage on the year's operations of £502,165. The shortage on the following year was £60,546. The year 1900 started with a deficit and ended with a surplus on the operations of that year, there being an actual surplus of £250,000; but the following year there was an actual deficit of £87,000. Next year there was a surplus of £198,023 and in 1903 there was a surplus of £108,475, but from 1904 onward there have been succeeding deficits, the last of which was last year, when the actual deficit was only £2,365, showing that the present Treasurer has had the best record of any year's operations of any Treasurer during the last five years. As already intimated in the pre-session speech the Government have no intention of suspending their public works policy. I maintain that at no time in the history of Western Australia has it been more necessary to push forward developmental work. The time may come when possibly we shall not have the same opportunities as we have now to go on the London market to borrow for reproductive works, and I should be sorry indeed

to cry a halt at the present time. When we remember how the loan money has been expended it is gratifying to realise what a small proportion of it has been spent on works that are not of a reproductive character. Compared with the other States this is very gratifying, and I will refer subsequently in detail to the manner in which the loans have been expended in Western Australia as compared with the loan expenditure of the sister States. The great work of opening up and settling our lands must be continued in order that the State shall take its place in the Commonwealth as a producer and exporter. The railways already authorised for the development of the mining and agricultural industries, and the completion of the railways in hand, will naturally demand considerable expenditure from loan funds, and before the close of this session it will be necessary to bring down for the approval of Parliament a loan authorisation in order to carry out these works, and at the same time to provide funds for the works forecasted. As to railways which have received the approval of Parliament, the line providing communication with the Upper Chapman Valley and the Wilgarup railway will complete the programme outlined by me in 1906. Authorisation has already been approved for these lines and provision will be made on this year's Estimates for the completion of the works. The Bridgetown-Wilgarup line will open up an area of agricultural country which will be of great value to the State. We have already anticipated the approval of Parliament to that line to this extent that some two or three years ago we spent a considerable amount of money in ringbarking, clearing and preparing the land in that district, so that with the advent of the railway no time would be lost in the settlement of the land.

Mr. Foulkes: How many acres have you dealt with?

The PREMIER: Offhand I cannot give the exact acreage, but I should say about 20,000 or 30,000 acres. In addition to that this railway must eventu-

ally be a portion of the line to couple up Bridgetown and Albany. As to the line between Bridgetown and Denmark, we have a huge territory there practically unknown, and containing as it does some of the finest forests in the world. Undoubtedly the karri forests in that district are a sight. There are over one million acres of karri country that will be opened up by the construction of the line, while at the same time the very productive swamps in the neighbourhood of the coast will provide homes for many hundreds of people in a very few years. The Upper Chapman railway has been debated in this House on more than one occasion. A board has recently been appointed to make a recommendation as to the best route to adopt, and when the Bill is brought down the report prepared by the Surveyor General, the Engineer-in-Chief, and the Chief Traffic Manager will be submitted in support of the route the Government propose to ask Parliament to approve of. The only new railway we propose to submit at the present time is the line from Nannine to Meekatharra. Many members have had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of that very important district. From recent development there is every prospect that the anticipations of its most hopeful supporters will be more than realised. That communication there is a necessity must be admitted by all those who have had an opportunity of visiting the district. There is practically no mining timber within a very great distance of the present railway and it is imperative that facilities for obtaining supplies should be provided. I am sure that when the measure is brought before the House, with the information we shall be able to put before members, it will secure a unanimous vote of approval. In addition to what is required for the railways, and to which I have referred, there are certain loan moneys to be expended in additions and improvements to jetties and tramways, to tramways and rolling stock for the North-West, to already opened railways, and for the construction of rolling stock to equip

new lines. Then there are harbour and river improvements, the provision of water supplies and sewerage—notably the completion of the Perth and Fremantle sewerage works—the boring for water in various parts of the State for the development of the goldfields and mineral resources generally, the erection of State batteries and drainage works in connection with the development of agriculture. Loan authorisation will be sought for a considerable amount, in order that advantage may be taken of any favourable opportunity for raising the necessary funds. In addition to the railways I have referred to, we have already announced our proposals for the future so far as railways are concerned. The construction of a line from Goomalling northward in the direction of Wongan has already been referred to. The Leader of the Opposition smiles, and that reminds me that in the campaign the fact that the line was being constructed in that direction was made use of for all it was worth by many members of the Opposition as evidence that the Government had taken the opportunity of giving their friends first-hand information. There was a certain amount of exaggeration in the statements made, and apparently the gentleman who obtained that information did not give the matter as much attention as was desirable in a question of this kind, seeing that his information might be contradicted on application to the Lands Department, should anyone desire to do so.

