

I say advisedly we have not got the full information we were entitled to get; it has not been explained to us in every little detail as I would have liked. I am sorry to have delayed the House, but I feel strongly on these questions. My aim in this life is to see that this State, of which I am a native, is flourishing; and I cannot help thinking that the Government, if they proceed on their present lines of barring private enterprise and trying to run the State themselves, are not putting Western Australia on the path I would like to see it on.

On motion by Hon. R. D. McKenzie debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th July, 1912.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Attorney General: Report of the Education Department for year ended 30th June, 1911.

QUESTION—EDUCATION, TEACHERS' SALARIES.

Mr. TURVEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, What amount of money, exclusive of annual increments, was devoted during the current year to increasing teachers' salaries? 2, How many tea-

chers participated in this increase? 3, On what basis were these increases granted?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, £5,166 during the last financial year; £2,280 in increments from July 1st, and £2,886 in increments from January 1st. The expenditure on the latter is for half the year only, the annual value of these increments being £5,772. The total annual value of all the increments is, therefore, £8,052. These figures are for teachers only, and do not include monitors. 2, 227 received increases from July 1st, and 348 increases from January 1st, exclusive of annual increments. 3, The salaries of the lower grades of teachers were dealt with this year, the alteration of the general scale being left for the coming Estimates. The alterations made were as follows:—(a.) The minimum salary for unclassified teachers was raised to £110 for both sexes. The minimum previously had been £80 for women, £90 for men. (b.) The maximum salary for unclassified teachers in charge of schools was raised to £140 for men and £130 for women. The previous figures were £120 and £110 respectively. (c.) The salaries of assistants in grade C2 were raised to £120-£130 for men, and £120 for women. The previous figures were £110 to £130 for men, and £100 to £110 for women. (d.) The minimum for women in charge of schools of Class VI. was raised from £120 to £130. (e.) Corresponding increases to those mentioned above were given to supply teachers in similar positions. (f.) Provision was made for first female assistants as well as first male assistants in mixed schools of Class II., and for first assistants in schools of Class III. The following scale of additions to the salary of first assistants was introduced:—A3 teacher: £30 first class school; £25 second class school; £20 third class school. B1 teacher: £25 first class school; £20 second class school; £15 third class school. B2 teacher: £15 third class school. (Previously first assistants with the A3 classification in 1st class schools received £30, and all others £15.) (g.) The salaries of female monitors were raised to £40 and £50. The previous

figures were £36 and £45. (h.) The salaries of probationers were raised to £24 and £40 for boys, and £24 and £30 for girls. The previous figures were £18 and £27 for boys; £12 and £18 for girls. (i.) The salaries of female monitors-on-supply were raised to £35 and £45. The previous figures were £30 and £40

QUESTION—KARRI TIMBER TESTS.

Mr. McDOWALL (for Mr. O'Loghlen) asked the Premier: 1, Whose recommendation have the Government adopted in regard to the utilising of karri timber? 2, Where was the test made? 3, What period of time was covered by this test?

The PREMIER replied: On the joint recommendation of the Engineer-in-Chief and the Chief Engineer of Existing Lines. I would like to read a statement as well, not only for the information of members but for the information of the public, dealing with this question. It is as follows:—During 1906 a series of exhaustive tests of the hardwoods of Western Australia were carried out at the Midland Junction Railway Workshops, and in reporting upon karri timber for use as sleepers the investigating officer (Mr. G. A. Julius, B.Sc., M.E.) stated, *inter alia*: "Two karri sleepers that had been in service in a damp position for 19 years showed many signs of dry rot, yet still retained their hold upon the dogspikes to a degree quite sufficient to render them safe in the road. Karri, whilst in every other respect almost unequalled as a sleeper timber, is prone to develop dry rot if used in damp ground. In regard to the development of dry rot it is established that the presence of the sap is the chief source of trouble. . . and such a process is now being experimented upon as promises not only to render the timber practically immune to dry rot but also to attacks from white ants, and should this process prove successful . . . there is no doubt that karri will prove one of the most valuable sleeper timbers in the world." (*Vide* Western Australian Timber Tests 1906, p. 23.) The process referred to is that known as "powellis-

ing," and during October 1906 a number of karri sleepers were powellised at Midland Junction workshops and placed in the line with untreated ones, in places favourable to the development of dry rot and where dry rot already existed. During November 1909 some of the sleepers were examined and dry rot was found to exist in some of the untreated ones. One powellised and one unpowellised sleeper were removed from the line and examined by the departmental analytical chemist who reported upon them in March 1910 as follows:—"I find that the untreated karri is affected by dry rot. These timber diseases seem to have travelled in a certain direction, as one side and the end are the parts most affected. I found in several places along the side that the apparently affected area extends to a depth of five eighths of an inch. At these places the fibres in the karri had almost disappeared, having given place to a granular and friable mass, which could be readily removed with the finger nail. It is impossible to say whether the dry rot has penetrated deeper. . . . I have examined the powellised karri sleeper and find it free from the above disease. In no part of the sleeper can any of the fungi be found, and that fibre is sound all over the portion exposed. The condition of the sleeper is much more sound than the untreated sleeper." On 23rd November 1910 two sleepers (one powellised and one unpowellised) were taken out of the road. Superficially they both appeared thoroughly free from dry rot, they were sawn in halves, were found to be sound, and one-half section of each was subjected to analytical examination, the analyst reporting in May 1911 as follows:—"I have to report having made an examination of the two half sections of sleepers received from the Chief Engineer of Existing Lines, marked "A" and "B" respectively. "A" powellised 1st November 1906.—Upon careful examination of this sleeper and inspection under the microscope of a section, I failed to detect any evidences of dry rot. The sleeper appeared to be in a fairly sound condition, and if anything, a little better than "B." "B" unpowellised.—I failed

to discover any evidences of dry rot in this half sleeper. The fibre appeared as sound as that in sleeper marked "A" and fairly well preserved. Apart from a crack through the section taken, the timber was as sound as that in "A." In every way, the sleeper marked "B" is superior to the unpowellised sleeper inspected in March 1910." Karri timber is a most suitable timber for use as railway sleepers, as it holds the dog spikes firmly, no re-boring being necessary, and the detrimental influences of dry rot and white ants being removed by the powellising treatment, karri may be considered as the best "sleeper" timber par excellence.

Culvert timbers—In May 1908 a culvert on the Jarrahwood section was renewed with powellised karri timber. This culvert has been subsequently specially examined at intervals and the timbers found to be in good condition.

P.W.D. experiment—During August 1908 the Public Works Department had some pieces of powellised and unpowellised karri timber placed underground at Broome, where white ants are particularly voracious. The timbers were unearthed on 11th February 1909, the treated piece being untouched whilst the untreated piece was almost completely eaten away. Karri is also largely used for car and wagon construction purposes. Its average life when used in wagon underframes as headstocks and bogie bolsters, etc., is not less than 18 years, nor less than 25 years in the other parts of the framing, and the first cost in Western Australia is stated to be at least 10 per cent. less than for the steel frame, besides which (while having equal carrying capacity the timber frames possess greater flexibility than the steel frames, and consequently are less easily derailed, and when damaged are more easily and quickly repaired. It was found that the flooring planks in the trucks bulged up during the winter, necessitating the removal of a plank and its replacement during the summer, but since the timber has been powellised this difficulty has been overcome. The powellising process for the preservation of timber has been adopted in other parts of the world, and plants are installed in several other States

of the Commonwealth, notably New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE INSPECTOR.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: Will applications be called at once for the new position of Public Service Inspector? If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: It has not yet been decided when applications will be called, this matter now being under the consideration of the Government.

BILL—METHODIST CHURCH PROPERTY TRUST.

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): It is not my intention to take up very much of the time of hon. members in discussing the subject matter of His Excellency's Speech; I would rather content myself by making brief references to some of the most important matters contained in that Speech and reserving to myself the right to discuss the other questions of lesser importance when they come forward in due time. I regret with previous speakers the unfortunate dry season that we have recently experienced, and I sympathise with those heroic settlers who have battled through the past year and who have met their almost insurmountable difficulties with a good heart. I feel sure that every hon.

member will rejoice in the fact that during the last few days our agricultural areas have been visited with beneficial rains, and I express the hope that the result of these rains will be a bountiful harvest and that our settlers will reap a rich reward for the efforts they have put forward. I also realise the difficulties that have surrounded the efforts of the present Administration in carrying on the affairs of the country during this time of temporary stress. At the same time, while I do not wish to be ungenerous to the Ministers controlling the affairs of this State, I feel that it is necessary for me to make some criticism especially on the management of affairs during the past nine months. The first and most important question I wish to deal with is that of finance. We know that finance is the pivot upon which the future prosperity of the country must revolve, and unless our finances are in a satisfactory and healthy state we cannot expect the country to develop to the same extent as if the finances were in a sound condition. It is a fact that the result of the year's operations are somewhat disquietening when we come to take into consideration the fact that the present Treasurer started the year with a credit balance.

The Premier : Oh, no.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : There certainly was a credit balance of some £13,000 at the beginning of the financial year.

The Premier : But the present Treasurer did not start with a credit balance.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : Well, the present financial year started with a credit balance.

The Premier : But where was it on September 30th ?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : On that date, undoubtedly there was a debit balance of £28,000, but I am quoting the whole year, and I am justified in using that credit balance for the sake of argument. Now, while the present Treasurer commenced with a credit balance of £13,000 after nine months operations he wound up with a deficit at the end of May of £182,000.

The Premier : You do not know what the deficit will be at the end of the year.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Do you know ?

The Premier : I do not.

Hon. Frank Wilson : The figures may be better.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : We sincerely hope that they are better.

The Premier : It will be a true statement, rest assured of that.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : We hope that they are better, but I certainly contend that the caution which is so necessary has not been exercised. When we come to compare the past Treasurer's management with that of the present Treasurer, we must agree that the Premier has not exercised that consideration and care that he should have done if he had paid better attention to the question of finance. We know that during Mr. Wilson's Administration he had many difficulties to contend with in the years prior to 1909. He had to meet with the ever-shrinking revenue from Commonwealth returns, but by careful management during the years 1909-10 and 1910-11 he accounted for a considerable excess of revenue over expenditure with the result that at the end of the financial year 1910-11 he wound up with a credit balance.

The Premier : By the wholesale transfer of expenditure from revenue to Loan Fund.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Nonsense.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : I might very well leave the leader of the Opposition to deal with that assertion. I am quite content to know that the finances of the country showed a credit balance instead of showing a debit balance of such proportions as that which exists to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : Did you feel quite happy over it ?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : I felt much happier than I do to-day.

The Premier : We would feel happier, too, if we had had the same seasons.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE : I felt happier for the reason that I am not satisfied as to where the present Treasurer is going to land us. Where is he going to stop ? During the past eleven months he has spent something like £300,000 more than the late Treasurer spent during the corresponding period of the previous year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And nothing to show for it?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: And, as my leader says, there is nothing to show for it. And when we come to add the probable annual cost to the country of the new socialistic ventures of the present Administration, we must pause and wonder where we are going to land. . . .

Mr. Green: That is where the shoe pinches.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not suppose that the hon. gentleman who interjected has really considered how far the shoe is going to pinch or who it is going to pinch.

Mr. Green: A State flour mill will pinch.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In this connection, I want to warn the Premier and his Ministers that he is embarking on very dangerous experiments in the ventures he is about to undertake. This House might at least have expected that the Government would have taken hon. members on this side into their confidence in regard to these proposals. It is evidently sufficient in the minds of the Government to know that these proposals have been submitted to caucus, that they have been approved of by their followers, and it was therefore not necessary to refer them to Parliament.

The Premier: You know as well as possible that is an incorrect statement. They were before the public at the general election.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: We can only judge by actions.

The Premier: You know very well they were spoken of from every platform on which there was a member from this side during the election.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: What I complain of is that we have no data placed before us before the country is committed to this large expenditure. That is the point I want the Premier to understand, and that is the point the country wants some information about. It is all very well for the Premier to tell us that he has a mandate for this expenditure and to know that amongst his own immediate supporters it is a popular movement, but at the same time there are electors

throughout the length and breadth of this country who want to know a little more about these proposals of the Government before they approve of them. And I say the Government had no right to incur this expenditure and to pledge the country.

The Premier: Did you not pledge the country before you wanted some information? You pledged yourselves long ago; your leader pledged your party to buy a special steamer.

Mr. Mitchell: Not before Parliament approved.

The Premier: Your leader said that, if necessary, he would buy a State steamer.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But not before consulting Parliament.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: So far as I understood the intentions of the leader of the Opposition he was to bring forward some comprehensive scheme for dealing with this vexed question. The purchase of a steamer was only part of the proposal.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If necessary.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes, if necessary. So far as I am personally concerned, I would certainly like to have had some information from my leader before agreeing to give my support to a proposal, the success of which I am sure is likely to be very problematical. However, my point is this, that the Premier, notwithstanding the fact that the year's operations have landed us with a deficit, has further pledged the country to this very doubtful proposition, the socialistic venture of procuring steamers. Very little has been said during the debate in regard to the action of the Government in putting on a steamer on the south-east coast. It is too early to say much about the operations of the service, but I feel myself, from the information I have been able to glean, that the Government have entered on a very risky proposition indeed. As a matter of fact the trade in the Hopetoun district we know has fallen off very much of late, and as far as the harbour facilities are concerned very great difficulties present themselves and I understand it is part of the Government's scheme to equip this service or have it thoroughly carried out, and to further improve the

harbour facilities at Hopetoun. I would like to know whether the expenditure in connection with the improvement of the harbour or the extension of the jetty is to be charged to the capital amount of the State's steamer service, and what provision the Government have made for lightering steamers at this particular port.

