

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 27th July, 1905.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3-30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: Report and Returns under Sections 54 and 83 of the Government Railways Act, 1904.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: 1. By-laws under the Goldfields Water Supply Act, 1902. 2. By-laws under the Roads Act, 1902, passed by the Road Boards of Minilya, Greenough, Kojonup, Serpentine, Peak Hill, North-East Coolgardie, Katanning, Upper Blackwood, Perth, and Canning. 3. Exemptions from rating under the Roads Act, 1902—List of approvals.

By HON. W. C. ANGWIN: 1. Reports of Examinations of Accounts of the Department of Agriculture. 2. Audit of Accounts of Refrigerating Works. 3. Report on Accounts, Katanning Lands Office. 4. Report on System of Accounting in the Lands Department.

QUESTION—MINING EXEMPTION,
WEST BOULDER.

MR. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1. Has the Warden at Kalgoorlie recommended the Minister to refuse the application for farther exemption by the West Boulder Gold Mining Company? 2. Has the Minister carried out the warden's recommendation? 3. If not, for what reasons?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1. Yes. 2. No. 3. A shaft had been sunk to a depth of over 500ft. and a considerable amount of driving and

diamond drilling had been done without success, and a large amount of money spent. The company have permission from the Great Boulder Company to put a diamond drill from the Hamilton shaft when it reaches a depth of 1,400ft., and have arranged to do the work. I considered that the proposed boring from the Hamilton shaft would prove the existence or otherwise of lodes in the property better and more economically than work carried out from the company's existing workings, and therefore granted six months' farther exemption, on the distinct understanding that work must in any case be resumed at the end of the term.

QUESTION (IRREGULAR) — CON-
FERENCE DETAILS, GOVERNMENT AND
OPPOSITION.

SPEAKER'S RULING.

MR. THOMAS had given notice that he would ask the Premier, and failing a satisfactory reply from the Premier that he would ask certain other members, the following question: Will he give the House the purport of the speeches made, details of proposals submitted, and decisions arrived at between the Opposition and the Government delegates at the recent conference held to attempt to bring about a coalition between those parties; in fact, will the same procedure be adopted as in the publication of all the doings at the conference between the Labour party and the Independents?

MR. SPEAKER (Hon. M. H. Jacoby): With reference to the question of which the hon. member has given notice, I have to rule that it will be out of order if addressed to the members for Guildford, Ivanhoe, Northam, Boulder, Katanning, and York. Standing Order 107 provides that questions to unofficial members relating to any Bill, motion, or other public matter connected with the business of the House may be asked. A private conference between members, though it may be in some circumstances a matter of public interest, cannot within the limits of the Standing Order be the subject of questions to private members.

MR. MORAN, for Mr. Thomas, then asked the question of the Premier.

THE PREMIER replied: The only proposals submitted and discussed at the meeting in question were in relation to

legislation which might be regarded as desirable in the interests of the country. As differences of opinion existed on these matters, the only decision arrived at was that members should continue to differ. I made no record of the utterances of any member present.

PRIVILEGE—CHARGE AGAINST A MEMBER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): In the Press this morning there was published a matter affecting the honour of this House, and reflecting upon one of its members. I intended to have brought it up under the heading of privilege; but as the hon. member is not present, I propose not to proceed in the matter until there is an opportunity, or rather, because the hon. member may desire to take such action that may render any step on my part unnecessary.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): In my opinion the leader of the House has adopted the only and proper course. No doubt the hon. member concerned will take such steps as may appear to him necessary to vindicate his own honour.

[At a later stage in the sitting, the matter was brought up by the member for South Fremantle.]

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I desire to address a few words on a pressing question of privilege. In the *Morning Herald* newspaper published to-day, there is a short statement which I will read to the House. It is headed, "Charge against a Member of Parliament—A Serious Allegation—The Ocean Freights Commission." It reads as follows:—

We have received a copy of a recent issue of a leading shipping and commercial journal, published in London, which contains a trenchant article on the report of the Royal Commission on Ocean Freights. In the course of the article, exceedingly grave allegations are made against a member of the West Australian Assembly—allegations which, if true, would unfit him to hold a seat in any Parliament. While it would be unfair to publish the charges without verification or without at the same time giving the member concerned an opportunity of refuting them, it is our intention to see that the matter shall be thoroughly investigated in the proper quarter, and that the whole of the circumstances shall be brought to light.

I am not going to take up the time of the House much. This is clearly an imputation on every member of the House, without farther explanation. But it would be idle on my part to pretend not to know against whom it is directed. After the publication of that newspaper this morning, I had the English newspaper brought to me, and there can be no doubt that these remarks were directed against myself. I will satisfy myself by saying I have a most complete and satisfactory answer to those allegations. In this and in other papers there are general charges against the Commission, its mode of procedure, and its findings. Myself and my colleagues will make a satisfactory reply to that, and we are willing to bear the brunt of it. The other matter affects the honour of the House, and it is my duty to bring it before the House and to assure members my answer is a complete one; but I place myself in the hands of the House.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): I referred to this matter just on opening this afternoon, and I was sure the hon. member for South Fremantle that if he had been present he would have taken the action he has taken. The hon. member has told us that he desires that an inquiry should be held by the House in order that his honour may be fully vindicated; and I feel quite satisfied that the inquiry which the hon. member courts, and courts properly, will have the effect the hon. member has indicated. At the same time, it is our duty as members of this Assembly, whenever the honour of the Assembly or the honour of any individual member of the Assembly is reflected upon, to see that both the Assembly and the individual member are fully protected, to see that the fullest and most close inquiry is made into any attack that may be made on an hon. member. The charge made against the hon. member is that while he was a member of a Royal Commission inquiring into the question of ocean freights, he did make use of certain knowledge obtained as a member of that Commission for the purpose of obtaining a certain personal advantage. The charge made is in its actual wording inaccurate, because the allegation is based upon a circumstance which occurred before that Royal Commission was sitting and before that Royal Commission was

appointed. It is based on a letter that was written some two months, or nearly two months, before the Royal Commission was appointed. But at the time that letter was written the member for South Fremantle was a member of a select committee of the House that was dealing with and inquiring into the same subject that the Royal Commission subsequently investigated. Therefore the hon. member, while he has evidence by the dates that the actual charge against him is necessarily false, desires that the charge be transferred from his work as a Royal Commissioner to his work as a member of the select committee, and may be investigated. With the object of making this investigation, I beg to propose :

That a committee of this House be appointed to inquire into the allegation against the hon. member for South Fremantle, and that such committee consist of the members for Guildford, Toodyay, Gascoyne, Katanning, and the mover; with power to call for persons, papers, and records; to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned; to report this day week; and that the committee have power to take evidence on oath.