Mr. Bath: He made the application and was refused.

The PREMIER: He made one application about three weeks ago for certain information, and I stated I would be only too pleased to give it if the application were made through the Minister. As a matter of fact all these statements were grossly exaggerated. It was said that various members, and gentlemen known to members of the Government, had acquired large areas. As a matter of fact it was said that Sir Walter James had acquired 20,000 acres which he selected with me when we were travelling in a motor car. We find from very careful inquiry that

this acreage has dwindled down to 1,000 acres held by Lady James. This was one little discrepancy. Another statement was made that a gentleman not unacquainted with a certain hostility in Perth had selected 20,000 acres. On inquiry it was found that there was a misapprehension as to the area in this case also, for there was only something like 5,000 acres held, and this in the names of five different persons. Instead of that area being absolutely adjacent to the proposed railway we find it was situated from the proposed termination of the suggested railway only a distance of some 50 miles. There is no doubt that every opportunity was taken to put these exaggerations abroad to the disadvantage of the Government. As to my friend, Mr. Walker, no reference was made to the fact that he desired to settle on the land and to develop a portion of this State.

Mr. Hopkins: That would be unnecessary.

The PREMIER: Later on it was found that among the areas in proximity to the proposed line was one held by a member of the House. I must say that since then, however, approval has been given for an alteration as to the position of the land.

Mr. Walker: You did not tell me where to go.

The PREMIER: You seemed to have better information than anyone else, as your land was only three miles from the proposed railway, whereas the other land was about 50 miles.

Mr. Underwood: That was the block he did not get.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition had referred to certain newspapers when speaking in regard to the Government. I was almost tempted also to quote from a certain paper, but I do not wish to disturb the harmonious nature of the debate, or I might refer to some of the statements made in regard to the present Government. The Leader of the Opposition has said he exercised his influence to keep down personalities in connection with the recent elections. I might refer to certain newspaper articles—

Mr. Bolton: Let us have them.

The PREMIER: Very well, then. This is an extract from *The Westralian*

Worker, the official organ of the combined unions and political labour organisations of Western Australia. It is an election number and it refers in very strong terms to the gentlemen who at present occupy the Government benches. It states—

“The battle has commenced in earnest and once again the workers have an opportunity to manifest their solidarity and to attest their zeal in the cause of humanity. The issue about which the fight will wage is definite and requires no details to make it clear. It is tersely stated the war is between the exploiters of labour on the one hand and the exploited on the other. Labour is fighting for what is its own by every moral law, by every principle of justice. Its enemies are fighting for a continuance of that slavery which through all the ages has kept the workers ignorant, poor and docile. The spectacle is not without pathos. Here are thousands of men and women making an effort to lift their eyes from darkness to the light, to stand erect free from the burdens of centuries, to live among mortals as brethren and equals, to realise that this world is not a hopeless dungeon resonant with the clanking of chains and rank with the odours of gory sweat, but a theatre of hope and opportunities, resplendent with glories just shaping into outline of the future. Unfortunately labour has to fight against terrible odds. The very wealth that has been wrung from labour is to be used to work its destruction; the rich and the powerful who look upon workmen as cattle owned by them to supply them with riches and to carry their burdens combine their forces to bribe our weaker brethren to treachery, to flog the most crushed into craven obedience, and to place every possible obstacle to the ascertainment of truth and the obtainment of justice in the way of all. Even the mighty power of the Press, the greatest engine of emancipation that the world has ever seen is, with few exceptions, aiding the cause of the monopolists, the trusts and the combines, and maligning and misrepresenting the cause of the