The Premier: You would not expect us to charge up the improvement of Fremantle to a steamer service.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Great difficulties are presenting themselves at Hopetoun, and I believe the Government are bound to land goods, according to their contract with the Commonwealth, on the jetty; and I understand further that they have made no provision for lightering. In view of the fact that there is a great deal of copper ore awaiting shipment at this port which cannot be lightered to the vessels I conclude the Government will be put to a great deal of expense in providing the necessary lighters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): How long since is it you have had this information?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Premier has committed this country to an expenditure of money which is likely to further embarrass our financial position at Home because it is all very well to go to the Home market with good propositions like we have done in the past and with the fact that the bulk of the loan moneys have been spent in good sound propositions, but if the Government are to carry out their policy, particularly in regard to new railways, it will be necessary to find more money, and I can assure the Premier he will probably have greater difficulty in raising his loans, if he goes to the London market, when it is known we are trading in a reckless manner on the lines of the Labour policy.

The Premier: The wish is father to the thought.

Mr. Heitmann: Do you know that when it was proposed to build the railway from Fremantle to Perth, the same objection was raised?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I have tried to point out to the Treasurer that it is certainly far more necessary to build

railways to open up country, relying on the policy that we know to be on safe and sound lines, than embarking on dangerous experiments. There is another point, and no doubt the Treasurer will deal with this when he deals with the Budget. It seems to me the Premier is not giving us very much consolation as to how he is going to reduce the deficit. As a matter of fact we have not been assured that the increasing expenditure over revenue is going to stop. What I would like to know is how the Premier proposes to make up the deficiency. Does he propose to have further direct taxation, because if he does I can assure the Premier the country cannot stand any further direct taxation. If the bleeding process is to be brought into operation and that plank of the party's platform is to be carried out in its entirety, that taxation without exemption or rebate is to be brought into force, we shall bleed the unfortunate farmers who have gone through a most trying season. Are we to take the little drop of life-blood which is left in those farmers?

Mr. Heitmann: Has there been anything in the actions of the party to lead you to believe that they will be unfair?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am asking for information. I want to know where the Treasurer is to get the increasing revenue to cope with the increasing expenditure. As far as direct taxation is concerned, and I am referring to land taxation, the Government will have to take into consideration the fact that we have already pretty high local taxation. Local taxes have been increased during the last year by the new Roads Act under which a minimum is fixed and that of necessity has increased the local rates. Therefore, I am perfectly right in saying that as far as the country districts are concerned they cannot stand any further direct taxation. I am glad the Government realise the importance of our great agricultural industry, also that if this country is to prosper and develop and become the great country that we all expect it to be, we must fully develop our agricultural resources. I am glad to notice that to

some extent the Government have continued along the lines of policy adopted by the late Government. The land selected during the last year, we have been informed by the Premier, exceeds somewhat the area selected during the last year of the Administration of the late Government. All I can say is that I am glad to know that the settlement is being continued, and I think to a great extent we should give credit to the old conditions that prevailed when the Government took over the affairs of the State. The true position has not yet been disclosed in regard to the figures, but I think we might be content to wait until the operations of the year are concluded for further information before making any comment on the figures. The Government, I think, should take warning by the result of the falling off in the sales of town lands before they attempt to carry into effect the proposal to adopt the leasehold system instead of freehold tenure. Here is a glaring instance, and an indication of what will happen in the near future as soon as the Government bring in the amendment to the Land Act. We know as a positive fact that during the time the amended conditions regarding town lots have been in existence very few applications indeed have been made. There has almost been a suspension of business. This should be an indication to the Government of what is going to happen as soon as they bring into operation their leasehold tenure system. I hope that wiser counsels will prevail and if the Government see fit to bring in the conditions of leasehold tenure they will make it optional for the freehold tenure to continue. With regard to water supply, and we have heard a great deal about this during this debate, I would like to say at the outset that I am very pleased at the manner in which the present Administration have dealt with the farmers during the past dry seasons. At the same time I think that very often Ministers when travelling about the country have hardly been fair as to the amount of credit due to the late Administration. We all know full well that this system of providing

water-supplies, clearing roads in the new areas, putting down tanks in dry districts, was instituted by my friend the late Minister for Lands. I know very well that the Minister incurred displeasure very often amongst members of this House by expending money in this direction when it was found that this work was being carried out from the vote provided for the development of agriculture.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He promised; this Government did the work.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I know the hon. member (Mr. Mitchell) did an enormous amount of good work in this direction. I have personal experience of the works that were carried out, and I congratulate the present Minister in continuing this work in the manner he has done. He certainly had the advantage of the work put in by the late Ministry, and the present Government certainly were met with a situation which the late Ministry had not met with—the season was a much drier one and it was discovered that the work would have to proceed at a moderate pace. Something was said by the Premier a little while ago in regard to the putting down of pot-holes. The present Administration, as far as I know, have never refused to carry out necessary works. The late Minister for Lands, Mr. Mitchell, was the first to institute the 5,000-yards dams. There were several put down to the east of the Great Southern Railway. Some of them were put down at my own request, and the Minister willingly fell in with the suggestion and had them put down. That was before the present Administration came into office. So the Premier is hardly right in making the insinuation that there were nothing but pot holes put down by the late Administration. I appreciate what has been done by the present Government; I know they have met the situation; still I want to show some appreciation for the work done by their predecessors. Surely the want of activity on the part of present Ministers in regard to building railways is very apparent.

The Premier: Want of activity! I wish you could remove yourself from

party, and unburden yourself for a little while.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It is mentioned in the Governor's Speech that 284 miles were constructed, and that 453 miles were under way; and if we believe what the Minister for Works said to a deputation that waited on him, the Government have 2¼ years' railway construction under way.

Mr. George: Then there is the Trans-Australian also.

The Premier: We are not building 500 miles of railway along one route, do not forget. Some will be completed and others started in the meantime.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: One of the railways will be the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. That is of considerable length, and according to the programme laid down by the Government, it will take a considerable time to build.

The Premier: Some of the short railways will be completed in the meantime, and the gangs will be started on other lines.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: My complaint is that we need to build railways at a greater speed than at 200 miles per annum.

The Premier: Why did not your people do it?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I think an effort was put forward. Surely the Premier will admit a great deal was done in this direction, because, as a matter of fact, we have been calling on much of his valuable time lately to declare these lines open. It is absurd when we come to think of the lines that are urgently waiting to be constructed, for the Government to say, through their Minister for Works, that they cannot build more than 200 miles per annum. In the particular case of the Yillimining-Kondinin railway, which is urgently needed, why cannot it be pushed on with? The people in the locality are simply at their wits' end to know what to do. They are in serious difficulties. Even if the Government are opposed to the building of these railways by contract, and even suppose it might cost a little more to build it by contract, we are assured of the one fact that we would get a thoroughly good job, and we are also assured of this that we are

giving relief to those people who deserve it. I hope the Government will take this question of letting a few of these lines by contract into immediate consideration. I realise the difficulty, but I do not see why the country should be hung up until the Government get a further mandate from Congress in regard to this matter. I think the Government should be in the position to say at once, to meet a special case, "We cannot do this departmentally; we will do it by contract."

The Premier: That line is no more special than any others authorised.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: They are all important, and we should not keep these people waiting at all. I must also take some exception to a remark made by the Minister for Works in the course of that deputation that waited on him. It was in regard to the building of railways by the Public Works Department. I am not opposed to building some of our railways by day-labour; I think it is a good thing for the Public Works Department to be able to build some of these lines; but I do not see, when we have contractors in the State with their plants, and when we have people waiting for railway facilities, why we cannot push on with these works. But the Minister for Works said "he wanted good railways." Now, I take it that his insinuation was that the railways built by contract were not good railways; but I am sure he could not have discussed the matter with his chief, the Premier, or with the Minister for Railways: because I am sure the Premier, when travelling over some of these lines quite recently, must have come to the conclusion that the railways that were built by contract were good jobs.

Mr. S. Stubbs: He said so.

The Premier: That is the difference. I am not nervous about expressing my opinion. If some of you people would express your opinions, you would talk very differently from what you say now.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: All I can say is that the development of this country should not be held up.

The Premier: Held up! That is a nice term to use. We are building faster than your Government ever did.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The Premier: Yes, it is a fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I contend we are not building fast enough; but even if the present Government are building faster than the past Government—though I am assured by my chief that this is not a fact—it is no excuse. We have to consider the position as it exists to-day. I am very sorry to have to make some reference to the all important matter that has come under our notice during the past few months; that is in reference to the administration of the Lands Department. I have the greatest respect for the present Minister for Lands, and I feel sure that he is decidedly in earnest in doing his very best to administer the department to the best of his ability. At the same time I cannot lose sight of the fact that he has brought upon the country a very peculiar situation through the issuing of those much-talked-of regulations. I am with the Government entirely in doing the best to assist and encourage none but bona fide selectors to go on our lands. I realise, with other hon. members, that if we are to get the best possible results from this State we must get our lands developed to their utmost extent. At the same time, I am satisfied that the Minister for Lands went the wrong way about carrying out his intention. I am satisfied, notwithstanding the effect of his explanation the other night that he did it unintentionally, that he has done great injury to the security of our conditional purchase lands. There is no getting away from the fact that the issuing of such regulations did cause, at the time, and has caused since, considerable financial unrest. Further than that, I know for a fact that the financial institutions take a very serious view of the situation. I know that the country branches were circularised by the head offices, and I know that in many instances the local managers took a very serious view of the situation and they had to be much more careful in regard to their advances upon conditional purchases. The Minister could have attained his object without issuing such drastic regulations. I am satisfied it was his intention at the time to pass all bona fide transfers, but the regulations had

gone out, and the damage was already done. We find the position to-day is not so good, from a financial point of view, as it was when the regulations were issued. I agree with the Minister that the effect of the bad season was a contributing factor, and a very large one also; but it does not take much to frighten the financial institutions; it does not take much to make the man with the money button up his pockets. The man who has the money is the man who wants to be satisfied that his security is safe. For many years past, those who have lived in the agricultural districts have experienced great difficulty in getting financial institutions to look at our conditional purchase securities, and it was not until the Agricultural Bank, which was specially created for the purpose, was brought into use, that the other institutions, the chartered banks, were really able to realise there was some security in conditional purchase lands. Now, after working it up to a satisfactory position, and getting the banks to go into the country districts—along the Great Southern Railway they have, between York and Albany, 40 branches of the chartered banks established where 10 years ago there was not one branch—hon. members can understand the effect it will have upon the development of the country if the financial institutions restrict their operations to any great extent. A great deal of damage has been done by the issuing of the regulations, and I am sure no one would regret it more than the Minister for Lands. I hope that, even at this late hour, he will endeavour to restore the confidence that existed prior to the issue of the regulations. It is not always easy for one to admit that a mistake has been made, but I feel sure that, now that the Minister sees the situation, he will, at an early date, thoroughly explain what was his intention by those regulations, and remove the embargo that has existed during the past few months. I notice that the present Administration have not carried out that much talked of reduction in the price of land, in regard to which we heard so much at the last general election. I may say here I am quite satisfied that the late Minister erred

very much indeed in fixing the price of these lands at the rates he did. I have never lost an opportunity of saying that I disagreed with him in that particular; because if we are to settle our lands, and particularly the poorer and lighter of our lands, we must keep the prices down to the lowest possible limit. It is of no use putting these people on the land unless they are to make a success of their holdings, and I regret that the present Administration are following along the same lines as the late Minister in keeping up the prices. Some little time ago a board was appointed to inquire into the best means of eradicating the poison in the Kojonup district, and I am surprised that, notwithstanding the board was comprised of men of considerable experience, and that they made certain recommendations, their recommendations have not been acted upon by the present Government. One of the recommendations made was in respect to the revaluation and reclassification of the area known as Dininup. This area was cut up during the time Sir Newton Moore was Minister for Lands, and unfortunately it was cut up into areas too small to admit of successful working. Moreover it contained a considerable amount of poison, and was under a treble misfortune in the fact that the people placed upon that area were mostly Englishmen, totally inexperienced in the character of the country. These selectors have been asking for reclassification, and for some allowance for the ringbarking, which, I may say in passing, was done by day labour, affording work for unemployed, and was very badly done indeed, some of the trees being ringbarked and others not touched. The settlers on this area are naturally concerned about the price charged for ringbarking which has been of very little use to them. I trust the Minister will take into consideration the recommendation of this board and give some relief as early as possible to the people settled on that area. The further liberalisation of the Agricultural Bank was kept very prominently before the electors at the last general elections, and a very great deal was made of the amending Bill brought in.