I may say that in proposing this committee I recognise personally the unpleasantness of the task; and in speaking to the hon. members referred to, all of whom I have consulted as to their willingness to act, I have recognised likewise I am asking of them an unpleasant duty. And in nominating this committee I have selected members representing all sections of the House, members whom I believe to be possessed of sufficient firmness of character to justify the hon. member if he be right, as I believe he is, and to condemn the hon. member if the facts unfortunately prove he is wrong. I beg to propose the motion I have read.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford) : I desire to say that I heartily indorse every word that has fallen from the leader of the House as to the action he proposes to take in regard to this matter. As a committee is to be appointed, a committee which I feel sure will thoroughly sift the matter and probe to the hilt every accusation that has been made against the hon. member, so it would not be becoming of me, as I have been named to act on the committee, to express an opinion either one way or the other. I am satisfied that with that committee

justice will be done, and I have every reason to believe that the hon. member for South Fremantle desires nothing else but absolute justice. I desire to second the motion.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth) : I sympathise with the hon. member, and very much regret that he should have to wait whilst his character is under question even for a week. The hon. member at the beginning of last session consulted me a good many times as to this freights question, and I went on the select committee at his request. At the beginning of the last session the hon. member told me the condition of affairs which the select committee and the Royal Commission afterwards proved to exist. He was in full possession of all information. It was on his representation about the secret rebates that I supported the select committee; and I am pleased to be able to tell the House that the hon. member was as fully seised of all information at the beginning of that session as he is to-day. Therefore no aspersion can rest on his character to-day.

Question put and passed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth) : Before proceeding to the order of the day, I desire to make a personal explanation. It appears to me it is rather hard that one should be pursued with malevolence as a public man by one of the papers of this State; but this is the place to reply to accusations against one's honour. I desire to contradict flatly the charge made again by the *Morning Herald* this morning, that I sought to achieve the position of Premier in an honorary capacity without going before the electors of this country. That is absolutely untrue. When the difficulty with reference to a leader cropped up, Mr. Connor and my colleagues consulted me, and asked me if I were prepared to go to my constituents in the capacity of Premier. I said nothing would give me greater pleasure in my life, and that no greater honour than that could occur to me—going before my constituents in that capacity. The only difficulty in seeking emoluments was the difficulty of removing men who were already in office, and none of us sought to displace them from

those emoluments of office. I again draw the attention of the public to the fact that up to the time I opposed the Midland Railway purchase I was held up by this journal as being rather an important public man who had sought to do his duty. The editor of that journal sought me privately and asked me to support the purchase of the railway. I refused; hence these persecutions.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

NINTH DAY OF DEBATE.

THE AMENDMENTS.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle): Contrary to the usual practice adopted by speakers in the House during the debate on a no-confidence motion to attempt to put up a record for the length of their speeches, I am desirous of making a record for having taken up less time than any other speaker in this debate. Let me show first the position of parties in this House. When we met last session we had 22 Labour members and four Independents on one side of the House, and 23 on the opposite side. The Independents having decided to support the Government during that session, the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House were reluctantly compelled to retain their present position. I am at a loss why they are so anxious to come to this side and turn us out; for they certainly adorn the benches opposite far better than they could the benches on this side of the House. Prior to the meeting of Parliament this session, certain public statements were made by the leader of the Opposition that the Government would be challenged at the earliest opportunity. What does this no-confidence motion mean? It appears to me nothing more nor less than an invitation to the four gentlemen who hold the balance of power in this House and who are responsible for keeping the Labour party where they are now, to leave this side of the House and go over to the party on the other side of the House. If the Independents are willing to follow the leader of the Opposition, then he wins. If they are feeling more at home with the party on this side of the Chamber, then the hon. gentleman

loses nothing, but will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has kept faith with his public utterances that he would challenge the House, and that he has put the question to the test in this Chamber. Just here I should like to refer to a report in last Monday's *Morning Herald* which was referred to by the member for Dundas. I wish to reiterate that statement. It was as follows:—

Referring to the Independents, he said they should have either thrown in their lot with the Government or joined the Opposition, and thereby have secured for the country a stable Government for at least the life of the present Parliament. He expected that if a dissolution took place the Labour party would be blamed for it, which would be very unfair. If he thought the Labour party would not be blamed for a dissolution, he would say, "Let one come"; but if the party were to be charged with bringing one about, he would say, "A void it at almost any cost." It was a crying shame and a degradation to politics that 50 men could not carry on the business of the country for at least three years. They should have a stable Government to carry on until the end of the present Parliament at least.

That statement was taken up by the member for Dundas the other evening.

MR. MORAN: I think he was wrong.

MR. BOLTON: I thought so, and I think it is due to me to read it to the House and ask what there is to take exception to. The member for Dundas considers that the Premier should shoulder these remarks. I do not see what there is to shoulder; but I object to the Premier shouldering them. I am quite prepared to take the responsibility, and I go farther and say that these remarks will be indorsed by the public of the State, and that had these gentlemen who hold the balance of power in this House early in this debate said whom they were prepared to support, the debate need not have gone on to such a length. I readily admit that I should be sorry to see the Government turned out of power; but if the Government are to be superseded by the gentlemen on the opposite side of the Chamber it will not hurt me personally. If I have to sit in Opposition I shall endeavour to do my duty just as well as when I was supporting this Government. During the debate there has been a large amount of repetition and reiteration. For that reason I do not propose to mention at all the indictments against the Government. I

take it that the members of the Government are well able to answer these charges, and if not they should be. There are items in the proposals of the Government with which I am not in accord; but I claim, as every member of this House claims, that I have my freedom of voice and vote against these proposals just as freely as any member in this House. For one thing I am entirely opposed to the construction or the suggestion of a floating dock at Fremantle. I do not intend to go into the question fully, but I refer to it because it was referred to by the member for East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). That gentleman has no more right to assume that the dock cannot be constructed at less than double the estimated cost than I have to assume it cannot be constructed for one half the estimated cost; and the figures given by the Government are more reliable than those given by the member for East Fremantle. I prefer to take those of the Premier. It is suggested that £150,000 be spent on a floating dock. I suggest that the money could be well spent in connection with the preliminary expenses towards the building of a graving dock. The member for East Fremantle told us a few of the preliminary expenses; but I think the money could be spent in one direction well, in removing the unsightly and dangerous bridges across the Swan River connecting North Fremantle with Fremantle; and in their place to erect one steel swing bridge to carry all the traffic—vehicular, passenger, and railway. That would be one step towards the construction of a graving dock at Fremantle. I will not deal with that question farther. When the matter comes before the House, if it ever does, I shall go fully into the question. I commenced my remarks by saying that I intended to put up a record by not speaking long. I may say my vote will be declared in favour of the Government in the interests of the party to which I belong; but should the party be defeated, I shall cheerfully cross the floor of the House, and whilst sitting there I shall earnestly long for the day when the State will return an absolute majority of Labour members to the House, which it assuredly will do some day.