workers. Yet this is scarcely a new phenomenon. From the first day the slave felt the thrill of manhood within him to this great electoral struggle it has ever been so. Fortunately however at this time in our history, the workers have a weapon that must win the battle for them if they have only sense and energy enough to use it. The ballot box can defeat gold, treachery, slander, falsehood, and every form of political power and chicanery. If the workers will only be true to themselves and use this weapon on election day the brazen images of plutocracy must fall to the earth and for ever mingle with the dust. The only thing to fear is that the lies and the suppression of truth used by our enemies may so befool the voters that we shall go to the ballot as rival camps instead of one great solid host fired with liberating zeal. Division in our own ranks is the only thing that can confound us. The battle is to us from now, if we stand true to ourselves. The glib tongue of a Keenan, the wily two-facedness of a Gregory, the diplomatic humbug of a Wilson, the sneak-like perambulations of a Connolly, the wheezy rockets of a Price, the self-laudations of a Mitchell, and the second-hand bluster of a Moore will merely be as mud thrown at a fortress if the workers only realise their strength, that they have the common cause and that their triumph is the triumph of oppressed humanity everywhere. In short, this is the time to sink all petty differences, minor quarrels and insignificant variances."

I closed my eyes after reading this and fancied I was in the Chamber here. I may be wrong, but there is something about the article that seems to bear a family likeness to something I have heard before in this Chamber. The article continues—

"We must win if the toilers will stand shoulder to shoulder without a single breach in their ranks to meet the common enemy. This can be done without any wrench of conscience whatever as against the usurpers now in office. They gained power only by

subterfuge and despicable manoeuvres. They have held on only by wholesale political bribery and dishonourable parrot cries of dishonesty. They have no good deed or promise that they can point to that is original with them: the very part of their creed on which they most loudly clamour for support is taken holus bolus from our platform, and the modification of the evils they proposed was brought about by the Labour representatives in Parliament who, for their wholesome services under the most trying circumstances, were most roundly abused and calumniated at the time both by the Ministerialists and the Press of the State. As to the evil they have done, it reads like a calendar of crimes. It has doubtless blunted the conscience of the people and added to the depravity of our public life. It is to correct these evils, to steer the ship of State in a sea of purer politics, and above all to lift the citizens from subservience to manly independence and equality of opportunities that we now appeal to the workers in all electorates to be united and to vote solidly for Labour on election day."

The question I ask members is did the Leader of the Opposition succeed or not?

Mr. Walker: It is a very good article.

The PREMIER: To get back to the question of railway construction; I would like, for the information of the House, to give details of the position of works at the present time. The Collie-Narrogin railway is a line which was authorised prior to the advent of the Daglish Government, and we have to-night in the Chamber the gentleman who was responsible for putting that Railway Bill through this House. That railway was completed in September of last year, and the expenditure from June, 1907, to October, 1908, was £14,791. On the Coolgardie-Norseman and Coolgardie-Widgiemooltha line, £47,191 has been expended. The first section of this line was completed in June, 1908. In connection with the second section, the felling and clearing has been completed to the 93 miles, earth-works to the 87 miles, bridges to the 53

miles, culverts to the 60 miles, and plates and rails to the 60 miles. The contract was let on 21st August, and the time for the completion of the railway will be at the beginning of next year. The first section of the Donnybrook-Preston railway is open for traffic, and at the present time something like £23,832 has been spent there, that is inclusive of rails and fastenings. Felling, clearing and grubbing have been completed to the 46 miles, earthworks to the 37 miles, and in progress to the 47 miles, bridges completed to the 41 miles, log culverts to the 43 miles, and plates laid to the 36 miles. With regard to the Greenhills-Quairading line completed in April last something like £18,731 has been expended on it. On the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe line £23,957 has been expended. There, earthworks have been completed to the 33 miles, the bridges have been nearly all completed, plates and sleepers laid to the 32 miles. In connection with Jandakot-Armidale line £5,709 has been spent, and the ballasting there is now being carried out by the working railways. The Narrogin-Wickepin railway is one which was laid by contract, and the sum of £8,857 has been spent on it up to the present. On the Jarrahwood-Nannup line £8,167 has been expended; the earthworks have been completed to the 15½ miles; while in regard to the Newcastle-Bolgart railway, approval for which was given by Parliament in December of last year, the contract was let for this work on the 31st of last month. In addition to this we have spent on rails and fastenings, 45lb. rails, the sum of £148,841. Tenders were invited on the 18th October, 1907, for 100 miles of permanent way and accepted on 10th January, 1908. All this material has been delivered. A contract has been let for 248 miles of permanent way material for the Port Hedland-Marble Bar, Mount Magnet-Black Range, and the Pinjarrah-Marrinup railways, but the delivery in this State cannot take place until next January. The whole of the delivery is to be made within six months. A question was asked with regard to the Pinjarrah-Marrinup rail-