While to some extent it has met the requirements of farmers, yet it has not gone as far as we would have liked it to go; not so far as the Minister led us to believe it would go. I am sorry the Minister is not in his place just now, because I wished to bring under his notice the necessity for further liberalising this great institution which has already done so much to build up our agricultural industry. In introducing the amending Bill last session the Minister said—

I have always held that if it is good enough for the Agricultural Bank to help the settler create a security, it is also good enough and advantageous for the Agricultural Bank to lend him money after that security has been created, and in this particular measure I seek to accomplish that purpose. It is provided here that subject to the provisions of the Act and the discretion of the trustees of the Bank they will have power to lend money upon the security just as the chartered banks do.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

When the Bill left this Chamber no limit was placed on the advance, but when it was returned from another place the maximum advance was limited to £2,000. However, the settlers in the country were under the impression that what the Minister said when introducing the Bill would be carried into effect. I have no complaint to make against the Agricultural Bank, rather have I everything to say by way of commendation of the good work done by the general manager, by the trustees and by the deputy manager. There is no doubt at all Mr. Paterson has done a tremendous amount of good work in that institution, and with his staff he has sympathetically considered the various applications placed before him. At the same time we are in this position to-day: the policy of the bank has not been altered, it remains just the same as in years past. The bank has not the capital to meet all the applications which may be commended to the manager, and until Parliament expressly indicates to the bank that they wish the bank to take up existing mortgages or to loan upon well

improved properties, the manager, of course, can only carry out the intention of the Act as it appears to-day. I am pleased to notice in the Speech that provision is to be made for increasing the capital of the bank, and I hope that when this proposition is taken into consideration sufficient money will be set aside to provide for the points I have just mentioned. I am sorry to say the Government have been rather neglectful in regard to providing sufficient moneys for road facilities. Although last year, from revenue, an increase of £7,000 was provided, yet from loan funds—and we know that if we are to get the best results from our railways we must be ready to build feeder roads to all the new lines—the Government made no extra provision from loan funds. Rather were they content to carry forward an unexpended balance of the £80,000 loan provided by the previous Government. Thus £30,000 was carried forward, and I am assured that less than one-half of that was available for the expenditure of last year, because a good portion of it had already been earmarked. I hope the Premier will bear that in mind when he is considering the Estimates for the coming financial year, and that ample provision will be made for our roads. I have nothing further to say in regard to the Speech, but I would like to make a short reference to the question of railway freights. It is a matter I think the Government might very well keep steadily before them for their earnest consideration.

Mr. Lander: They have reduced the terminal charge on agricultural lines.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes, I congratulate the Government upon their action in doing away with the terminal charge upon the light railways. At the same time I think the Government should be reminded that agriculturists in this State pay the highest rate for the carriage of agricultural produce that is paid in any of the States of the Commonwealth, with the one exception of South Australia. As a matter of fact, in New South Wales for a distance of 300 miles the agriculturist pays 10s. 6d., whereas in Western Australia he is required to pay 17s. There-

fore, if we are to compete successfully with our Eastern neighbours it is only fair and right that our agriculturists should be placed upon the same basis with them in respect to railway freights. The cost of construction of agricultural machinery is one that has always concerned me very much. I feel that we are paying altogether too much for our agricultural machinery, and although the Government have indicated their intention of embarking upon State works for the production of agricultural machinery, I cannot see any likelihood of their achieving a reduction in the cost of such machinery. In my opinion it would be far better if the Government were first to make sure they were going to be successful in this venture, and I trust the fullest information will be obtained by the Government before they enter upon the construction of this agricultural machinery by State enterprise. At the same time I would point out to the Government that they are not going to reduce the cost of binders, for some considerable time at least, because reapers and binders are not likely to be made in the State workshops, and I think the Government might well approach this question by way of official inquiry. We have the data of the Harvester Commission appointed by the Federal Government, and I think the Government should first secure all the information it is possible to obtain with a view of seeing what can be done to reduce the cost of agricultural machinery. I have nothing further to add. I am sorry if I have wearied hon. members with my remarks. I would like to conclude with the hope that we shall have a bounteous harvest, that confidence in the country will be maintained, and that as a result of the year's operations we shall be able to boast a record development.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): I rise for the second time to support a motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech, and I regret that members have an opportunity of doing so. As we know, the Labour policy which is being put into operation seeks to do away with anything in the direction of

frill, which may be regarded as unnecessary. We have seen that in regard to the removal of the Mace, and I think it would be a good thing if the proceedings at the opening of Parliament were amended so that the amount of time spent on the Address-in-reply could be utilised in considering the serious business of the country.

Mr. Heitmann: It gives us an opportunity to get into the stride.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: But we have an opportunity of discussing each individual measure and I am sorry the time is wasted perhaps in this respect, but I am taking advantage of the usual habit of calling attention to some necessary works. I congratulate the Ministry on the great improvement in administration that it is readily recognised has taken place during the last few months, and particularly in regard to the assistance which they have given to farmers. One of the best things the Minister for Lands has done is to reform the system on which extensions of time for the payment of rents are granted. Under the late Government these applications were all dealt with in Perth, and concessions were very often obtained by St. George's-terrace farmers without any officer closely associated with the district knowing anything about them. The Minister has altered this system, and under the new system all applications for extension of time for the payment of rent are dealt with by the district land agents, and extensions before being granted have to be certified by the district officer as being deserving. I am surprised that that peculiar organisation known as the Metropolitan Branch of the Farmers' and Producers' Association, and composed largely of gentlemen who lend money to farmers at reasonable rates of interest and who conduct commercial concerns on the Terrace, have not objected to this alteration by the Minister for Lands as strenuously publicly as we know some of their members do privately. We know also that it was largely through the influence of the associated banks and some of the gentlemen who belong to this Metropolitan Farmers' Association that

the decentralisation of the lands branch of the Lands Department and the system of dealing with transfers was not proceeded with some little time ago. I hope that this extension of the decentralisation system will have the early consideration of the Minister for Lands. By the provision of seed wheat to farmers great assistance has been given to settlers who were so seriously affected by the recent drought. The action of the Government in this respect has enabled hundreds of farmers to remain on their land and to keep their families there, farmers who would otherwise have had to leave their properties and perhaps have been forced to sacrifice them. Fortunately the Government came to the rescue and supplied these drought-afflicted people with seed wheat and manure, and I wish to congratulate Mr. Sutton, the Agricultural Commissioner for the Wheat Belts, on the excellent manner in which he has administered the work of the Seed Wheat Board. The Government's action in this direction was very justifiable. The wheat belt is the greatest asset Western Australia has; our permanent prosperity depends upon it and the assistance the Government have given to the wheat growers is very encouraging. I am sorry that even greater reference is not made in the Speech to the establishment of agricultural implement works. We are told that attention is being given to that subject. I hope works will very soon be constructed. Our policy as outlined was to construct harvesters here. We are told by an expert authority that harvesters can be made for less than £60, and I hope very soon the Government will push on with that somewhat socialistic enterprise, in the interests of our settlers.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Are not harvesters patented, and would it not cost a lot for royalty?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have found that when a recent Government gave special assistance from the Agricultural Bank to settlers to buy agricultural machinery made in Western Australia, an enterprising gentleman straight away be-

gan to make these machines at Victoria Park, and surely if patent rights did not stop that gentleman of limited capital from starting, they will not prevent the Government. Regarding State flour mills, I would like to see them established right through the agricultural districts. We have a co-operative flour mill in Narrogin which is doing excellent work, but only to-day I received a letter from the Williams roads board in which they have applied to the Government for the erection of a State flour mill at Williams, and the people at Wickepin have made a similar request.

Mr. Carpenter: Did you say the Williams roads board?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes. Entering farmers many of whom farm big areas have applied for a mill at Williams and I am pleased of this because that centre has been regarded as being a slightly conservative one. I hope the Government will look carefully into these requests. Tremendous quantities of wheat are produced in these districts and the people are sympathetic to our policy in this respect, and I know of no place where State flour mills could be started with greater prospects of success. The people of Cuballing are also anxious to have a State flour mill there. I am glad to know that the provision of workers' homes is being proceeded with. In Narrogin there is a great demand for houses at the present time, and I hope that very soon homes will be provided throughout the agricultural as well as in the city areas. I regret that so much time has been spent in discussing the somewhat frivolous no-confidence motion introduced by the leader of the Opposition. I think the people in this State expected the Government to purchase steamers as soon as they had the opportunity, particularly in view of the fact that a State-owned line of steamers for the North-West coast was the first plank of the Labour party's special platform for the North-West. The popularity of that proposal was evidenced by the return from those constituencies of three supporters of the Government at the recent

election. Since then I have had an opportunity with other members of visiting the North-West, and I can assure the House that every section of the North-West community is pleased and gratified at the action of the Government in this respect. Commercial people, storekeepers and squatters are all pleased that there is a prospect of their being relieved from the operations of the shipping ring. They are pleased that freights and passenger fares are likely to be reduced. On this point I hope that if this Government have the power they will exercise it, and if not that they will appeal to the Federal Government to prevent State-owned steamers which will be manned by white labour paying a proper rate of wages from being subjected to the unfair competition of the coolie-manned steamers now on that line. In the United States all foreign vessels have been prevented from trading between ports in that country, and while I do not want to see boats which will conform to our requirements in regard to the people they employ and the wages they pay, stopped from trading here, I hope the Government boats will not be subject to any competition from the boats which now employ cheap Asiatic labour on the coast. I am very glad that the people in the North-West are to have the advantage of State-owned means of communication by steamers, just as the people in the agricultural districts have State-owned means of communication in the shape of railways. This brings me to the important question of railway construction. We are told in the Speech that 453 miles of railway are under construction, and that is very gratifying. The Government were faced with difficulties in regard to pushing these works forward. When they assumed office they found they had to build a large number of railways which had been promised and authorised by the previous Government and which had never been constructed. The Wickepin-Merredin line had been promised to the people for five or six years. For years that particular proposal had been before the country and the line had been authorised for a long time before this

Government took office, but nothing had been done towards starting it. I am glad that through the energy of the present Government that line is in hand now, but it would be interesting if we could ascertain why that line and the Yillimining-Kondinin line, both of which were recommended for special priority of construction by the agricultural advisory board, were not put in hand by the late Government. In regard to the Yillimining-Kondinin line, I do not quite understand an interjection that was made by the Premier because throughout that district the people have recognised that the Premier has shown a special anxiety to give them their railway as soon as that can be done. The Premier showed his anxiety by bringing that particular railway in and getting it authorised as soon as he took office, and, while I have no desire to delay the House, I think if any member has any doubt as to the reasons why this line should have special priority of construction, I will read the advisory board's report and the remarks of the Minister for Works at the time that railway was introduced. The Advisory Board said—

Of these lines—referring to all the lines they were reviewing—we consider that next to the through line, Wickepin-Merredin, the eastern or Kulin loop should have preference in order of construction, as the land is of high quality, is relatively far from any existing service, and promises very substantial returns to the general railway system.

In spite of that a large number of railways since recommended have been actually constructed whilst the Yillimining-Kondinin railway has not yet been put in hand.

The Premier: If any line is authorised by Parliament this session it will not be commenced before that particular one.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am pleased to have that assurance. The Minister for Works on the same subject, said—

The Advisory Board urged that it was an area which should receive special consideration, and which was only second in importance to the Wickepin-Merredin proposition. As I have al-

ready stated in reply to a question, the Government do not propose to give it preference over the Nunagin-Quairading line, nor over the Wickepin-Merredin line, but we propose to give consideration to the recommendation of the advisory board, recognising that this is a thickly populated area, that a large proportion of it is under cultivation, and that in many respects it is deserving of consideration. The Bill has been brought down in order to get the necessary authority to construct the line whenever time permits after we have finished with the other propositions I have referred to.

In the district that that railway will serve, there are probably over 1,000 settlers with their wives, all calling out for railway communication, and the Minister for Railways has promised that the railway would start not later than March. Whilst we are glad to receive that definite promise, I must urge that it is not definite enough, and it is not soon enough. Why not start that railway now? The hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches have money; they have floated loans far more successfully than previous Administrations have of late been able to do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I have tried to get one in my district for seven years and have not succeeded.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Minister for Works has the chance of his life to make a name that will live not only in the records of this State, but will also live in the memories of the people of that great district, and I urge the Minister to grasp his opportunity while it is so close at hand. Let him rise to the occasion, and it is an occasion for action, not for words. The people of that district do not want any more promises. They have had them for three years, whilst the previous Administration was in power, and they never even got a Bill authorised. Now that the railway is authorised they want the Minister for Works to purchase the plant and send rails and sleepers along and get the work put in hand. If Ministers could go out into that district, they would see the people living in rough

huts and 50, 60, and 70 miles from a railway. It is well known that these people cannot remain so far away from railway communication. It costs them far more for improvements than it has any right to cost, and they are wasting their money on carting. They have large areas cropped, but what good will their crops be to them until they get railway communication? I appeal to the Ministry to carry out the long-delayed promise that this railway should have priority of construction. I feel sure that the Government are seized with the necessity for having a vigorous public works policy put in hand. Six new railways were forecasted in the Governor's Speech, but it is certainly not enough, and I am sure this number is not all the Government intend to bring forward. The first of these railways is that from Norseman to Esperance, and I hope the Government will take the House into its confidence with regard to the step it proposes to adopt to see that the measure goes through another place. I take it this Government are not going to miss the opportunity of taking some special action to force that Bill on the statute book.