Mr. E. NEEDHAM (on amendments): In moving the Address-in-reply,

I expressed a desire that the debate on the question would not be unnecessarily prolonged; and I determined not to speak again to prolong the debate. But from recent observations which have fallen from members sitting in this corner, I deem it desirable to say a few words. I very much regret the member for Dundas is not in his place. I was going to speak last night when he was in his chair, and I hope that before I am far advanced the member for Dundas will be here. Before dealing with that member's observations I will refer to a remark made by the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) in the course of his eloquent address the other night. He said he was not one of those members who went round on Saturday nights making statements which they would not make on the floor of the House. I am one of those members of the House who made a speech last Saturday night, and I made that speech with the full knowledge that it would be published to the country, that members of the House would be cognisant of it. I knew full well the Press were there, and everything I said on that occasion I am prepared to say again here. I was not afraid to make those utterances, because when making them I knew I was speaking my political convictions and what I considered to be true. And I will say in making that statement I was speaking entirely in a political sense. The member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) in the course of his speech, which I read yesterday morning, said I made a statement that night that members sitting on this side of the House would not touch the Independents with a 40ft. pole. If that is a correct record of his statement, it is not right. I made a statement that so far as I was concerned I would not touch either the Opposition or the Independents with a 40ft. pole.

Mr. THOMAS: I congratulate myself on the statement.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I was determined all along that my vote would never go for a coalition to put members of the Opposition on the Government side; and up to Wednesday night of last week I was quite prepared to go on working with those gentlemen who so loyally supported us during last session. But when the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran)

took it upon himself to come to the House and make the attack which he did on the Government and on the Labour party, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that as far as I was concerned, after that speech all coalitions with any other party were off.

MR. THOMAS : He never said anything except what was said at the conference.

MR. NEEDHAM : The hon. member said more on the floor of the House. To my mind he was stronger in his objections to the Government. He charged the Government with duplicity ; he did not make that charge at the conference.

MR. MORAN : I hope the hon. member will not mistake the party for the Government. The party were guilty of no duplicity. Evidently they believe in the plank put forward. When members advocate a course and pretend to carry out a work and do not do so, therein lies the duplicity. I said the Premier was practically earnest about it, and I think so too.

MR. NEEDHAM : I accept the explanation, the construction of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise. Rightly or wrongly I have come to the conclusion that the hon. member made an attack on the party.

MR. MORAN : I think you are pretty nearly right.

MR. NEEDHAM : In view of that fact I made the statement I did on Saturday. Recent developments have not tended to convince me that I am wrong, because the breach between the Independents and the Labour party, caused by the speech of the member for West Perth, has been widened by the utterances of the member for Dundas, who is just as emphatic as the member for West Perth.

MR. MORAN : He was not half emphatic enough.

MR. THOMAS : I rise to a point of explanation in this matter. I made no charges whatever. I made a statement of what occurred at the conference, and I challenged the Premier or any member of the party to deny the truth of the statement read by me. In my remarks I made no charges, except that I regretted the Government or some members of the party could not suppress irresponsible and irrepressible members on their side of the House making use of

lies to the public at meetings they were addressing.

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think the member for Fremantle made that statement, or I should have corrected him if he did so. The hon. member (Mr. Thomas) must not accuse members of telling lies. I do not think the hon. member can make that statement now.

MR. THOMAS : I will say "misstatements," instead.

MR. NEEDHAM : I do not think these statements tend to clear the air. I stand on the same ground that I took up on Saturday night. The member for Dundas also said that this party sought this meeting. I think the member for West Perth will bear me out when I say that originally that meeting was sought by the Independents.

MR. MORAN : Certainly not. I think you passed a resolution.

MR. NEEDHAM : The member for West Perth knows the suggestion came from himself, and his memory must be very short if he cannot remember that.

MR. MORAN : I am informed that the party passed a resolution at caucus expressing a desire to meet the Independents. I have lived during twelve months with one object, that being to to bring about a coalition. I have sought it all the time.

MR. NEEDHAM : That is the position as far as I can make out, that the suggestion emanated first from the Independents. However, I am simply taking this opportunity of saying here what I said in another place, and nothing has occurred since to change my mind. I care not what the result may be.

MR. MORAN : Who sought the other conference ?

MR. NEEDHAM : I was at the caucus meeting which passed the resolution to meet the four gentlemen appointed from the Opposition. But then, so far as that is concerned, I think it is well known what my opinions are. What I said on Saturday night I say yet. I have not agreed to coalition with either the Independents or the Opposition. I think that is a plain enough statement. I have nothing farther to add. I do not want to unnecessary prolong the discussion. My vote will go with the Government of the day, and if it so happens that they

fall in this fight, I trust they will fall as a Labour party.

MR. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I must express my deep regret that it has been thought necessary during this debate to make the disclosures which were brought before the House by the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas). It seems to me it is undesirable that the proceedings of any party or private conversation of hon. members of this Parliament should be repeated in this Chamber; and my only fear in connection with this matter is that we may be establishing a precedent which will certainly undermine the honour and the integrity of Parliament itself.

MR. THOMAS: Do not forget that a resolution was passed at our conference that everything should be made available to the public.

MR. MORAN: And a resolution was passed by the other conference that a statement should not be made.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The position becomes the more complicated, the more one hears of it, and it becomes more undesirable still that everything should be related in this House which took place at a private meeting.

MR. THOMAS: It was a public meeting, not a private one.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I admit that perhaps the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) had some good ground for reading his statement in this Chamber. No doubt he had, from what he stated, but still the practice is undesirable, and we cannot get away from this fact that the conference had delegated two members, the Premier and the member for West Perth, to give to the Press a statement of what took place. If that statement was incorrect—

MR. MORAN: It was not incorrect.

MR. FRANK WILSON: If it was not full enough, then the two members empowered to give this statement were the gentlemen to correct it.

MR. MORAN: We did not want the task of writing all that out.

MR. FRANK WILSON: It certainly does not redound to the credit of our proceedings that we should spend the better part of the time of this debate listening to what this hon. member or the other hon. member said at caucus or a party meeting. I hope if such a thing

occurs again we shall find the report of the proceedings given to the Press will be sufficient for all parties. For if private meetings have to be reported on the floor of the House, then I think public life will become unbearable to any member. We have too much protestation about the honour and integrity of members and different parties. It is to be taken for granted, I think, that any gentlemen, any citizens of this State elected to represent the people in this House, are imbued with honourable motives and integrity of purpose. The very fact of their being here ought to be sufficient guarantee of that, at any rate, and I regret to think it is necessary that members should make so many protestations as to their truthfulness and their honour. We are all honourable members, I hope, and we all truthful, I hope. If not, we have no right to be in this Chamber to occupy the positions we do.

MR. MORAN: Your leader believed that publication was necessary to remove an impression from his mind.

MR. FRANK WILSON: If it was necessary, why did not the hon. member give it to the Press? I protest against the time of the House being taken up in listening to the details of any meeting held by members for party purposes.

MR. MORAN: Why was it demanded from your side of the House?