way, and in connection with that work I may state it will be commenced without delay, and in view of the fact that we have certain plant available for railway construction, we propose to build it departmentally. Hon. members are aware that we have not confined ourselves to any one policy, either departmental or contract. When the occasion has arisen when we found we could do it better departmentally we did not hesitate to adopt that course. As I stated during the course of my election speeches, there is one thing more than another in connection with departmental construction that I regret, and that is by the Public Service Act we are not able to reward these men in charge of the works with more liberality. I hope when the matter is under discussion some steps will be taken which will permit of a certain amount of discretionary power being exercised by Ministers in the direction of giving bonuses. We have some most capable foremen employed in the department, and it is unsatisfactory when a man is working hard in the interests of the State and his salary is limited to £300 a year, that you cannot offer him some sort of reward, especially when you know that if he were working with a private contractor he would be getting more than double the salary being paid by the Government. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the fact that the spur railways so far have not been as successful as he anticipated they would be. As far as I am personally concerned, considering it is only a short while since they have been completed, I think the returns have been very satisfactory indeed, more especially when we recollect that no credit is given to those lines for the increased traffic on the main lines, which must eventuate as the result of the construction of spur lines. I have had the expenditure and earnings of the railways brought up to date from the period of the Commissioner's report. I am sure hon. members will be glad to know that since the issue of that report there has been an improvement. While the Goomalling-Dowerin line has not shown up to any great extent, there are

others which have done so. On the Donnybrook-Preston Valley line, the earnings were £1,694 for the three months, while the expenditure was £781. The earnings of the Coolgardie-Widgemootha line have been £2,324, and the expenditure £1,262; the total earnings over working expenses of the Goomalling-Powerin, Wagin-Dumbleyung, Katanning-Kojonup, Donnybrook-Preston Valley, Greenhills-Quairading, Torbay-Denmark, Wonnerup-Jarrahdwood, and Coolgardie-Widgemootha lines amounted to £1,281.

Mr. Holman: How did the Katanning-Kojonup railway get on?

The PREMIER: The expenditure was £200 in excess of the earnings. When we realise that the figures deal with the months between July and September I think it will be conceded that they are very satisfactory. As a result of the policy of constructing those railways hundreds of people have become permanent settlers on the land. In regard to land settlement, as Minister controlling the Lands Department, I would like to make a few remarks in regard to what we anticipate our revenue will be, and also in regard to the progress that has been made in land settlement. During the first four months of the financial year no less than £108,394 has been received as against £99,433 for the corresponding period of the previous year, an increase during those four months of £8,961. There is, therefore, every likelihood that the forecast I made at the time of my pre-session speech, that the revenue would increase by £16,000 or £17,000, will be more than realised. I would like to say in connection with the administration of this department that notwithstanding the fact that the revenue has increased by something like £50,000, the working expenses have been reduced during the last three years by £30,000, bringing the percentage of expenditure to revenue down from 80 per cent. to 42 per cent., and notwithstanding the fact that we have an increased revenue of something like £20,000, it naturally means increased work as far as the officers are concerned. I am satisfied that this year we will be able