Mr. Taylor : You are treading on dangerous ground.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : There are several courses open to the Government and I have every confidence that they will do whatever is best in the matter. I am not suggesting in reply to the interjection that sensible and logical argument will not be the best way of getting it through, but I hope the Government will make a special effort. In regard to the proposal for a railway westward of Wagin, I am sorry that the Governor's Speech is not a little more definite. I have been through most of the country and I am strongly of opinion that the railway should start from Darkan and run in a southerly direction so as to serve the settlers south of Darkan and give relief to those in the Moodiarrup district. I object to the proposal to run a line from Wagin to Hillman.

The Premier : Why go back to Darkan?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : Because there are so many settlers there, and there is good land the whole way, and it is closely settled and well watered.

The Premier : It is all served.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : No. Those people are labouring under great disabilities. At any rate the direct route from Wagin to Hillman will miss the settlers altogether, and that is the survey which was being made by the late Government.

Mr. S. Stubbs : No one is urging its construction to Hillman.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : I am glad to hear that and I hope that the interests of the wheat growers east of Wagin will not be put ahead of the interests of the settlers south of Darkan. Another pleasing feature of the Speech is the Government's decision to extend the Yillimining-Kondinin railway on to Mount Arrowsmith and Wadderin. These places are not in my electorate at all, but the fact that the Government are extending the line shows how very urgent it is to get it built to Kondinin straight away, in order that the second part of the policy may be proceeded with. Surely when the Government propose to extend the railway to a district only recently settled, it is ample evidence that an immediate start should be made in the construction of the line along the more closely settled and better improved districts between Yillimining, Dorakin, and Kondinin, and I am all the more pleased to see that the extension is to be proceeded with because it shows that the Government are going to start the authorised section quickly. In this morning's paper I saw some remarks to the effect that the present Government were giving spoils to the victors. I resent those remarks very much. If we look at the Governor's Speech it will be seen that of the six lines which it is proposed to build, five are in electorates represented by members of the Opposition.

The Premier : We forgot to take that into consideration.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : That is to say that although two-thirds of the members of this House are on this side, five-

sixths of the new railways proposed are in Opposition constituencies, and the sixth is the Esperance railway.

Mr. McDowall : That is everyone's constituency.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : The Opposition constituencies will get five of the six railways prepared to be authorised and yet unwarranted and unjust charges are made that spoils are being given to the victors. I point out these facts more in sorrow than in anger because I had hoped that the railway construction policy of the Government would not be so much confined to the districts that Opposition members represent for the time being. I am disappointed that no reference was made in the Speech to the Narrogin-Armadale railway. That railway was recommended by the advisory board and I am pleased to say that a survey of it has been promised by the Premier as soon as the engineers have finished their work in connection with the Transcontinental railway. That assurance, which was given to an influential deputation which I was privileged to introduce to the Premier some time ago is very satisfactory. I would like to point out that the improved prospects of the present harvest are an additional argument for the immediate construction of this line, because I am perfectly certain if we have a reasonably good harvest this year there is going to be terrible congestion on the Great-Southern railway line.

Mr. S. Stubbs : That is true.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : Last year there was great difficulty in getting trucks. We know what the Government have done in the way of ordering trucks but the construction of this railway would relieve the position immensely. At the present time people in the Great Southern districts have to travel from Narrogin to Fremantle—a distance of 174 miles, whereas the route recommended by the advisory board is 117 miles in length, and that represents a saving of 57 miles on all traffic between Albany and Fremantle and between every part of the Great Southern railway and Fremantle, and almost the same saving to

Perth. It is not necessary for me to do more than to quote those figures to emphasise that the Narrogin-Armadale railway is required at once to shorten the journey between the Great Southern districts and Fremantle, as well as to serve existing and future settlements west of the Great Southern railway, and to relieve the traffic on the northern portion of the Great Southern railway, and to provide a shorter route to a port for wheat produced throughout the Great Southern districts.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : Before tea I had concluded my remarks on the necessity for the Narrogin-Armadale trunk railway, but there is another proposal to which I wish to draw attention, and that is the necessity for a railway to serve the Quindanning district. Some three or four months ago, I communicated with the Premier asking that the Railways Advisory Board should be sent to that rich and long-settled district to report on the best means of opening it up by railway. Settlers have been in that district for some 40 years, but in some way their claims to railway communication seem to have been overlooked. So far, I have not heard of the board being instructed to go into that district, and I would like to know if the board is still in existence, and if not, what system the Government have in mind to deal with the new railway proposals until such time as Parliament may see fit to approve of the appointment of a Public Works Standing Committee. Until such a committee is appointed, I think the Government might reasonably continue to trust the board that has done such very excellent work for the State in the past, and I hope to hear from the Premier that the board will be sent to Quindanning before long. Although I have taken this opportunity of bringing one or two railway proposals in my own district before the House, I do not approach the question of agricultural railways in any parochial spirit. I am always prepared to support all agri-

cultural and other railways that may be brought forward to develop this great State of ours.

Mr. Monger : Hear hear.

Mr E. B. JOHNSTON : But not as based on the lines of the Katanning-Kojonup railway a plan of which was shown us by the Premier the other night, and which we have that hon. gentleman's word for believing was illegally built more than 10 miles from the route authorised by Parliament. We all know that the prosperity of this country depends on a vigorous railway policy, and the great majority of the people in this country realise that we have, in the person of the Premier, a leader of broad views, who recognises the needs of the people of the country in this direction. I am sure that gentleman realises that his Government will be judged by the people. Probably their final judgment will not be given for another 20 years, because I believe he is leading a party that will retain office as a continuous Ministry for at least that period, but I am sure that he realises that his Government will be judged from time to time, not alone by the way in which he carries into effect the splendid programme of humane legislation for the improvement of the industrial and social conditions of the people, but also on the energy and foresight which his Government display in building these railways which are so necessary for the progress and development of the State. I wish to say just a few words in regard to the Agricultural Bank. I am very pleased to know that the Government intend to increase its capital this session, and I hope the increase will be by a very considerable amount. Right throughout the agricultural districts at the present time people are singing out for more money from the Agricultural Bank. The Minister for Lands outlined very clearly the policy that the private banking institutions are adopting to-day in regard to the man on the land. The Minister has a keen grip of the position, and it is not necessary for me to say anything beyond this, that the condition of affairs he indicated needs special action on the

part of the Government to increase the power and financial strength of the Agricultural Bank so that they can fight these private institutions. Very much more capital is required for taking over mortgages from the private banks in those cases where the bleeding process is being exercised by them on the settler. There is another matter connected with the assistance to farmers to which I would like to draw the attention of the Government. I hope they will do something to relieve the settlers from the rings by which they are surrounded, and more particularly the ring which controls the supply of artificial manures to the farmer. Some three years ago, manure works were established at West Guildford and North Fremantle, and we all joined in a chorus commending the enterprise of those people who were responsible for these two new enterprises? We thought that the farmers in this State were going to derive very great benefit from these local manure works, but I am sorry to say that there has been a combination between the two firms in question, namely Cuming Smith and Company Proprietary Limited, and the Mt. Lyell Company, which combination is operating detrimentally to the farmers and preventing them from getting their manures at the price at which they should get them. There is to-day absolutely no competition at all between these two firms. I have here the price lists of the two firms, showing the prices for local manures, and it is a striking fact that the charges for every item on the two lists are absolutely identical.

Mr. Heitmann : You do not blame them for that?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : I would blame the people if they allowed Parliament to permit that state of affairs to continue. I do not blame the firms for getting what they can, but it is the duty of this House to see that the farmer gets a fair deal, which he is not getting to-day. Not only are the superphosphates everywhere quoted at the same price, namely £4 7s. 6d. per ton, but for every one of the 31 different kinds of manures that are sold to the farmers, the price is exactly the

same. For instance, we have dissolved bone superphosphates £7 5s. per ton on both quotations; special potato manure, £8 2s. 6d. on both quotations; onion manure, £7 2s. 6d. on both quotations; special rose manure, £12 12s. 6d. per ton on each quotation. In not one single item is there one bit of difference.

Mr. S. Stubbs: There are other importers of manures. I do not get my manures from those firms.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am saying that, in regard to all classes of manures, there is just the one price, showing that a combination exists in regard to the supplying of manures to the farmers.

Mr. S. Stubbs: I sell a lot of manure, and I do not consult them, and there are many others in the same position.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The hon. member cannot show me different prices for the same manure anywhere in Western Australia. The farmers are paying more than they should through this combination, and they are being charged an iniquitous rate of interest whenever they have manure on terms. The price charged as interest is 1s. per month on £4 7s. 6d., and I think it is time we had a Usurers' Act in Western Australia to prevent such high interest being exacted from a class of the community who are least able to protect themselves, and who are least able to pay it. Not only this, but in regard to the manures sold by these two firms—and hon. members know that the local manures are more largely sought after than the imported ones because they run more freely through the drills—I want to point out that practically all the agents in the country who are agents for one of these firms are agents for both. Nearly every man who sells Mt. Lyell manures also sells Cuming Smith's manures. There is practically no competition between them, and the same combination controls the prices of imported manures as well, showing that the local merchants are in absolute combination in this matter. For instance, Globe manure is £4 2s. 6d. everywhere; Cross's manure is £4 4s., and Thomas's superphosphate is £3 12s. 6d. per ton at Fremantle, no matter what firm one goes to; and when we consider

the rates of wharfage and the agency charges that are paid on the imported manures sold at these prices, it must be readily apparent that the farmer should be able to get his local manure very much cheaper. I have not been able to find out how much cheaper. I have obtained figures which may or may not be correct, but this is a matter that the Government should investigate in order to find out whether or not settlers are getting anything approaching a fair deal. And if these firms will not give settlers a fair deal in regard to the artificial manures they cannot do without, I hope the Government will step in and make these manures. In regard to manures and jute goods the head offices of the firms supplying the same send periodical circulars to all country agents, and the price to the farmer is always the same at the same time. The jute goods are all imported, and there is no competition at all in regard to them, and although these bags range at times from 4s. 6d. to 5s. a dozen for forward delivery, they are always the same price at the same time; if you get a quote from one agent it is an absolute waste of time going to another agent, because he will quote exactly the same. Of course at harvest time the prices are much higher, being from 6s. 6d. to 7s., or even more. These prices are fixed by a combination in Perth, and the farmer has absolutely no protection in the matter. I hope this will be looked into; I hope a committee of investigation will be appointed, and that, if necessary, jute works and manure works will be established here. The Liberal Administrations of the past have for years had the chance to take this matter up, but they did to the farmer in this connection what they did in most other matters—neglected him entirely. At the last election some of the leaders of the party opposite went around the country telling the farmers that the Labour party would steal their land, turn the people out of their homes, and rob the aged widow of her cot. If the leader of the Opposition had devoted one-quarter of the energy he spent last year on circulating imaginative theories of this kind regarding the Labour policy, to trying to

serve the people or endeavouring to give farmers cheaper Crown land, cheaper machinery and cheaper manures, or to studying the welfare of the people as a whole, he might not have met his political Waterloo last October. But there is a well-known proverb, "Do not flog a dead horse." I believe it will also apply to an ass, and as the National Liberal "Ass" is defunct, I leave it alone. I hope the Government will do something to see that the Government hospitals are made available to settlers; because recently legitimate and poor struggling settlers have, in continuance of the past practice, been refused admittance to the Government hospitals. In my own district settlers are told that they must go to private hospitals unless they are paupers. It is a condition of affairs we must try to end.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: It is not the case in my district.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is another instance of where you have got the "spoils." I hope the Honorary Minister, who takes a great interest in this subject, will try to do something to extend the scope of these hospitals. Already, I believe, the present Government have altered the conditions regarding the admission to hospitals in the North-West. When we went up there recently and visited various hospitals, it was found that Asiatics were put in the wards side by side with good white Australians, and they received the same nursing and the same medical and other attention in every way.

Mr. George: That is common humanity, is it not?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The hon. member is quite right there; but while the Australian worker had to pay 6s. and, in some cases, 9s. a day for his attendance in the hospital, the Liberal Administration charged the Asiatic patient only 2s. 6d. per day, in other words they gave the scum of Asia access to those hospitals at 2s. 6d. a day while charging the white man the much higher rates mentioned for the same treatment. That is a condition of affairs that was, no doubt, brought into operation by the black-labour-employing magnates of the North-

West who supported the late Administration; and I am glad to say that in that respect the present Government are going to see that the past preference to Asiatics is abolished. I want to touch on some remarks made in this Chamber relating to the High School. I would point out that the High School is a purely Government school. It is controlled by a board appointed by the Governor-in-Council, instead of by the Education Department, and founded by Act of Parliament in 1876, primary education being controlled by a similar board which has since been turned into a department, while the board controlling the High School continues to exist. In those days primary and secondary education were on an equal footing. Of course since then a number of secondary schools have been established, and I welcome these schools and admire the good work they are doing in the educational arena, but the High School established by the State is purely a secular institution.