MR. FRANK WILSON: I do not mean to question the fearlessness or the honour of the four Independents who occupy the front cross-bench on the Government side of the House. Undoubtedly they are fearless, and undoubtedly they are honourable gentlemen. They wish to do the best they possibly can in the interests of the State. But I claim for every member of the House the same right, and I claim they are equally as fearless and equally as honourable in their intentions, no matter what party they belong to.

MR. MORAN: We never denied that.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Of course the hon. member does not deny it. Why protest about fearlessness in the expression of opinion? The member for Dundas got up and, with all the eloquence he undoubtedly has at his command, said: "We four Independent members will stand together fearless in the expression

of our opinions, and we are honourable in our intentions."

MR. THOMAS: I said also that the whole country was against us, and that your side demanded a proper explanation.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am sorry to hear that the whole country was against them previously. If the whole country was against them then, I am bound to say that in my opinion the whole country is against them to-day.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, no. They have had the truth since then.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The truth! The country is sick and tired of the debate going on in this House during the last fortnight or three weeks. The country wants some solution of the difficulty, and wants it quickly.

MR. MORAN: Then you sit down and give your vote. Your motion of want of confidence created it all.

MR. RASON: What about yours?

MR. FRANK WILSON: With regard to the leader of the Independent party —

MR. MORAN: Mr. Thomas you mean, I presume.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I mean the member for West Perth, who has been recognised as the leader of the Independents. With regard to the charge that he had been seeking to become Premier of this State, I see nothing dishonourable in his ambition to be Premier of Western Australia. I dare say that other members, possibly at times in bygone days, have dreamed of filling a similar position, but those dreams have not come to fruition. [MEMBER: Even the member for Sussex.] Even the member for Sussex may have had dreams of that description. I see nothing dishonourable, and I say this also, I see nothing dishonourable in any member being ambitious to fill the position, and wishing to take the emoluments attached to that position. If the hon. member were elected as leader of the Government and did the work of Premier, surely he would be entitled to the salary attached to the office. And why then this need to say we do not want the emoluments of office?

MR. MORAN: They are already taken up.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Already taken up? I know this, that the man

who does the work is entitled to the pay, and if I did the work I should claim the pay attached to the office. And what I want to know is why the member for West Perth, in the exercise of his natural ambition to fill that important position, should say that he did not want the emoluments attached to the office.

MR. MORAN: I have told you.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member has explained. I am glad to hear he has given some explanation this afternoon; that he believed others wanted it more than himself, or something to that effect.

MR. MORAN: No.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Well, is that the meaning?

MR. MORAN: No; it is not even the meaning.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Then I do not know what the explanation was.

MR. MORAN: It does not affect you, does it?

MR. FRANK WILSON: Not one iota.

MR. MORAN: Then leave it alone.

MR. FRANK WILSON: A natural question for the outside public to put is why the hon. gentleman wished to fill the position in an honorary capacity. I am glad he has given the explanation, and I shall have the opportunity, possibly, of reading it in the papers to-morrow.

MR. MORAN: On a point of explanation and order. I did not want to fill the position, and never sought it. Others endeavoured to persuade me to do so. That is where we differ in this matter. I did not seek the position at all, and I want to inform the hon. member there is nothing doubtful about the transaction. There is nothing, I repeat again, to cause him to inquire into it. That is a matter between myself and my constituents. I did not wish to displace the other members of the Cabinet, but desired to keep them in power to carry out the policy on this side of the House. I have explained the matter farther to-day.

MR. GORDON: It takes a lot of points of order to explain it.

MR. MORAN: Where there are thick-heads it does.

MR. FRANK WILSON: It is my undoubted right in the position of a member of this House to deal with any subject of interest to the public or connected with the good administration of

the State, and notwithstanding that I should always be inclined to oblige my friend the member for West Perth in every way possible, I intend still, if necessary, to probe this matter yet further. [MR. GORDON: Hear, hear.] I want to point out that it is somewhat unconstitutional for a Premier to hold the position in an honorary capacity. I am not quite sure whether any incident such as this has occurred before in Australian history. I believe there was something in Tasmania when Mr. Braddon held the position of honorary Premier, as he did not wish to be troubled with the details of office, and because of the express wish of his party and of the electors who returned him to that position unopposed. That is a very different position from what we have here to-day. I do not for a moment wish to accuse the hon. member (Mr. Moran) of seeking for the position. I have not done that. I have said that if he had that ambition it was a very laudable one, and that if he did wish to fill the position he was entitled to the salary attached to it. I have not accused him of seeking it unworthily. I think it a worthy ambition for any member to possess. And if the people wish him to fill that position, undoubtedly he will reach the height of his ambition in due course of time. But I will add this: I am glad to hear his statement that he wished to go before his electors in the capacity of Premier, and would be proud to do so. Any member filling the position of Premier of Western Australia, whether it be in an honorary capacity or whether he receives the pay attached to the office, cannot do it honourably unless he is there with at least his electors behind him.

MR. MORAN: It does not require re-asserting, does it?

MR. FRANK WILSON: Last night the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis) made a bitter attack on the Government and a bitter attack on the leader of the Opposition. I wish to say right here that this Opposition has no connection whatever with the James Government. Charges levelled against the James Government—a Government to which some of the present Opposition were strongly opposed—are not a sufficient answer to the charges made against the present occu-

pants of the Treasury bench; and farther, the mere fact that one or two members now in Opposition happen to have held portfolios in the James Government is no proof that the policy which the James Government put before the country is the policy which the leader of the Opposition to-day would advocate in the best interests of the country. If successive Governments had to carry the sins of all that went before them, because individuals connected with the Government of to-day have possibly been connected with past Governments, then in such old-established countries as Great Britain and other European States, Ministers would never get away from charges and recriminations attachable to preceding Administrations. Is it necessary that we in Opposition should give detailed reasons why we wish to turn the Government out of office? If we disagree with their principles generally, and disagree with the composition of their party, are not these sufficient reasons for opposing them and turning them out of office if we can? Is it necessary that we should prove that they have been dishonest in some of their transactions? I trow not; and I should not like to take up that attitude. I think it would be wrong to charge Ministers with conduct that might have even the semblance of dishonourable practice. We grant them all honesty of purpose; we believe they have done their best in the positions they fill; but we disagree with them on vital principles, because they represent what we believe to be a minority of the people of this State. We disagree with them because we believe—and we have this from members of their party—that the Government are controlled by a caucus vote, that they are controlled by the resolutions of a congress, a party, as the member for Coolgardie said the other night—[MINISTER: All electors]—all electors, but a small section of the electors. We believe that Labour members do not represent the people as a whole; that they represent a class, and that a small class in the country; and on those grounds alone we are justified in doing our utmost to turn Ministers out of the positions they hold, and in taking charge ourselves.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Very few members on this side were returned by minorities.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am not discussing that, but the general position. It has been admitted throughout this debate that the Labour Government is controlled by a caucus vote. The member for Coolgardie utterly condemned the Government, lock, stock, and barrel. He had no place for them; he condemned the Premier, and yet he said "Because I am pledged—"

DR. ELLIS: He did not condemn the Government; he condemned the Premier only.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Only one person?