to carry on without any increase in the amount Parliament voted last year. Selection is going on at a great rate, and it is interesting to compare the first four months of the present financial year with the corresponding four months of last year. Last year in July we had 212 applications as against 504 in July of this. In August of last year the number was 276 as against 480 this year. In September of last year the applications numbered 341 as against 549 this year; and during October of this year we have had 572 applications as against 384 in October of last year. That is evidence that the policy which is being pursued by the department in advertising our lands is reaping good fruit, coupled with the fact that selectors are assured that if there is land taken up to any extent in the neighbourhood of their holdings, railway facilities will not be withheld for any length of time. The policy of looking ahead will be pursued. At the present time we have an area to the north of Doodlakine which five parties are surveying and cutting up. The policy of surveying before selection is being pursued with vigor, and we realise that when this is carried out in large areas it will mean that many of the delays which are incidental to selection where land is not already surveyed, will be done away with and prompt approval will be granted to applications. Further classification is being made north of Cowcowing with a view to future subdivision. In regard to the country in the neighbourhood of Geraldton, which will be served by the Upper Chapman railway, that has been surveyed and thrown open, and has been well applied for. The various lots, however, cannot yet be allocated as we have made a provision that the Agricultural Bank Inspector shall inspect these various lots with an inspector from the Lands Department, in order that we may come to the conclusion as to the value of the blocks, so that in the case of applications being made by selectors for an advance, approval will be given immediately. In regard to the Denmark country which was acquired last year,

clearing operations were commenced there in March last, and the work has been going on since. Up to the present time 344 men have been employed there and 137 men are engaged there now. Referring to the work being done there by the unemployed, it is interesting to note that of the large number who were ostensibly out of employment, and of the 49 originally sent there, only eight remain. All these men started at a wage of 7s. per day and their wages were increased to 8s. when it was found that they could earn the money.

Mr. Hopkins: Have they left or have they settled on the land?

The PREMIER: A good many have left. At the present time we do not propose to throw open that area until the whole scheme we have outlined is complete. We are clearing certain roads, making provision for cultivation, and clearing areas, and considering a proposal to lay down a certain area under grass in each block; it has been recommended by the officer in charge there, who has had a good experience in Gippsland of similar country, and at the present time we are giving consideration to that proposal. We do not propose to throw open any of this land until the whole scheme is completed, and no encouragement will be given to selectors to go down there and inspect until the whole work is finished. The township is being cleared and subdivided, and when the lots are thrown open we expect we will be able to realise a fairly good return. The Melbourne Agency is largely responsible for the number of selectors we are having; the fact that we have such an energetic representative in Melbourne is no doubt responsible for this. I had intended to extend these agencies, to establish an agency in Sydney, as a result of the success which has attended the Melbourne Agency, but for the present I intend to hold that over until the officer-in-charge at Melbourne has an opportunity of visiting Sydney and reporting. Any other remarks I have to make in connection with the Lands Department I will withhold until the discussion on the Estimates comes along. In re-

gard to the question of industries, the Government and Parliament of the State have been very energetic in encouraging by every possible means our primary industries; it has been a leading feature of our policy and has been supported by Parliament, but successful as has been our efforts in this direction, I am satisfied that some attention must be given to the development of our secondary industries which have not grown since Federation proportionately with the increase of our population. I propose to place under the control of one of my colleagues a department, the object of which will be to give encouragement to our many and valued secondary industries, so that they may be fostered and encouraged in the same way as the Agricultural and Mines Departments are encouraging the agriculturist and the miner. When dealing with this question it might not be inopportune to mention that we have had a proposal in regard to certain areas of our lands, and it has resulted in an agreement to utilise the blackboys growing on vacant Crown lands and timber leases. It is my intention to lay the agreement on the table so that hon. members will have an opportunity of perusing the same, and if they think there is anything in it which would not meet with the approval of the House or is against the best interests of the country, they will have an opportunity of pointing it out.

Mr. Holman: It is a pity you do not do that with all your agreements.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is. Once bitten, twice shy. The fact that the freezing works proposal was subjected to so much misrepresentation is one of the reasons which actuates me in putting this proposal before the House. The Leader of the Opposition is aware that the restrictions inserted in that agreement were really very stringent, and the interests of the public generally were absolutely safeguarded, and I defy any man to say different. There was not one single individual who criticised that agreement who was able to suggest any improvement to it.

Mr. Holman : We have not seen it yet.

The PREMIER : Well, it was referred to on every possible occasion. The agreement was so stringent and the interests of the State were preserved to such an extent that those desirous of obtaining the subsidy have declined to complete the agreement.

Mr. Hopkins : They thought better of it.

Mr. Holman : They could not float it.

The PREMIER : I will say this, when I thought there was a possibility that these negotiations might fall through I reserved the whole of the unalienated Crown lands in East Kimberley, so that if the Government decided to erect a public freezer they could lease those lands on such conditions as to enable the stock to be passed through the freezing works. I thought that I was doing something in the interests of the State when I did this, but one gentleman on the platform at North Perth during the election declared that I was doing it for the squatters, and he held it up as one of the awful things of which the Moore Government were capable.