Mr. Heitmann: It is not established by the State. It has had about £35,000 out of the State.

Mr. George: It has done good work for the State.

Mr. Heitmann: Do you call that good work?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A school of this kind is absolutely necessary in our midst. Similar institutions in other States are still supported by the State where Labour Governments are in power. The Sydney Grammar School is an entirely similar institution to our High School, and I have never heard that the Labour party in New South Wales have had any designs of interfering in the good work it is doing. I would like to quote from an account in the *Year Book of Australia* as to the constitution of the Sydney Grammar School. It says—

The Sydney Grammar School is a State-aided institution. It was founded by statute in 1854, and receives an endowment of £1,500 a year, but is practically independent of the Minister of Public Instruction, being controlled by trustees.

Mr. Heitmann: Do you advocate that system here?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We have the same system, that is, control by governors, but I do not mind if the system of control is altered, so long as the school is not prevented from continuing the work it is doing.

Mr. Foley: We have the Modern School, the Technical School, and all sorts of things.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The extract I was reading continues—

The limit of age for admission is ten years, and the fees are £5 per per quarter for the lower and upper schools. Boys under 15 are charged £4 per quarter in the lower school. The course of instruction is designed "to qualify for admission to the University, and should supply an adequate training for professional life." The total enrolment of pupils for 1910 was 689. We have seen that some degree of secondary education is supplied in all the public schools that contain a fifth class. But in order to give to pupils of these schools the advantages of a superior public school where the fifth class will be large and presumably better taught than the fifth class of a small school, or the advantages of attendance at a high school, or at the Sydney Grammar School, the State have provided scholarships, and twenty-four bursaries are offered each half-year (June and December). The winner of a scholarship or of a bursary is entitled to three years' free education, the former in the high school nearest his residence, the latter in either the high school or the superior public school nearest his residence, or in the Sydney Grammar School. The latter has also another advantage. If his attendance at one of these schools does not necessitate his boarding away from home, he gets an allowance of £10 a year. If it does, the allowance is raised to £30. At the examinations held in 1910 under this scheme, 188 candidates were successful.

We have in this State the same system of scholarships from the State schools to the High School, but the High School is charging fees of only £12 a year, while at the Sydney Grammar School they charge £16 and £20 a year according to the age of the boy. I take it that the policy of the Labour party is to increase educational facilities.

Mr. Foley: Yes, and with free, secular education.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This is secular education.

Mr. Foley: But it is not free.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Well, make it free. Give them more subsidy. One remark I was sorry to hear—and I feel sure it gave pain to a good many people in the State—was when the member for Leonora remarked that the High School was a "snob institution."

Mr. Foley: I repeat it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I would rather you did not. All who know the head master of the school, Mr. Faulkner, know that he is a man who does not support the idea of boys being snobs, but, on the contrary, has done a great deal to make them manly, truthful, and honest. If that headmaster has had a motto in his life that he has wished the boys under his tuition to observe, it has been "manliness"; and that being so, I resent the remark the hon. member has made. I suppose no boy has turned out just all that the head master wished him to be, but the education got at the school must have been of great help. I just wish to touch on one land transaction that has been given undue prominence in this State, that is in regard to the farm owned by the Minister for Works between Wickepin and Merredin. We have heard about this *ad nauseam* from members of the Liberal party; but when I was there a few months ago I was surprised that so much had been said about the place. We went there one evening and found a fine little holding and plenty of work being done. There were two men working on the farm, and we found that the owner was honestly complying with the Act with regard to the improvement conditions.

Mr. Monger: Under Section 55?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, but under Section 55 it is permissible for the Minister for Lands to grant substituted residence to any occupier; yet though the Minister for Works had the substituted residence carried on and had men living on the farm and working it, he did not ask for it, but brought the farm under Section 56.

Mr. Monger: When?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Lately. Thereby he had to do one-half as much improvements again. I say that the present Minister for Lands would have been absolutely justified in allowing the residence of the employees to count, as has been done in plenty of other cases.

Mr. Monger: Name one.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I could name many cases in the Great Southern district where the residence has never been insisted upon or the transfer effected as has been done in this case. If the same bona fide measure of improvements were being done on small areas by all our land holders, then Western Australia would be more prosperous than she is to-day. The Minister for Works deserves every credit for spending his money on that land in the way he is doing, building up a home for the future. Incidentally I may mention that he is paying the Government a very much inflated price for the land, namely, 22s. per acre, whereas three-fourths of our farmers have land just as good, and much closer to a railway, for which they have paid anything from 3s. 4d. to 10s. per acre.

Mr. George: He is not paying more than other people around him, is he?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, more than a great number of them. There is one gentleman, I think he is a friend of the hon. member's, who has about 20,000 acres of land in the locality for which he pays 10s. an acre, and some of it is better land than that for which the Minister is paying 22s.

The Minister for Mines: A few other members of the Liberal League might also be put in the same category.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I repeat that the Minister for Works deserves credit and thanks for the work he is doing

on that land. When we find the big guns of the Liberal League, such as Sir John Forrest, and the leader of the Opposition, continually harping on this little thousand-acre selection in the way they do, poisoning the minds of people, it is a proof of the poverty of material for attack on Labour Ministers. These attacks are only made on the member for Guildford because he is a Labour member; if he belonged to the other side he would have been commended, and had his photograph inserted in the *Settlers' Guide* on account of the good work he has done. We were told by the Premier with a great deal of detail the other evening about the Narrattarra estate. After some thirteen years of service in the Lands Department, I wish to say that I never before in my life heard of such transactions as were then outlined by the Premier. I have never heard of such concessions being granted in the Lands Department before to a Minister and his wife and sons. I agree with the Premier that the actions were morally wrong whatever might have been their legal aspect. To me the reading of those transactions sounded more like the plot of a comic opera than a recital of the acts of administration of a Minister entrusted by the people with the work of effecting closer settlement on a re-purchased estate. I desire to say a few words in regard to the present prosperity of the State. You will remember that when the Government came into power last year everyone remarked, "What bad luck for the Labour Government that they should strike this bad year, this partial drought." It is now that we are feeling the bad effects of that phenomenal drought, and those effects would have been very much more seriously felt if we had not been fortunate enough to have in power a Labour Administration to checkmate them.

Mr. Allen: They brought the rain.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, but they helped the people on the land to stay there until the rain came. I say that if there is a little tightening of money, and if pressure is being exerted by the banks, it is in no way because of the present Government being in power, but entirely because we had a bad season last year.

I think it is very unfair for political opponents of the Government to put on this Ministry the blame that, if attachable to anyone, is attachable only to the higher powers that refused to send the rain last year.

Mr. George: We cannot pass a vote of censure on them.

The Minister for Mines: If they belonged to the Labour party you would.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, the rains have come now, and if we get a good season we will have a chance of showing the effects of the Labour policy in the improved condition of the people. In conclusion I say, despite the misrepresentations of some sections of the Press, despite the factious opposition of disappointed Liberal office-seekers, and despite the wails of the meat ring and the shipping combine, I hope the present Government, under the leadership of the Premier, a gentleman who possesses the entire confidence of his party and of the people of the State, will continue to put the particularly humane and noble policy of the Labour party into operation, thereby fulfilling its great destiny of improving the lot and conditions of life of the people of this portion of the Commonwealth.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco): Although, judging from their remarks, His Excellency's Speech does not find satisfaction with the members of the Opposition, I am sure it gives unbounded satisfaction to those sitting on this side of the House; because they realise that it was a recapitulation of the marvellous achievements which have been performed in an incredibly short period of time by the present Government. When the Government acceded to office, owing to the very dry season which we had last year in the agricultural areas the prospects were not encouraging to the Ministry; but by one of the boldest strokes of policy which this State, or indeed any other State of Australia has ever known, they not only succeeded in retaining those settlers already upon the land, but they succeeded also in imparting such confidence to intending settlers that land selection went ahead at an even greater rate than dur-

ing previous favourable years; and by the proper administration of the land laws the State is guaranteed that those people who are now selecting land are genuine settlers, and not parasitical speculators. In connection with this matter of land settlement the action of the leader of the Opposition and of other prominent members of the Liberal party in persisting, after the sures of the Lands Department have been made public, in their absurd and erroneous statement that land settlement has ceased is greatly to be deprecated. It would have been thought that one who until quite recently held the proud position of head of the Government would have more regard for the welfare of the State than to persist in such a statement. The leader of the Opposition also complained that His Excellency's Speech was the longest he had ever heard. I think that is easily understood. I do not believe any other Government in this State have had such a record of good work to recount to the people. The leader of the Opposition, I think, will recognise that the works performed by his Government were retained in the minds of the people, much to his discomfort, without any lengthy remarks from His Excellency. The leader of the Opposition also launched the indictment against the Government that they had acted unconstitutionally; but although he delivered a very lengthy speech, of which that portion of it reported in the newspapers covered six columns of the *West Australian*, he devoted less than two inches of that space to the unconstitutional aspect which he saw fit to launch this indictment upon. And even in the few words he devoted to that subject he proved, I think, to any unbiassed mind that the Government had acted quite constitutionally; for he said the Audit Act provided that no money might be drawn from Consolidated Revenue Fund without the authority of the law or by the authority of His Excellency the Governor. If the leader of the Opposition were here I would ask him does he contend that the Government expended any money without the signature of His Excellency on the warrant for that expenditure? I think

he would admit that such a claim could not be substantiated, and therefore I hold that in the very few remarks he made on that aspect of the question he proved conclusively that the Government had acted quite within their rights. Now a great deal of stress has been laid upon the financial position. It is admitted, and the Premier and other members of the Ministry have never sought to deny, that a deficit exists to-day, but they claim that the conditions which brought about that deficiency were such that that outcome could not be avoided. The dry season has had a marked effect upon affairs in this State, and the very large increase in salaries and wages which have been granted to the civil servants have been proved over and over again to be far more than the amount of the deficit as it exists to-day. I claim that the State is not the loser, but that the deficit was put into the pockets of the people when we increased the wages and salaries of those who were undeniably underpaid prior to the advent of this Government. We remember the fact that members on this side of the House fought the election mainly upon that question. They said then that the lower paid officers in the railway service, those who were receiving as low as 7s. a day, should receive 9s. and nothing under as a living wage. One of the first acts of the Government when they acceded to power was to make 9s. the minimum rate of pay throughout the Government service. If we have a small deficit, if our ledger does not balance, does that prove that the State is suffering any hardship? I contend that when we raise the status of these workers we are doing a great benefit to the State. We are making a better circulation of money; we are allowing those workers and their wives and families to live in a greater degree of comfort than they could under the old order of things. I would like to draw attention to the references published in the newspapers at the end of May in regard to the finances in Victoria, just to convey to members some idea of what havoc a dry season can play in regard to the finances of the State. They did not experience a dry season in that State as

we did here, but there was one threatening, and to show what effect it had I will quote information that came through from Victoria—

The dry season appears to be already having some effect on the state of the revenue, there being a drop in the receipts of several departments last month. Despite the extension of traffic which has taken place in connection with opening up of new lines, the railway revenue was £44,360 below the figures for the corresponding period of 1911. There was also a fall of £50,000 in miscellaneous receipts.

That is a fall of £100,000 in a month in the finances of Victoria through a threatened dry season. The dry season did not operate there as it did here. I want to make this claim that the Premier in dealing with the financial state of affairs in Western Australia proved conclusively that his Government had developed cosmos out of the chaos left them as a legacy by their predecessors. There is one other question upon which I wish to touch, and I am very pleased that the leader of the Opposition has taken his place in the Chamber again, because this is a question which seems to be a pet hobby of his. He labours it on every conceivable occasion when the opportunity offers. The question is the Trades Hall proposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Call it tyranny.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I am dealing with the grant of money. The Premier, in speaking the other night, proved that in every State of Australia not only have the Governments made grants of money to the trades hall, but they have also granted very valuable land sites for the erection of these halls, and in this State previous Governments which by no stretch of imagination can be called Labour Governments, have made grants of money and land for the purpose of erecting trades halls. I have moved for a return of figures and those I am about to quote are from memory. The Fremantle Trades and Labour Council received the land on which the hall now stands, and £2,000 for the erection of the hall. At Kalgoorlie also, land and an amount of money were granted to assist in the erection of the

hall, but in the case of the Perth Trades Hall we find that the Trades and Labour Council were able to finance the proposition, insofar as that portion of the building already erected is concerned, on equally good terms outside as the Government have been prepared to offer. But to show that our advocacy of the leasehold system was not a mere empty platitude, we were prepared to allow the Government to take over the land for the same price which had been paid for it, and we were willing to rent it at a rental of four per cent. upon the capital value. We realised also that we were not able on favourable terms to finance the erection of the other portion of the building. We had intended to erect a hall about the size of the Queen's Hall. I think it would have been without question the most up-to-date hall in this State, because there was not only a beautiful hall the size of Queen's Hall, but a ground floor and basement in connection with it. We realised that we could not finance that portion of it, but we asked no more and the Government promised no more than an ordinary borrower could get from the Savings Bank. We were willing to take the money at five per cent., which is the rate of interest fixed by law for Savings Bank money to be lent at. The leader of the Opposition uses the puerile argument that when grants were made to other trades halls they were only industrial organisations, and not political organisations. Every trades hall that has been built in Australia and that is now in existence has been built since the days when the Labour movement adopted political action as one of their functions. I think it is within the memory of every member in this Chamber that the very people who are now condemning the Labour movement for including political action among their objectives, are the very people who were first responsible for bringing about that state of affairs. It was the large employing class who, at the close of the great maritime strike in Australia (the strike which cost so much misery and hardship to the workers) said to the workers in a satirical vein, "Why do you not return members to Parliament and have your grievances redressed in a

constitutional manner?" That advice, which was given in jest, was accepted in earnest, and from that day on I think every sensible organisation includes political action amongst its principal functions. Shortly after the close of that strike the first Labour man in Australia was returned to Parliament, and in a little over 20 years the Labour party stands in the proud position to-day of being in control in the Federal Parliament and in two State Parliaments, and of being in direct opposition with an enormous chance at any election of taking over control of affairs in the other State Parliaments in Australia. At the famous Liberal rally held the other evening at Bayswater, to which a great deal of reference has been made during the course of this debate, the leader of the Opposition spoke about tyranny.