DR. ELLIS: That is all.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Well, I think that is a poor sort of condemnation. If the hon. member attacks one Minister when there are six in the team, I think his action is very discreditable. Let Ministers be attacked as a whole; let the party be attacked as a whole; let Ministers stand or fall together; then we shall have fair play. If we single out one individual, and make him a scapegoat for the whole Cabinet, we are playing the game unfairly; we are hitting below the belt, to use the language of the prize ring. I was remarking that the member for Coolgardie bitterly attacked the leader of the Opposition, and used for that purpose the Auditor General's report for the year ending 30th June, 1904. Certainly the hon. member kept this House amused for the better part of an hour by reading extracts condemnatory of the accounts kept in several Government departments. He certainly showed that some serious amendment was needed; that things ought to be put in order; that accounts ought to be kept differently; and, possibly, that some of the officers in some of the departments ought to be fired, and fired promptly. But he tried to attach to the shoulders of the leader of the Opposition the whole blame for the irregularities mentioned in that report. I have not studied the report very closely; but I did cast my eye through the concluding paragraphs, and I find that paragraph 103 states: "It will be noticed that the report refers to matters dealt with upwards of nine months after the close of the financial year." This, I venture to say, takes the sting out of the accusation. The hon. member held that the report

dealt with accounts prior to the date on which the present Government took office, and that, therefore, the leader of the Opposition and his friends are entirely to blame for the state of affairs. But if it be correct that the Auditor General is dealing with accounts extending over nine months after the commencement of the last financial year—that is extending into the early months of this year—his charges apply as well to the present occupants of the Treasury bench as to the James Government whom they turned out. I should like briefly to look at the position, and to see what it is that the Independents wish the Opposition to do, to see what the Independents condemn the Government for doing, and what they themselves propose to do if they should have the power. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) has accused the leader of the Opposition of not putting any policy before the country. It is well known that it is no part of the duty of a leader of the Opposition to propound a policy when he is attacking the Government. [MR. MORAN: Especially under present conditions. It would be rather awkward.] Well, the hon. member stated here in a very loud voice that he would show the country what it ought to do. He said the policy of the Government was no good, as it would take ten years to carry out. He condemned it altogether. He said the Opposition was no good, because the leader had not put forth a policy in his attack on the Government; but the Independents, the benefactors of the country, would put before this House and the people a policy which would save the position. Let us look at it. First of all the hon. member said the Midland Railway purchase was the stumbling-block in the Government policy, and that he was absolutely opposed to that purchase; that he was determined to tell the country what should be done; that he would not support the present Government in coming to any terms with the Midland Railway Company at the present time. He preferred to watch the results of the unimproved land tax. A little later on in his speech he said that the Independent members were not prepared to purchase the Midland Railway. I interjected, "What, not at any price?" and the hon. member naturally said, "Well,

I do not say not at any price." I now presume that the hon. member, if he could get the railway and lands for a million, would snap up the bargain.

MR. MORAN: I am not to be drawn by another agent to do the deal.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Well, if he could get it for £500,000, he would snap it up to-morrow.

MR. MORAN: I will not say even that.

MR. FRANK WILSON: We see the inconsistency. First of all, he was against coming to any terms whatever regarding the purchase. Next, he was doubtful: he did not say that at a price he would not purchase it. Thirdly he said, not that he was not prepared to buy the property, but that he was not going to be bull-dozed into buying it. What position are we to understand the hon. member has taken up? His consistency is no doubt magnificent. Later on, when the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) was speaking, the member for West Perth said there was in the Government policy a little item of one and a half millions that the Independents objected to. Mr. Gregory said, "And the rest?" The hon. member replied, "Yes." The Independents were prepared to support every item in the Government policy except the purchase of the Midland property, and were prepared to support even that, I take it from the hon. member's interjections, at a price.

MR. THOMAS: You are wrong.

MR. MORAN: You must not take it so. Make your own case.

MR. FRANK WILSON: What does it all boil down to? If I am wrong, as the hon. member says, then the Independents are opposed to the Government policy; if I am right, they will support the Government policy, including the purchase of the Midland Railway, at a price. Is not that the position of every member in this House—that he will support the purchase of the Midland Railway at a price, so long as that price is reasonable? The hon. member said the Government policy could not be carried out in 10 years. Yet now he wants the country to understand that it can be carried out, provided we drop the Midland Railway purchase. What other policy has he put before us, apart from the dropping of the Midland purchase?

He believes that white pine can be grown on our hills, and that we can grow flax. That seems the sum total of the policy which the Independents are prepared to put before the country, to save the position and to find work for the unemployed. Their attitude is "yes-no" on the Midland question; principally "no." It seems to be "yes" on the Pilbarra Railway, but that is doubtful. The hon. member disagrees with the agricultural railway and land-settlement policy of the Government. [MR. MORAN: Where?] In his speech. He does not know where the money is to come from.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member must not misrepresent me. I have never, in that speech or in any other, disagreed with the land settlement policy of the Government. The hon. member ought to know that. He is making out a very poor case; but let him stick to the truth if he can.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member (Mr. Moran) must not so far transgress the rules of the House. He knows it is not permissible to accuse another member of untruthfulness. I look to the older members of the House to uphold the rules of debate. The hon. member should withdraw that remark.

MR. MORAN: Which part of it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member suggested to the member for Sussex that he should stick to the truth if he could. That is the objectionable remark.

MR. MORAN: I withdraw that. I will give him every latitude to wander as far as he likes.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member is nothing if not rude. I have no occasion to go to him for latitude. I can take all the latitude that the rules of the House allow me. He says I am wrong in stating that he disagrees with the agricultural railways and land settlement.

MR. MORAN: Absolutely wrong.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Then I say he disagrees with agricultural railways.

MR. MORAN: Absolutely wrong.

MR. FRANK WILSON: These are his words:—

The most important part of his disagreement—

MR. MORAN: Is the hon. member allowed to quote from my speech in this House?

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am reading from my own notes.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is in order in reading from his own notes any remarks made in this House.

MR. FRANK WILSON: This is the note I made:—

The most important part of his disagreement with the Government, so far as their general policy was concerned, was in connection with agricultural railways and the policy of land settlement.

Is that is a correct quotation?

MR. MORAN: It is absolutely correct. I do disagree with the Government in the indefiniteness of these proposals, and I want them more definite and more extended. The hon. member knows it well.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member goes on to summarise the cost of these railways, and finishes up by saying,

Hon. members were entitled to know where the Government were going to get the money, and when it was proposed to start the works.

MR. MORAN: That is right.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member disagrees with the agricultural railways because of the cost, and now has the audacity to stand up and say that he wants to extend the system.

MR. MORAN: I wish to appeal to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is misrepresenting me. I have not disagreed with any proposals to build agricultural railways in that speech or anywhere else. I have not disagreed with the proposal in any way; and a appeal to members who heard the speech to bear me out, and to you, sir, to allow the hon. member to quote me as much as he likes, but not to misrepresent me on a matter which I hold above any matter of policy in this country. The hon. member is an expert at that sort of thing.