Mr. Holman : Who was he ?

The PREMIER : *Mr. Le Mesurier*. The hon. member who is sitting there (*Mr. Swan*) can ascribe his election to the fact that *Mr. Le Mesurier* was so consistent and so persistent in his misrepresentation of this agreement that certain people concluded that there must be something in it, and consequently they decided to vote for *Mr. Swan* ; they could not stand the other man. In regard to this agreement I propose to lay it on the table. This is an agreement to be entered into between the Government and *Messrs. Wallace and Black*, whereby permission is to be granted to these gentlemen for a period of twenty-one years to clear and remove for the purpose of treating as a commercial product the blackboys growing on certain Crown lands and timber leases and concessions. With regard to the timber leases, permission is given sub-

ject to the consent of the lessees. The right is reserved to the Minister to grant licenses to cut blackboy for domestic purposes. Selection of land can proceed without restriction over the lands comprised within the agreement ; £1,000 is to be spent by the company within 12 months, and £9,000 within two years. A royalty of 6d. per ton is to be paid. Statements are to be furnished every three months setting forth the tonnage cut and removed and royalty paid. The agreement cannot be transferred without the consent of the Minister, and the right may be revoked and improvements forfeited for any breach of the conditions. All disputes are to be submitted to arbitration. It is all very well for hon. members to pick holes in the agreement ; I am responsible for this document, and if anyone can show me where it can be improved upon, where the State's interests can be preserved more than on the lines I have indicated, I will be only too glad to give heed to them. When we have a proposal to treat what is really a waste product we should, I think, do all that is possible to encourage such an industry. As my colleague points out, it will provide work for a large number of men, and will at the same time make use of a product that is to-day absolutely of no value and which is in fact a cost to the settler to clear from 10s. to £2 per acre. A certain area has also been acquired by the same people, I believe, in Queensland. I propose to put all the information I have together on the file so that hon. members can satisfy themselves. As far as we are concerned our conditions are ever so much more stringent than those demanded in the north-eastern State. They charge 2d. a ton ; we insist upon 6d., and we insist upon a larger sum being expended. It is intended to start in Western Australia as soon as the necessary machinery and plant are ready. There is one matter which has cropped up during the course of the debate, and which possibly the Attorney General can answer better than I can, and that is in regard to what the Leader of the Opposition styled as the way in which *Mr. Gregory* has hung on to his portfolio.

The Leader of the Opposition intimated that there was no precedent for such a course. As a matter of fact there are any number of precedents, and I have taken the opportunity to obtain—

Mr. Bath : I did not say there was no precedent. I said no justification.

The PREMIER : Well, I think there was every possible justification, and that is where we differ. The necessity for each member of the Ministry to have a seat in Parliament is not laid down by any Act of Parliament in this State or of the Mother Country. It is one of those unwritten constitutional understandings which is nowhere formally recorded. I have on a previous occasion referred to the fact that in the year 1845 the late Mr. Gladstone was appointed Secretary for the Colonies, and on putting up for re-election at Newark he was defeated, notwithstanding this he continued to hold office as Secretary for the Colonies from December, 1845 to July, 1846, when the Government of which he was a member was defeated. In other words he remained in office without a seat in Parliament for a period of about seven months. Similarly in January, 1887, Mr. Goschen became Chancellor of the Exchequer ; but he did not succeed in getting returned to Parliament until the ensuing month.

Mr. Hudson : Gladstone, Goschen, and Gregory.

The PREMIER : A very good trio. Turning to the Constitution Acts of the various States of the Commonwealth, I find no attempt whatever has been made to define the position of the Executive or the various members thereof in relation to Parliament, although when Sir Walter James brought in a bill to amend the local Constitution, he made provision that a Minister must secure a seat in Parliament within three months of being given a portfolio. The precedents show what practically appears to be that a Minister if he is defeated at the poll should continue in office for a reasonable time, or until such period as he has had an opportunity of seeking a seat elsewhere, which period in the Natal Act is defined as four months, and in the Commonwealth Constitution Act as three months.