The Premier: All that he said was not published either.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is what I am going to refer to. In his remarks I believe he committed one of the grossest acts of indiscretion—to put it mildly—that any public man could be guilty of. He pronounced upon a case which was still *sub judice*, and expressed the hope that the defendants would be found guilty and mulcted in heavy damages.

Mr. Lander: Under that iniquitous jury system of his.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I do not want to say anything more of that case.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, say something more.

The Premier: The papers were not game to publish your remarks.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why, not?

The Premier: It would have been contempt of court.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Had the newspapers published the hon. member's remarks I am sure the leader of the Opposition would have been very sorry that he ever made them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why were they not published?

Mr. Dwyer: Through fear of the consequences.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How do you know what they were?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We have it on the best authority.

The Premier: Look at the crowd you addressed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Were you one of the thirteen?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I would like to put this question to the leader of the Opposition. During his speech he had a large number of questions to ask various Ministers. I would like to ask him if he knows who financed this case for the plaintiff?

Mr. Allen: I do.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I have it on good authority that the wife of the plaintiff went to the Women's Liberal League, and demanded that the Liberal League should finance this prosecution because her husband was fighting a tyrannous union.

Mr. Allen: That is absolutely false.

The Premier: You are not the president of the Liberal Union.

Mr. Allen: But I know something about it. I know where she got the money.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I have it on good authority that the wife of the plaintiff demanded that her husband should be financed by the Liberal League.

Mr. Allen: I know she pledged everything she had, even to her household furniture.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I am not in the position to say whether the man was financed or not by the Liberal League. There was another case of tyranny referred to by the leader of the Opposition, and that was in regard to a man working in the Stores Department. The leader of the Opposition said it was a fact that a man, whose name was Stott, was working at the Government Stores Department on a job, which the secretary of the union thought should belong to a member of the carpenters' society. The hon. member said that in his speech in the House, and it was a different statement from that which he made at Bayswater. Out there the hon. member made no mention whatever about the secretary thinking that the work ought to belong to a member of the union. What the hon. member said was that the man was engaged in pulling

down shelves at 9s. a day, and the secretary of the Carpenters' Union came along and demanded that the man should join the union. The man refused, saying that he was quite contented with his position, and a few days later he was discharged. I do not know where the hon. gentleman got his information, but I know this, he did not get it from the man in question, who did not supply it to the leader of the Opposition or to anyone else.

Mr. George: Was he sacked, and what for?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I will give the hon. member the true position of affairs. The man was engaged through the Labour Bureau at 9s. a day, and he was doing carpenter's work. He was not pulling down shelves as the hon. member stated, but he was erecting an office inside the department, purely carpenter's work. The secretary of the Building Trades Vigilance Committee came along and saw the work, and informed Mr. Simpson that he was liable to prosecution for a breach of the carpenters' award for employing this man on carpenters' work at less than the arbitration award rates. I want to ask the leader of the Opposition whether he upholds an award of the court being broken. Does he think that an award of the Court should be broken as individuals please?

Mr. George: Certainly not.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: This man was doing carpenters' work for less than the award rates, when the secretary of the vigilance committee told the stores manager he would have to pay the man the award rates. There was no mention whatever made of the man having to be put off the work. If Mr. Simpson desired to retain him, all he had to do was to pay him the award rates. But Mr. Simpson knew that the man was not a carpenter and was not proficient at the trade to receive the wages prescribed by the court, and he paid the man off and got a carpenter in his place.

Mr. George: What did the poor devil do for a living after he got the sack?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We cannot help that. What did you do when you were

put out of the railways? That however is beside the question. The suggestion of the hon. member means that any employer can engage anyone at a lesser rate than the arbitration award specifies. All that was done in this case was, as I have related it, and still the leader of the Opposition is crying out from the house-tops that there was tyranny practised, when he knew in his heart that nothing of the kind had ever taken place.

Mr. George: They ought to have found the man another job.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It was not their place to do that. They have sufficient to do with policing the Arbitration awards and seeing that their own members get what they are entitled to. I want to deal briefly with the Arbitration Act. This is a measure in regard to which a great bogey is spread about by opponents of the Labour party. We have heard from our opponents, year in and year out, and ever since this Act has been placed upon the statute-book, that the labour organisations will not obey the awards of the court if those awards are not just what they desire. The statement was made only a little while ago by some of the leading members of the liberal organisations in Victoria.

Mr. George: Do they obey the award?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Undoubtedly. The labour organisations or the workers have no way of breaking the award except by leaving their work, and then the whole world knows it. How many cases are there where men have left their work after an award has been given by the court? For every one case that the hon. member can bring to light I will guarantee to bring thousands where the employers have broken the award and broken it consistently. Everything is in the favour of the employer breaking the award. He can inflict all kinds of pin-pricks upon those working for him, and the employee cannot break the award unless he openly defies the award and leaves his work, when all the world knows about it. The people never get to know the cases where the employers break the award. Just such is the one I have referred to. Had it not been that, by chance,

the secretary of the vigilance committee happened along and found this man at his work, and also that the wages he was getting were below those of the award, no one would have known anything about it, and there are thousands of cases occurring every day where workers are paid less than the Arbitration Court award, and in a number of cases I believe that workers are acting in collusion with the employers in breaking the awards of the Court.

Mr. George: Why do you not prosecute the men for breaking the awards?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We would prosecute not only the employer but the employee as well if we could get the evidence.

Mr. George: Is it not a fact that employers have been brought before the court for not obeying the award?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Undoubtedly, in a number of cases, but on account of the policing of the awards being placed upon the shoulders of the union they find it very difficult indeed, but I think the time has arrived when we should realise that this Act, which plays such an important part in the lives of the great majority of the community, should be enforced the same as any other. We should have a special department to see that the awards of the court are obeyed in their entirety both by the employer and the employee. I believe this Act is of such great importance to the welfare of the community that that aspect of it should be taken in hand during the present session. I want to say also that every labour society throughout Australia is pledged to arbitration as a means of settling industrial disputes. The Labour parties are pledged to that, but I never heard of a member of the Liberal organisations saying that he was willing to give the workers an arbitration court which was untrammelled by legal technicalities, and I am satisfied of this, that, if the workers were given a court to which they could get without all this circumlocution and red tape, and a court which had the power to arbitrate properly upon disputes that came before it, the workers would not only avail themselves of that court, but they would also obey every decision given by it.

The organisations of the Labour party, and the Parliamentary Labour party, and the members of the Trades and Labour Council in every State are pledged to that principle, and they are pledged to see that the awards of the court are obeyed if they get a court in which they can place confidence. I am going to appeal to hon. members opposite, when this Arbitration Bill comes before them, to assist in creating a measure in which the workers will have every confidence. Only the other day one of the employers' representatives on the Arbitration Court, in giving a decision in the plumbers' case, made, to my mind, some very pertinent remarks. He said—

The union called a strike, and had called out from their employment men who were employed by the Government, that is to say by the public as well as by private employers whether these men were receiving the full wage demanded by the union or not. The men had by this unlawful method succeeded in getting certain advantages and had come to the court and invoked the aid of the law in order that the law might enable them to obtain those unlawfully won advantages.

They were hard remarks to make, and they might have been justified, but immediately after we find in the shop assistants' case—a case which had been for four days before the court, and during the four days nothing was done except to argue on technicalities—that on the fourth day the case was thrown out of the court on a technical objection which had never before been taken in the court, although the Act has been in existence for ten years. So hon. members will see that while these remarks may have some force when the workers have an opportunity to go to the court, they lose all their force and significance when we remember that the unions cannot get to the court without an enormous amount of trouble, and that when they do get there they have no guarantee that the case is not going to be thrown out on a technical objection. I want to point out another aspect, and it is that the employers never raise these technical objections against a

union that is well organised, and which is composed entirely of male workers, because they realise that where there are only male workers, the possibility exists that the organisation is so perfect that the workers will resent these technical objections being taken before the court. But on every conceivable occasion when an organisation comes before the court which consists of male and female members, these technicalities are brought to light. The tailors and tailoresses in this city—and they represent the industry in which the greatest amount of sweating takes place—have had two awards from the Arbitration Court and both of them have been defeated by the Full Court upon technical objections. Now, in the case of the shop assistants which I have just quoted, after fighting for four days against all the technical objections which the legal mind could invent, they finally succumbed to one which, if the position was not so serious, would be almost ludicrous. The judge held that because the circular calling the meeting of the union did not contain every item of the dispute upon it, the members of the union could not be expected to know what they were voting upon. Did any sensible being ever hear of such an objection being upheld by a court of law? Four hundred members of the union attended that special meeting, an enormous meeting as everyone will agree, and it is held that these 400 people would come together to discuss a proposition and what they were going to do in connection with getting their case before the court, carry the necessary motion required by law, but because every item of the dispute was not upon the notice calling the meeting, they are supposed not to know what they voted upon. Now, I say that if the members on the opposite side of the House are desirous of having industrial peace in this State, or if they are desirous of retaining that amount of social legislation which we have at the present time, they will agree when this measure comes forward to make a good, workable, sensible Act of it; because I can promise them that if they go on persisting in refusing to the workers the redress which they

seek through this measure, they are only hastening the day when the workers will transfer their affections to a higher sphere and place their confidence in the Federal Parliament and the Federal Arbitration Court.

Mr. George : Bring in a measure fair all round and you will get our support: you know that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : The position is that this measure, which was brought into existence to prevent strikes, has been brought to such a pass that it is almost impossible to prove the existence of a dispute before that court unless the workers in the first instance resort to a strike. They are compelled to go out on strike to prove that they have a dispute before the court will agree to deal with the case. Anybody who has the welfare of the community at heart will realise the necessity of placing upon the statute book an Arbitration Act in which the workers of the State will have confidence. I am quite certain that the Act which the Government will bring down will not only give that consideration to the worker, but that it will give ample opportunity also to the employer, because we ask for nothing more than that we shall be able to approach the court without any necessary red tape: that Parliament shall remove all the technicalities when we get to the court and let us put our case squarely and fairly before that tribunal which, as hon. members know, is composed of a representative of either side and presided over by a judge of the Supreme Court. Surely employers must have sufficient confidence in a judge of the Supreme Court.

Hon. Frank Wilson : That is not the reason your measure was thrown out last year.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : When hon. members know that we have a judge of the Supreme Court, who is not likely to be biased in favour of the workers, why not give us an Act that will enable both sides to go before the court?

Hon. Frank Wilson : We gave you that last year and you would not take it.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : That is absolutely incorrect. The Government passed that

measure in spite of the antagonism of the members of the Opposition, but the members of their party in another place insisted that the workers should not get justice in that Bill.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You wanted to put the judge off the court.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : No. When the Bill came back from another place, we immediately agreed to waive that point. The two points on which the Bill was wrecked were the right to include rural workers and the power of the court to grade workers. We on this side said that we could not possibly agree that the rural workers, who constitute such a large and deserving section of the community, should be left outside the scope of the Act. We also had in view the experience in connection with the tramways case, when Mr. Justice Burnside, the then President, said he realised that in that industry it was necessary to grade the workers, but as he had no power to do that under the Act, he appealed to the managers of the Tramway Company to comply with his wish, in order to make the award a workable one. Of course they refused to do that; hence that trouble. All we sought under the Amending Bill was that where the court thought it necessary for the peace and good government of an industry to grade workers, it should have power to do so. We also asked for preference to unionists, not that it should be compulsory, but that if we should be able to prove to the satisfaction of the judge that, in the interests of the community, and for the sake of the peaceful working and carrying on of an industry, it was necessary to grant preference, the court should have the power in these circumstances to grant it.