MR. GORDON: Make another speech or two.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I should be sorry to misrepresent the member for West Perth or any other member. He ought to know me well enough for that.

MR. MORAN: It is because I know you so well that I am watching you so closely.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I defy any one who heard the hon. member's speech or read it carefully, as I did word for word, to come to any conclusion but that the hon. member was opposed to the Govern-

ment proposals at the present time for agricultural railways.

MR. MORAN: There are no such proposals that I am opposed to.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Another item the member for West Perth is weak on is that of the Norseman Railway; and in this connection I am sorry for the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), because I believe that hon. member's heart is set on the construction of that railway, but his leader gives a very doubtful story about it. According to him, it is going to cost some £600,000. [DR. ELLIS: Who said that?] The hon. member said that if the railway were built on the standard of the Government railways it would cost £600,000 of Government money to construct it.

MR. MORAN: I said that I was against the standardising of the railway.

MR. FRANK WILSON: How much is the hon. member going to save if he does not standardise the railway? If he has experience in the construction of railways, he will know that it will cost not over £200 a mile less than the cost of constructing Government railways now. That would be the difference between the present cost and his scheme of non-standardising.

DR. ELLIS: It would make a difference of £2,000 a mile.

[Interjections from Government cross-benches.]

MR. FRANK WILSON: Have I the floor, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: I must appeal to members to avoid interjecting so much. The hon. member has been embarrassed during the whole of his speech; and I ask members to pay more attention to the rules of the House, and assist the hon. member to continue his speech.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Another great objection is taken by the hon. member to the action of the Government in connection with the timber tramline from Lakeside. It shows exactly what value the member for West Perth puts on the Norseman Railway. He stated that if this tramline were built from Lakeside we should not then construct the Norseman Railway. He said:—

If that tramway were constructed, the Norseman Railway would not be required at all.

MR. MORAN: That is again quite wrong.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I can only assure the hon. member that I am quoting his own words.

MR. MORAN: From the newspapers or from *Hansard*?

MR. FRANK WILSON: From my own notes, as I have read the remarks in the newspapers.

MR. MORAN: My speech is in *Hansard*. I deny that assertion. I never made use of the remark, and it is not recorded in my speech; also, I am sure I have not cut it out, as the proofs can be appealed to.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I have not had an opportunity of reading the *Hansard* report.

MR. MORAN: Why not?

MR. FRANK WILSON: Because it was not published.

MR. MORAN: It has been published. I have it here.

MR. FRANK WILSON: My notes read:—

He said he had been informed that a private concession had been asked for from Lakeside for a timber company, which was favourably considered. There was someone intervening and the matter was dropped. There was only one market, that is the Kalgoorlie mines, and if that tramway were constructed the Norseman line would not be required.

MR. MORAN: Where are they taken from?

MR. FRANK WILSON: From the newspaper reports.

MR. MORAN: I have denied it. You will withdraw.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I cannot withdraw. I simply accept the hon. member's denial. I cannot withdraw, as I know nothing to the contrary. If the Norseman Railway is only justified for firewood purposes—[MEMBER: "If" again]—is there any reason why it should be constructed at all? None whatever. I agree it should not be considered if it is only a question of firewood; but surely that is not a sufficient argument to spend even £300,000, half the figure the hon. member mentioned, if it is only to supply the mines at Kalgoorlie with firewood. I hope when this great question of the Norseman Railway is threshed out on the floor of this House we shall have much better grounds set forth before

sanctioning an expenditure on that work. [MEMBER: You need not worry about that.] I think we need not worry about it from what the member for West Perth says. I have mentioned that the member for West Perth condemns the Government policy because it cannot be carried out. Of course he condemns the Midland Railway purchase because he does not believe in it; at any rate, not at the price. He thinks we can grow white pine on the hills, which is to be a solution of the unemployed question. I agree with him that perhaps we might do something in growing timber, and that perhaps we might be able to do something in establishing the flax industry in this State.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have a New Zealander already who has taken up a large area to grow flax.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I wish to point out that throughout the hon. member's speech there was no definite policy put before the House, though the hon. member started with a flourish of trumpets that he was going to tell the country what ought to be done. There was one item in which I was in thorough accord with the hon. member. [MR. MORAN: I must withdraw that. It looks suspicious.] It was when he referred to the necessity for the renewal of the buoyancy of the olden days and a renewal of the confidence of the investors, the people who had their money invested in the State. [MR. MORAN: In Sir John's time; and you were his greatest opponent.] Yes; in Sir John Forrest's time, or in any other Premier's time. So long as we can have a renewal of the buoyancy of the market, and so long as we know that the outside public, the British investors whom our opponents are so accustomed to disparage, have confidence in this country, I think we may look forward to a prosperous time in the future. But that is not the case. I am sorry to say I must of necessity repeat remarks I have made in this Chamber many times before, that at present in the old country, to which we look for the supply of the needful in connection with our public works programme and in connection with our private industries, there is that lack of confidence and want of buoyancy which prevents the necessary capital coming to our shores that is

going to provide the funds and the sinews of life to the workers who are now seeking employment. I think if we can restore the confidence which used to exist in the minds of the public investors, and if we can restore that confidence and once more have capital being invested in our great industries, if we can have our mining industry which is at present at a standstill extended and enlarged—and the only true criterion of an industry of that description is the number of men to which it will give employment—we shall be doing one great good to this country and to all concerned in it by turning out the present Government, and thereby restoring the confidence which the investors have lost.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: But you do not think seriously that a change of Government will bring that about?

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am firmly of opinion that a change of Government would go a long way to restore the confidence of investors in the old country. I am strongly of opinion that if we had Sir John Forrest back—a friend of the member for West Perth and mine also—we would have a very different feeling in this country than we have to-day. Instead of the depression we are suffering from and the feeling of uncertainty—[MR. HENSHAW: We should have something worse]—instead of the feeling of worse times coming on us, we should have a feeling of security and confidence, which is always the prelude to a prosperous period in our various industries. I need hardly say that if my vote will turn the present occupants of the Treasury benches out of power, it will be given generously, with all the generousness that I am capable of. I should regret exceedingly to take any action which would injure the Ministerial bench individually. I respect Ministers and I esteem them. I am glad to think they are my friends. I have recollections of pleasant hours spent in their company. Even my friend the Minister for Justice I esteem for his honesty of purpose, and his individuality appeals to me. I have had a pleasant trip, extending over two or three days, in the South-West with the Premier and the Minister for Lands. We had a very pleasant time together, and I learned there to value the attributes of their different characters and to esteem their

companionship. I have strong recollections of many a warfare carried out on the floor of the Arbitration Court with the Minister for Works. We fought with high words at times, but they did not leave bitterness behind. Therefore, individually I have every respect for those hon. gentlemen; and I can say the same for the great bulk of their supporters, and I wish them well. Of course, collectively I wish they were—well, in the seats we now occupy, and that we were in theirs. The Minister for Lands did me the honour of quoting from a speech which I made some four years ago in connection with the Arbitration Act; he also did me the honour to refer to a speech I made on the Address-in-Reply about the same time. I am glad he did quote that speech, because it showed to me at any rate that the public would see from the quotation, if they followed it, that I am not the hide-bound conservative that some of my friends are apt to call me.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You mean you were not.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The Minister cannot point to any action in my public career which would warrant him in saying that I have not supported progressive measures in the best interests of the State of Western Australia. It seems to me the hon. member is annoyed because on inquiring into the matter he found I was so true a democrat and represented the great masses of the people, which the hon. member himself does not represent. We have in connection with the question of the Arbitration Act the proposal of giving a preference to unionists. The Minister attempted to show I had been supporting this action in the past.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not that you have been supporting.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I think the hon. member said I supported it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You were on a rail, and did not know which way to go.