Mr. Taylor : That was when all elections were not held on the one day. In most States elections are now held practically on the one day. So the precedent cannot be applied.

The PREMIER : As far as precedents are concerned, it was said that we had to go to England to find a precedent, but Mr. Price, the Premier of South Australia, has advised me that Mr. Symons, the Attorney General, was appointed on the 10th March, and held office until the 24th June, 1881, and that Mr. Anderson, another Attorney General, held office from the 10th March to the 26th July, 1905. Mr. Symons did not seek election, but Mr. Anderson was defeated at an election during May, 1905. As far as Victoria is concerned, there is one precedent of a Minister who held office from the 9th August to the 19th October, 1875. A limit of three months is now fixed in Victoria by the Constitution Act of 1903. In regard to Queensland, in 1879, Mr. Pring, being appointed Attorney General, failed to secure re-election, and remained in office for 12 months without a seat in Parliament ; while last year Mr. Airey, with whom the Leader of the Opposition is acquainted, was defeated at the general election, but remained in office as Home Secretary for two months, and was then nominated for the Upper House with a seat in the Ministry.

Mr. Taylor : That was a nominee House.

The PREMIER : Yes ; yet the hon. member says that ours is the most antiquated constitution in the Commonwealth. I do not propose to detain hon. members longer. As the Leader of the Opposition has already said, we will have another opportunity of discussing the financial question, which after all is the most important that will engage the attention of Parliament this session ; and I shall when the time arrives refer to certain proposals that will be brought forward. In regard to Federal finances, as I have already intimated through the Governor's Speech, it is my intention to introduce and ask the House to confirm certain resolutions which were unani-

mously adopted at the conference of Premiers held quite recently in Melbourne.

Mr. Taylor: You will hardly get through before Christmas

The PREMIER: I am not particular if we do not rise before Christmas. As long as we do not sit too late at night, possibly we may be able to extend our sittings over another month. However, I am satisfied these proposals will commend themselves to members as being reasonable, and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition, in view of the attitude he has taken up in the past in regard to the necessity for securing the financial independence of the State, will see his way clear to give them his support. In conclusion I can only say that, so far as the Government are concerned, we propose to faithfully endeavour to carry out the policy that has already been outlined, one that we believe is to the advantage of the State generally, and which we hope will have the effect of making this State, which I feel sure we trust it will always be, one of the foremost States of the great Commonwealth of Australia.

On motion by *Mr Heitmann* debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 13th November, 1908.

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

QUESTION—EARLY CLOSING, WEEKLY HOLIDAY.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Premier: 1. Will he make a statement to the House explaining the attitude of the Government

on the question of the alteration of the weekly half-holiday under the Early Closing Act? 2. Will the Government withdraw the Proclamation or defer the date of the alteration until Parliament has discussed the question?

The PREMIER replied: I have already given notice of my intention to move on Tuesday, 17th inst., for leave to introduce a "Bill to further amend the Early Closing Act, 1902," the discussion upon which will afford an opportunity of placing the views of the Government before the House.

QUESTION—LOANS SINKING FUND ACCOUNT.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Treasurer: 1. What is the total now to credit of the Loans Sinking Fund Account? 2. What proportion is in cash and what proportion is invested? 3. How is the Fund controlled. 4. Is the cash balance of the Fund held in the State or in London?

The TREASURER replied: 1. £1,993,196 6s. 4d. 2. In cash, £3,815 9s. 4d.; invested, £1,989,380 17s. 3. By trustees appointed by the financial agents of the State with the concurrence of the Governor-in-Council. 4. In London.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, MOUNT MAGNET-BLACK RANGE.

Mr. HARDWICK (for *Mr. Carson*) asked the Premier. When do the Government intend calling tenders for the construction of the Mt. Magnet-Black Range Railway?

The PREMIER replied: Approval for the calling of tenders has already been given, and a notification will appear in the next issue of the *Government Gazette*.

QUESTION—MURCHISON FIRE- WOOD COMPANY EXEMPTION.

Mr. HOLMAN (for *Mr. Heitmann*) asked the Premier: 1. Has the Murchison Firewood Company been granted three months' exemption from payment of rent on rails supplied by Government? 2. If so, upon what grounds?