Mr. George : Are you not doing away with the liberty of the subject?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : No. It has existed in New Zealand ever since the Arbitration Act has been in force, and there has been no liberty taken away from the subject there. In many cases for the peaceful carrying on of an industry, the Arbitration Court has given preference to unionists. The same is the case in New South Wales, and I do not think that the

subjects there have forfeited any of their liberty. Bless my soul ! the hon. member's own Federal organisation, in the great platform they drew up the other day, said that they had no objection to preference to unionists so long as it was granted by the court, and so long as it was proved to the court that it was justified in the interests of the community. Of course when revised by the Parliamentary party, they quickly struck it out, but those who drew up the platform placed that principle there and gave it forth that they had no objection to preference to unionists. All the workers require is that they shall be able to place their case honestly before the Arbitration Court, but we want the court to have full power to deal with the case in any way it thinks necessary. Now I want to deal briefly with a couple of other measures likely to come before the Chamber during the present session. The first one is the early closing measure, which I think should have been amended a very long time ago. To-day we find young girls working in tearooms and restaurants up till 11.30 at night, and then having to go to their homes out in the suburbs, some of which are a long distance from the city. These young girls are kept there at work simply to gratify the pleasure of other portions of the community who have plenty of leisure to go to theatres and picture shows in the evening, and after enjoying themselves thoroughly feel that they want a little to eat and drink on their way home. Consequently these young girls are kept there working until late into the night.

Mr. George : It is the same with the hotels, is it not ?

Mr. B. J. STURBS : Yes, but I am not dealing with the hotels at the present because I shall have an opportunity of doing that when the Licensing Bill comes forward. I am sure that the opening hour for hotels is far too late, too, but there are not the young girls employed in the hotels who are employed in tearooms and restaurants. We found the licensed victuallers a little while ago, when the barmaids and barmen had obtained an award providing that they

should live off the premises to prevent the employers taking a greater proportion of their wages than they had a right to for board and lodging, complaining that they could not expect women employed in bars to go to their homes at such a late hour of the night. Now, if barmaids cannot go to their homes late at night because it is not proper for them to be out in the streets so late, what is to be said of the young girls employed in the tearooms ? I say that the majority of women employed in the bars know enough of the world—and I do not say it in any way disrespectfully—to take care of themselves, but the majority of those who are employed in tearooms and restaurants are girls only in their teens, and it is not right that these people should have the privilege of keeping their places of business open to such a late hour at night and keeping these young girls working, simply to fill the employer's coffers.

The Premier : Remember a good many are engaged just as long hours in homes.

Mr. B. J. STURBS : Yes, but that only proves the necessity for some organisation among those engaged as domestics for the purpose of improving their working conditions. I am satisfied there is no more selfish class in the world than those who are in a position to go out and enjoy themselves at night at all classes of amusement and yet expect those at home to remain up and have all the comforts ready for them when they return. They must have their supper when they go home after thoroughly enjoying themselves at amusements. It only proves the necessity for bringing about an organisation that will get better conditions for those women-folk who are engaged in domestic duties. It is also necessary that some better system of keeping the records provided for by this Act should be brought about. Only the other day a case was before the police court in which the employer was summoned for not entering up a proper record, and Mr. Roe, the police magistrate, said he had come to the conclusion that in many cases the records were entered up automatically and compiled week after week without

any regard for the actual hours worked by the employees. That is undoubtedly a fact. Anyone who has had the experience in these matters knows full well that these records are entered up at different periods whenever the employer or the person charged with the responsibility feels inclined to do it. We should bring about a system that would compel the employers to enter up these records every morning, showing the hours each person has to do work. Then when the inspector came along, if he found any person was working outside the hours entered up for him to work, it would be a breach of the Act for which the employer would be liable to punishment. Under the present state of affairs, if an inspector comes along the record is entered up after, and it is hard indeed to get a conviction against a number of these employers. The Factories Act also deals principally with a number of our women-kind. The leader of the Opposition seemed to take the same standing with respect to this Act as he took with regard to the freezing works at Wyndham. He said, in reply to an interjection the other night, that the erection of freezing works at Wyndham had been his policy for many years; and I believe that, had he remained on the Treasury bench, it would have been his policy for many years to come; I do not think anything would have eventuated. I think if we were able to induce members opposite to give up the name of Liberals they have adopted for their party, and if we got them to adopt the name of The Great Procrastinators, it would be more befitting their actions. In 1906 a Select Committee was appointed to enquire into the allegations of sweating which had been made. The report of that committee was a very far-reaching one. They brought in some very drastic recommendations, which were fully justified by the evidence put before them during the inquiry. They found that a great deal of sweating existed, yet the late Government took no action. Their report read:—

It was found on examination of the wages sheets in the clothing in-

dustry, that, exclusive of the salaries paid to a few leading hands, in charge of the work rooms, the average wage paid to employees is indefensibly small, being little more than 10s. a week. A comparison of the wages sheet of a lengthened period pointed to the conclusion that either the services of a worker, after reaching a certain standard of proficiency, are dispensed with, or that increases are only granted in small sums and at very irregular intervals. From this your committee are convinced that the employment of what are termed beginners is out of proportion to the number of proficient workers.

And so on, the report goes, right throughout. It deals with all the conditions that exist in connection with the factory work. It deals with what are known as outworkers, people who take work out, not to earn a livelihood, but, as the report says, simply as a pastime, or to get "pin" money, and who take it at a wage which brings them into unfair competition with other workers who are compelled to work for a livelihood. It proves that some action should have been taken, many years ago, to remedy this state of affairs. We also have them dealing with the Asiatic question in connection with our factories. They recommend, after full inquiry, that all furniture manufactured in the State, whether by European or Asiatic labour, should be so stamped immediately on its completion and before leaving the portion of the premises in which it is manufactured. They also recommend that all furniture imported into the State should be stamped whether it be manufactured by Asiatic labour or by European labour. They also deal with the apprentice question, and point out the great necessity for bringing about a system of indenturing apprentices, or some other means that would ensure our rising generation, in whatever trade they desire to learn, that they may be taught the trade properly and not a small portion of it only. I think the part of the proposal of the committee to which most stress should be given is their recommendation that the admin-

istration of the Factories and Health Acts should be separated. When the report was made the departments were not combined, but a proposition was afoot that they should be combined, and the committee foresaw the great trouble and, if I may say so, the great neglect that would be brought about in the inspectorial branches of these Acts by having the two departments combined. Now we find that in the last Public Service Commissioner's recommendations any inspector under this Act who does not possess a Royal Sanitary Institute certificate cannot rise above the minimum; but I claim that some of our factory inspectors should undoubtedly rise to the maximum allowed for this class of work. It is almost impossible for an inspector to be an industrial inspector as well as a health inspector; there is far too much to learn. A man to be a health inspector has far too much technical knowledge to acquire to enable him to become thoroughly acquainted with his work and master it and at the same time make himself conversant with all our industrial laws.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is necessary for an industrial inspector under the Factories Act to have a thorough knowledge of our industrial laws in order to carry out his work in a satisfactory manner. I think the inspectors to carry out arbitration awards should also be inspectors under our Factories Act, because it is exactly the same class of work. There would be nothing difficult in a factory inspector becoming conversant also with an arbitration award. The work is of the same nature, and I am sure we would get far greater satisfaction than we have had up to the present from our factory legislation, if we could have the inspectors confined to that work alone and not doing health work also.

Mr. Lander: What about the lady inspector washing bottles in the Health Office?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There was a recommendation in the report of the select committee that a lady inspector

should be appointed. I am convinced one lady inspector is not sufficient. We have such a large number of women and young girls working in our factories, and none but lady inspectors can see that the conditions of the Act are carried out in these factories. We could not put on a male inspector to see that the conditions with regard to women are carried out in their entirety. I understand it is the intention of the Government to appoint another lady inspector, and that applications are now being called, but I would point out that an anomaly has arisen, or has been created by the Public Service Commissioner, the same as existed in regard to the factory inspectors being made health inspectors—it has been made necessary for the lady inspector to possess the qualifications of a nurse. Why the Public Service Commissioner saw fit to compel a lady factory inspector to possess the qualifications of a nurse passes my understanding. I contend that there is no necessity for a lady inspector of factories to possess any such qualifications. On the other hand, I claim that we could get women in the community with no knowledge whatever of nursing but with an excellent idea and knowledge of what is required in a factory, and an excellent knowledge of the Acts as they exist at the present moment, and as to what should exist in connection with factory work to make the conveniences suitable for women working in those places. Now I wish merely to express my great pleasure that the Government are going to deal with the Licensing Act this session. They are going to wipe out of existence that Act passed by their predecessors, an Act which gave satisfaction to nobody in the State, not to the licensed victuallers, the temperance people, nor to the general public. But I am convinced that the Act which the present Government intend to bring forward, when placed on the statute book and given an opportunity of proving its efficiency, will prove to be agreeable to the great majority of the people of the State. I had intended to touch briefly on a couple of other measures which it is proposed to bring forward.

this session, but the hour is getting late, and my remarks will keep until those measures are brought down. I only want to say in conclusion that in my opinion the actions of the present Government have given unbounded satisfaction to the people of the State. I believe that every administrative Act of the Government has been performed in the interests of the whole of the people. I believe the people of the State will endorse each and every one of them as readily as the people of the metropolitan area endorsed the purchase of the steamers at that magnificent public meeting which was held recently. Our opponents tried to belittle that meeting, but when we realise that there were present at that meeting to endorse the action of the Government a greater number of people than all the votes secured by the successful Liberal candidates at the last Legislative Council elections, we can readily believe that that action of the Government has met with the approbation of the people of the State.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. DOOLEY (Geraldton): I rise, not altogether to join in the chorus of compliments showered on the Administration, and not merely for the sake of expressing anything at all by way of compliment. Still, I think I would be lacking in a sense of appreciation if I did not, in passing, offer my congratulations to the Administration on their splendid achievements since attaining office. I must confess that when on their appointment I recalled that those gentlemen, or the majority of them, had never before had any experience of administrative work, I viewed the situation with a reasonable amount of apprehension; because I recognised that the country was fairly tired of the mal-administration of the previous Government, and I felt that in my position as a member of Parliament, I was, to an extent, involved in any administrative acts of the Government. I also recognised that circumstances were against the Government at the outset. For something like twenty years we had

never experienced so bad a season, and the Administration had to face the country and their position with a knowledge that a great deal of settlement had taken place owing to the fact that the dry areas had been over-boomed, and people had rushed on to those areas without being properly safeguarded. That would have been bad enough under normal conditions, but the drought which came along and threatened such disaster could only be dealt with by men of resource and initiative. So, viewing that position, I could quite understand the anxiety of an ordinary citizen who wished to see the best results from the efforts of the new Administration. The results have shown that Ministers met the position with a great deal of ability and capacity. With regard to the Address-in-reply, and the criticisms that have been put forward against the Administration, I can only say that in the history of politics, so far as it comes within my ken, I have never known a Government who have had to contend with such feeble criticism from their opponents. When we come to consider that only two Ministers of the Crown were subject to any criticism at all, namely, the Premier with regard to finance, and the Minister for Lands, it is seen how slight was the attack. In his reply to the leader of the Opposition the Premier showed conclusively that he was a thorough master of his office, and also a capable administrator. A point was endeavoured to be made of the fact that the Premier was inexperienced in finance, and was not carrying out his financial responsibilities in the manner he should have done. But when we traverse his speech and see the splendid and determined efforts he made to straighten the financial part of his office, we can readily believe that with a Premier who will take the stand he has done in that connection we have nothing to fear in regard to the future in the financial administration of the country generally. It was amusing to note the tactics of the leader of the Opposition, and pleasing to see the determined and well directed cudgelling he received from the Premier. A great

deal has been said with regard to the unconstitutional action of the Government in providing transport facilities for the people of the North-West. I naturally expected that when this aspect of the case was put forward something like facts would have been adduced to prove the charge. I expected that sections of the Constitution Act would have been quoted to demonstrate to us in what manner they had been fractured. But I am still awaiting that evidence. With regard to the regulations made by the Minister for Lands, I have had a little experience of political economists, and have heard political economy expounded on many occasions, particularly in regard to the land. But I had to come to this Chamber and listen to the member for Northam to learn that the value of land could not be ascertained unless we submitted it to auction. The member for Northam said we could not determine the value of land unless we dealt in buying and selling. I was always under the impression that the value of land was arrived at by its productive capacity, or, in the case of other than agricultural land, by its utility for the purposes of the community. But the member for Northam gave us to understand that we cannot arrive at the true value of land without putting it into the market. With regard to the alleged traffic in land which is supposed to have been taking place between the Minister for Works and the Premier, it has been clearly demonstrated that nothing of the kind has occurred. But assuming that it had taken place, it must be remembered that it took place under the Administration of the late Minister for Lands. If it had really occurred, in my opinion, it would have been sufficient to determine that the time had arrived for displacing the late Minister for Lands from office. Moreover it did not affect in any way the principles involved in the regulations issued by the present Minister for Lands. If regulations are issued which are claimed to be in the interests of the public good, or in the interests of a proper policy of land settlement, it does not follow that if members of a party do