[MR. QUINLAN took the Chair.]

MR. FRANK WILSON: I should like to occupy a moment in quoting what I did say on that point. Speaking on the principle of the Arbitration Act I said:—

As far as the principle is concerned, I have said, and I repeat, that I am in favour of it.

I am in favour of doing away with strikes, and all possibility of strikes; but we shall have to go very carefully through this Bill, because there are many clauses which in my opinion will require some adjusting, some amendment, and some explanation, I hope. For instance, I see in the first portion of the Bill, that one of the matters that may be adjudicated upon consists of the claims of members of industrial unions to be employed in preference to non-members, and the claims of industrial unions of employers to preference of service from unemployed unionists. These two provisions at the first blush appear to me to be very arbitrary. It seems to me very unsatisfactory, if we cannot legislate without unduly interfering with the liberty of the subject, and putting it into the power of any court to say that people shall give the preference of employment to members of a union. We shall have to approach this clause with some degree of caution.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not a straight-out declaration against it.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Then I do not know what a straight-out declaration is. I said it was unsatisfactory, and would interfere with the liberty of the subject. I state briefly the way I viewed it on that occasion; at the same time I was always willing to give due consideration and hear the arguments of the other side before making up my mind how I should give my vote. We have the usual clap-trap about the old man's wage being the maximum wage; we have also the question as to boy labour to be considered in connection with this matter. I say that old men who cannot earn the full wage in industrial pursuits in this country are entitled, to my mind, to sell their labour at the best price they can get. It is the undoubted right of any British subject to sell his labour in the best market. Never in the whole of my experience have I found that the rate of pay to an old man who is not capable of competing with his younger brethren, influenced at all the standard rate which the full able-bodied man can demand. The same thing applies to boy labour—boy labour never controls the market.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You ought to read the reports of the Labour Commissions which have been sitting in England.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I shall be glad to read all the reports, but I make the statement from my personal experience. I have employed labour for over 30 years, and I state that my experience with regard to apprentices is that you do

not require the indenture system in any of the large undertakings. It is found better to give freedom to the boys to work where they will, and it gives freedom to the employer to engage and discharge how he will. I am speaking of the action taken in connection with undertakings in the engineering trade years ago, when it was found that the indenture system was irksome both on the side of the boys and the employers, and it was gradually done away with. The Minister also attacked me, but did it very quietly; I do not know that he intended the House to hear it, because he said I was increasing my income by appearing before the Arbitration Court. I admit that freely. When I labour I like to be paid for my labour.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I only referred to the attack that you had made on others.

MR. FRANK WILSON: What attack was that?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: When you referred to the member of the agitator type.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I wonder where the connection is.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am simply returning the compliment.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Where does the compliment come in? I have been engaged in the Arbitration Court in the same way that a solicitor is employed in the Supreme Court.

MR. HENSHAW: A paid agitator.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am not like the member for Collie, who goes down and interferes between the workers and the employers, and causes strife and dissension, and prevented men going to work when an Arbitration award had been given.

MR. BOLTON: He does not get paid.

MR. FRANK WILSON: He has always been paid as a secretary.

MR. HENSHAW: I ask that the statement be withdrawn, that I prevented men going to work in the face of an award of the Arbitration Court.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw the statement.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I have much pleasure in accepting the statement of the hon. member that he did not prevent men going back to work. I am sorry to say that the hon. member had some hand, with the member for Forrest, in connec-

tion with the timber industry when a conference was to be held at Bunbury.

MR. HENSHAW : I ask that the statement which the hon. member has made be withdrawn. I am prepared to accept a withdrawal.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER : The hon. member did withdraw the statement.

MR. FRANK WILSON : I am not going on withdrawing all the time, but I say I am sorry the hon. member had some hand in connection with the timber conference between the workers and employers at Bunbury. Perhaps the hon. member would like to deny that. Instead of a settlement being come to, instead of a conference being held to arrive at a settlement, the hon. member made a speech which prevented the workers sitting at that conference. That may be right or wrong.

MR. HENSHAW : You are generally wrong.

MR. FRANK WILSON : If the hon. member denies that, I shall be glad to withdraw that statement also; but I think it would be better if the erroneous reports in the newspapers were corrected.

MR. A. J. WILSON : In fairness to the member for Collie—

MR. HENSHAW : The member for Collie can look after himself.

MR. A. J. WILSON : I was rising in explanation of the statement, but if the member for Collie does not wish me to justify the statement I do not want to.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER : The hon. member can speak for himself.

MR. FRANK WILSON : The hon. member does not wish for a withdrawal. I am not proud of any member, whether an employer of labour or one representing the workers, who will not use every means at his disposal to prevent the stoppage of work in the interests of all concerned.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : It was a question of a reduction in the railway rates.

MR. FRANK WILSON : The question was whether the men would submit to some reduction in their rate of wages to meet the hard times; that was the question, and I appeal to the member for Forrest to say if it was not so. In the usual off-hand way with leaders who do not care whether the men work or not, the hon. member advised the workers to

fight, and they are going to the Arbitration Court to fight. I notice also that some commendation has been given, I think by the member for Coolgardie in his speech last night, in regard to the appointment of a gentleman named Powell as inspector of batteries. The appointment carried with it full arbitrary power to dismiss employees.

DR. ELLIS : I said nothing about the question.

MR. FRANK WILSON : The member for Dundas and the member for Menzies both spoke about this matter, and I wish to call the attention of the House to the fact that we have a large body of workers on the railways, and there is hardly power vested in the Minister himself to dismiss even an office boy without that office boy having an appeal.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : The Minister has no power over the staff.

MR. GREGORY : Under your last Act.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : Your last Act.