not properly observe those regulations, that the regulations are unsound. I think the Opposition would have been better employed in attacking the regulations from that point of view than in declaring that the regulations had been the means of causing the banks to close down on the farmers. I say this was not so, certainly not according to my experience during the last six months. A good deal has been said during the course of this debate regarding the tyranny of unions, and I would like to say, as far as my observations have guided me, that this is another bogey, trotted out for electioneering purposes. The Federal elections are beginning to loom up, and, as is the custom, the opposite party are not able to attack successfully our principles. They are not able successfully to demonstrate any maladministration on the part of either the State or the Federal Labour party, so the usual tactics must be adopted, they must raise one more bogey. They seem to be fairly prolific in that particular industry, but the only thing about it is that they are very bad tradesmen. The bogeys they manufacture and the spirits they invoke seem to renege at the most critical moment, and this is another case in point. The bogey has been fairly well exploded during the course of this debate. So far as trades unions are concerned, we are told every time we ask our opponents to come face to face with us on this question—"we believe in unions, they are a good thing, we know they are doing good." We feel very thankful to them for telling us something we know all about, and which the public generally, if they think for a moment, must realise. Twenty years ago unionism was at a very low ebb; that was the most stagnant time in the history of unionism. It was the time of the big maritime strike, and stagnation in business and industry was never so pronounced either before or since. It was then that the industrial workers, finding that they were being neglected, ignored, passed aside and turned down on every possible occasion, started to look for a remedy. It has been said that nations move on their stomachs; the same thing

can be applied to all-reform. The trades union movement has been the commencement of reforms which are now being put into practical use. We know very well that the conditions of the worker never could have been improved or the improvement maintained had it not been for the unions. They have endeavoured on all occasions to work on sound and just lines. Ever since the advent of the industrial system or the capitalistic system, the moment an attempt was made by the wage-earner to better his conditions or protest against his conditions getting worse, he was met with the greatest opposition and the severest tyranny from the employing class. Throughout history and to the early part of last century we find that the workers were continually being tyrannised. The whole history of the labour movement proves conclusively that the workers have always had to suffer and that the leaders of unions have had to contend against tyranny, and it ill becomes these people to-day to raise this question whenever they desire to use it for political purposes. I come nearer home and would like to mention one or two instances in connection with the tyranny of employers. I shall refer to the member for Murray-Wellington and the time he was Commissioner of Railways. That gentleman, when Commissioner, started off with a great flourish of trumpets as to what he would do for the workers. He anticipated the union on that occasion in their desire for an appeal board. He constituted himself an appeal board, because, as usual, he could not trust anybody else but himself to do justice when the occasion demanded.

Mr. George: You are quite sure I fixed that, are you?

Mr. DOOLEY: So you tell us, and I am only taking your word. The appeal board was established and before it had been working twelve months a glaring case of injustice was brought to light in connection with one of the staff. The man had been peremptorily dismissed for an error which he had nothing to do with, but a scapegoat had to be found, and that man thought he had sufficient

grounds for an appeal. He only wanted to put his case before the appeal board and when the case was examined presumably it was a bit too strong even for the hon. member and he said he would not hear it. The case was not heard; consequently the appeal board became a dead letter, and immediately the union decided that their great hope for justice in the Commissioner had vanished. If they wanted assistance or an appeal board they realised it must be established under statute, and consequently, by a great deal of hard work and battling, and in the teeth of the opposition of the then Commissioner, a statutory appeal board was established. Then again we found that matters were not satisfactory, and we asked for better conditions in the usual way and again we were thwarted. Finally we were driven to the Arbitration Court. We went there and the then Commissioner took an action which was practically on all fours with the action of the leader of the Opposition at Bayswater. The case was being dealt with, we had had some difficulty in getting to the Court, but eventually had got there, and, while the matter was *sub judice* the then Commissioner endeavoured to intimidate and prevent justice from being done in that court by circularising the staff with the object and purpose of delaying proceedings or preventing the proceedings from going to that court.

Mr. George: Oh, that is your distorted imagination.

Mr. DOOLEY: I might tell the hon. member that had legal advice been followed on that occasion, it would have been a matter of hard fact which he would not have relished; but recognising the difficulties and complications with which the present Act is surrounded, we thought we could rely on the justice of our case and not bother to take action against the Commissioner or prevent the case from going before the Court in the way I have indicated. We know that to be a fact. I want to mention these things; I do not contend personally that there is any necessity to mention them to the observant person, but when this cry of tyranny is being made, it is just as well to mention some of the

tyrannical practices given effect to by some of the members who are now the first to cry out.

Mr. George: You know perfectly well it is not true.

Mr. DOOLEY: I challenge the hon. member to successfully contradict me.

Mr. George: It is true about the circular, but not the way you put it. Your union attempted to deal with the tradesmen; I wanted to see if the tradesmen wanted you and they did not.

Mr. DOOLEY: They were members of our union, and were justified in taking their case under the Arbitration Act and proceeding in the proper and constitutional way. While the case was being dealt with at the court, the hon. member sought to undermine it by circularising our men who had voted that they were willing the case should go to the court. The men were asked to say that they were not willing to go to the court, and would prefer that the Commissioner dealt with them. I am proud to say that although the attempt was made it was an absolute failure, but the point is that the then Commissioner of Railways was attempting to intimidate a large body of men by illegal methods.

Mr. George: Nonsense.

Mr. DOOLEY: That cannot be denied.

Mr. Heitmann: He must be a bad man.

Mr. Underwood: Is that the time they called him the "rajah"?

Mr. DOOLEY: So far as tyranny is concerned, I have never met a greater tyrant or despot than the hon. member was when he was in the position of Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. George: That is the greatest compliment I have ever had paid me.

Mr. DOOLEY: There is only one redeeming feature about the despot or tyrant and that is for him to have the courage of his tyranny or despotism. I know very well and I can show that that is just the virtue of a tyrant that the hon. member lacked on the occasion of which I am speaking.

Mr. George: That is very good; I wonder where you got it from.

Mr. DOOLEY: There was a member of that organisation who had been

working a good deal in connection with union matters and the departments suddenly discovered that he should be transferred to another branch of the railway service. A little celebration was given to the man on the occasion of his leaving, and there was a gentleman at that function who made certain statements that this man was being sent away on account of his activity in union matters. Then the Commissioner of Railways rang up the Press and said that this was nothing of the kind, that they were sending him away because he was a man who had a particular ability which could be better adapted at the place to which he was being sent.

Mr. George: Was not that man being paid less than tradesman's wages, and did I not give him more when he was sent away?

Mr. DOOLEY: That is absolutely wrong. The point I want to make is that when the man was sent away the Commissioner took the trouble to communicate with the Press and say that he was not being transferred for the reason given at the function. That man went away and came back and he had occasion to approach the appeal board, and when reasons were given why he should not get the improved position that he was asking for, he was told that he had been transferred to Geraldton simply to remove his bad influence from the men at Fremantle.

Mr. George: Did I say that?

Mr. DOOLEY: The hon. member did not say that, but he was present when it was said.

Mr. George: Nothing of the sort. The man claimed to be a tradesman and was not getting tradesman's wages, and he was sent where he could get them, and you were the man.

Mr. DOOLEY: As a matter of fact I was getting a trifle more than the minimum for that class of work.

Mr. George: You wanted a bit more, and I gave it to you.

Mr. DOOLEY: The question of wages did not crop up on that occasion.

Mr. George: It did.

Mr. DOOLEY: Another matter I would like to refer to is with regard to

the statement made here the other night by the same member with reference to station-masters and the salaried staff. He got up in virtuous indignation and spoke against the bad treatment and the generally awful state the salaried staff of the railways were in at the present time. The hon. member said that the wages of the wages men had been increased and why were not the conditions of the poor salaried men increased also. Their position to-day is not what it should be. When we come to compare the men in the railway service high up in the ranks, getting £500 or £600 a year, and when we compare the qualifications of the two classes of people, it will be found that the salaried staff are suffering an injustice. When these men appealed to the late Commissioner of Railways they were in a far worse condition than they are in to-day, but he flouted them and would not consider their requests.

Mr. George: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. DOOLEY: He even denied them official recognition. First of all when certain unions of the railway service appealed to the Commissioner on behalf of these men, the Commissioner said, "No, I deny their right to represent this class of man." We have heard a lot of talk about unions dictating what the men shall do of the work they shall perform, but here is a gentleman who is dictating and he and others now talk about tyranny. His is an example of tyranny and despotism, and taking away from the men their absolute civil rights and freedom, and saying "You shall not belong to that union; I will not recognise it." Those men were on the books of the union, yet he wanted to dictate to them as to which union they should belong. They said, "Very well, we will go to the Civil Service Association," and the Commissioner replied that he would not have that either.

Mr. George: They were in the Civil Service Association before I became Commissioner.

Mr. DOOLEY: That has nothing to do with what I am saying. It is a fact that the hon. member denied those men official recognition.

Mr. George: I got them to form an association of their own, and helped them and raised their minimum.

Mr. DOOLEY: How did the hon. member help them when they went to him for assistance?

Mr. Heitmann: Anyhow he is not Commissioner now.

Mr. DOOLEY: And a good thing for those men. They were working twelve hours a day, and there are very few who are working twelve hour shifts at the present time. A large number of them have been put on to eight hours since the hon. member left the railways, and their salaries have been increased something like fifteen per cent. Can we accept any statement from the member for Murray-Wellington with regard to his sincerity when he makes a great theatrical display of his sympathy towards railway officers at the present time? Actions speak louder than words. He had the opportunity of improving the positions of these men and he twitted every effort they made to improve their positions. These are cold-blooded facts and they cannot be successfully contradicted. With regard to the question of the meat trust, I think little more need be said. The member for Bunbury settled it yesterday when he quoted some of the evidence and the decision of the Royal Commission which dealt with the matter three or four years ago.

Mr. George: He dealt with ancient history, not present-day facts.

Mr. DOOLEY: The present Government have been collecting data which shows that the position has lately become accentuated, and acting in accordance with their pledges they have said "No more Royal Commissions or beating about the bush; the people want some relief and we are now going to see whether we can give it to them." There are two things which have been successfully shown here. One is that there is a meat trust, and that it operates by monopolising the trade and preventing any but those who are under its control from obtaining transport facilities, and assistance to market their stock, and then it has been proved conclusively that when

they get to the market the means of distribution are controlled and handled entirely by the combine. The onus lies on the Opposition to refute what has been said here. With regard to what has been said by the member for Beverley, I think his remarks for being illogical take the cake. He first of all starts off by eulogising the present Administration for the assistance they have given to the farmers, then he goes on to say that the farmer is the backbone of the country. In the next breath he states that the farmers desire to be protected from the Rural Workers' Union because they are too poor to pay the wages which are demanded. The hon. member admits that the farmer has the advantage of water supply, fertiliser supplies, seed wheat, increased financial assistance from the Agricultural Bank, deferred rents, and reduced freights, and with all those advantages and facilities he wants to deny the common right to the workers, without whose assistance the farmers could not send away a bushel of wheat to the market, to form an association. What for? Simply to put their claims for improved conditions legally before the court. The hon. member wants to deny the workers the right to form an organisation so that they may protect their interests, and then we hear all this talk about the tyranny of unions. Let me inform the hon. member that rural workers' unions existed in Great Britain so far back as 60 years ago.

Mr. George: Not 60 years ago, about 45 years ago.

Mr. DOOLEY: Well, it is a considerable time ago. However, I will bow, as I shall do on all occasions, to the almighty and expanding knowledge the hon. member possesses. There was a rural workers' union in existence forty-five years ago, pretty well before any of the present Administration were born.

The Minister for Lands: You might go back to a time six centuries ago.

Mr. DOOLEY: Precisely. The point is that when we hear so much about the tyranny of unions it is just as well to let the people know of the tyranny of employers. The people on the other

side proclaim loudly their sympathy with the employer in times of industrial unrest, and their approval of his tactics, but the same people complain bitterly when the same treatment is meted out by another section of the community. The troubles of the present Administration will not lie in their capacity to put into effect the policy of the party they represent, but in my opinion they will lie chiefly in the administration of their officers. The question they will have to deal with is one of very serious importance. They have already had a taste of the difficulties with regard to the equitable administration of the different staffs in the public service. Under our policy that service is not going to diminish; rather it is going to expand, and consequently the work of Ministers will increase. The matter they will have to keep well in view is that of seeing that justice is done to every individual in the service. They will have to ignore past customs, to put aside past traditions of public administration; they will have to go boldly, and remember that the battle is half won if they give justice and fair dealings to every individual member of the public service.

The Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin): And to those outside the service also.

Mr. DOOLEY: Yes, but justice does not admit of any qualification. I am speaking of justice in the broadest possible sense, of equality to all. I know that in the past that has not obtained in the public service, and I know that if in the future this principle is not kept well in view the difficulties of the Administration will be accentuated. They must see to this, and if they do they will have a staff of which no one member will be able to rise and say that he is not getting a fair deal. Then the extra work that will continue to come upon them as long as our policy is being pursued will be considerably lessened by observing a strict spirit of justice in the administration of the various offices.

On motion by Mr. Turvey debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.