MR. FRANK WILSON : It seems we are getting nearer together. I approve of the Commissioner and his representative having full power to dismiss employees when he finds it necessary to do so; but it seems passing strange that a body of men representing trades unions, as some members do, which have forced this class of legislation on the country in the past, who have not given power to the Minister for Railways or the Commissioner to dismiss an office boy in the service without an appeal, to appoint a gentleman like Mr. Powell with power to dismiss anyone under him. If we are going to have the principle of trades unionism brought about, if we are to have the country run on trades union lines, let us carry the principle to its full extent: then we shall understand what to do. Keep the Government in power, but let them adhere to their principles; do not let them go round breaking the principles which they believe are in the best interests of the country. I maintain the Government have had their trial. As I said before, they are honest in their intentions and endeavours to carry on the administration of the country —

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : And have been successful.

MR. FRANK WILSON: But have failed lamentably. The hon. member's own supporters shall be the judges, members of the caucus, who have got up in this House one after another to condemn the Ministry and to condemn the leader. The Premier started it by condemning two of his colleagues, and he not only condemned them but executed them. Now the tables are turned, and several of his own party are getting up and condemning him, and they are going to execute him very shortly. It is ancient history to repeat what has been said by different members outside this House when the storm first began. It would waste time for me to endeavour to repeat what members have said outside this House in condemnation of the Premier and his Ministers. It appears to me that it requires no repetition from this side. It really requires no accusation from the Government side to prove that they have outlived their usefulness, if they ever had usefulness, and that the members of their own party have found them wanting and now are commanding them to make place for others. Even the members of the outside party which was referred to by the member for Coolgardie last night submitted a motion for consideration at the Labour Congress that in the event of a no-confidence motion being moved in the Assembly they should be exonerated from their political pledge if they voted against the Government. I said that even at the Labour Congress a motion was tabled to exonerate members of the Labour party if they voted against the Labour Ministry.

LABOUR MEMBER: No; you are wrong.

MR. SCADDAN: It was the Council.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I must suppose, regarding those members, that they do not understand what their own party is doing outside. Whether it was in Labour Council or the Labour Congress, what does it matter? [MEMBER: There is a big difference.] Then we have a National Labour League, a Political Labour party, and the Labour Congress to deal with outside, and there is the caucus inside. To which do they owe allegiance? Do they owe allegiance to the whole, or to none of them? It appears to me that we are coming to a sad state of affairs, if those members who represent trades unionism in this country

and are controlled by their allegiance to these different bodies outside are going to administer the affairs of this State as these various bodies may dictate to them from time to time. I hope this House will set its face against such a course of events, and will endeavour now once for all to put an end to this class representation, which has been and is now working injuriously as far as the country is concerned, and which is bound in the future to bring our industries almost to a standstill. With regard to the charge of the leader of the Opposition—[MEMBER: Blank charge]—against the Premier, which has been admitted in this House, a charge which was supported by the member for West Perth and was driven home by that member, the charge of over-horworing, exceeding the authorisations, I do not want to labour the point farther, because the Colonial Treasurer has practically admitted that the charge was correct, that from a legal standpoint he may have or did exceed his authorisations, but he considered that his motive was good, and therefore he was exempt from any condemnation therefor. But I want to look at this question from another aspect. Is it good, sound business, was it good finance, the action which the Premier took in connection with the Savings Bank fund and the redemption of that local inscribed stock? I will deal with the question from the Savings Bank standpoint first, because he is the trustee of the Savings Bank. He had, as I understand the position, £180,000 cash reserve in hand at the time. He had about nine per cent. of the total deposits in actual cash, and the Bank had earned a profit for the year ending June, 1904, of in round figures £8,000. His action was to increase the reserve from £180,000 to £420,000 by paying off the local inscribed stock certificates to the amount of £240,000. The Bank, therefore, lost the interest, three and a-half per cent., on that £240,000 which it was getting from the Government, this being £8,400, less interest allowed by the Western Australian Bank in Perth, which I believe is about one per cent. on some portions of the deposits of the Savings Bank. It shows that if this cash reserve is increased from £180,000 to £420,000 the Bank will make no profit at all. I think that is apparent to

hon. members. So that from the standpoint of the Savings Bank it is a bad business deal. You pay three per cent. to your depositors on the daily balance of their accounts, and your Bank costs you about half per cent. for working expenses, and unless you employ the bulk of the money deposited you cannot hope to make any profit. So that from the standpoint of the Bank it was a bad business transaction to pay off that £240,000 and to cancel the local inscribed stock. From the Treasurer's standpoint it was a bad deal. We borrowed from the Savings Bank £240,000, for which we paid three and a-half per cent. We go to London and we borrow money which, including accrued interest and charges and allowing for redemption in 1920, which I believe is the earliest period at which the loan can be redeemed, costs us £4 2s. 2d. per cent.

MR. MORAN: Why fix 1920?

MR. FRANK WILSON: Because they have the right to redeem in 1920, 15 or 30 years; that is the earliest date at which the debt can be redeemed. It costs us £4 2s. 2d. per cent., which, carried on for the full term of 30 years, till 1935, would cost us something like 3s. 6d. or 3s. 8d. per cent. less. We are paying the bank £3 10s. per cent., so we are losing 12s. 2d. per cent., which means a loss of £1,460 per annum, or £21,900 for 15 years, and about £40,000 if we carry it on for 30 years. This actual loss of £1,460 per annum is in addition to the loss of profit which the Savings Bank is making of about £8,000 per annum, and which has always been paid into general revenue.

DR. ELLIS: And you are making the Savings Bank safe?

MR. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member is too previous. Again, take that business action from the Treasurer's point of view. The Treasurer is trustee of the Savings Bank. The hon. gentleman says it is necessary to increase the reserve. Is it necessary to increase the reserve to make everything safe? Let us inquire into that. [DR. ELLIS: Certainly.] Evidently the hon. member has not studied the question, or if he did study the question he did not understand it. Was it not the case that the Premier wanted this £240,000 at call for future loan expenditure? [DR. ELLIS: He

wanted a safe reserve.] Oh, safe reserve! What cash is necessary to make our Savings Bank safe? In case there were a run on the Savings Bank, might we anticipate there would be a run on the Savings Bank before there would be a run on other institutions? [DR. ELLIS: I saw it in Sydney.] The cash reserve of the Post Office Savings Bank is lodged in the Western Australian Bank. Is it not more likely that there will be a run on our financial institutions outside before there is a run on the Post Office Savings Bank? And if there is a run on the Western Australian Bank, how much of that reserve is going to be left when the run extends to the Post Office Savings Bank? The whole argument is this: the cash reserve is only good, it is only a safeguard, if it is available in case of need. If we have not got it in our own vaults it is not available. A run will commence on outside financial institutions first, if it comes at all. It does everywhere, in spite of what the hon. member says. What is the cash reserve? Banks do not close their doors until their cash reserve is pretty well exhausted; so there is nothing left to the Savings Bank when the run reaches it. I wish to show the House we have entered into a very bad business deal, owing to the want of necessary experience on the part of the Premier, I take it, to grasp the position. But what is the case here? The Government has full power. It is fully protected to stop any run. If there is a run on the Post Office Savings Bank, the Government can demand under the Act one month's notice of withdrawal for every deposit of £50 and under, and can demand three months' notice for every deposit above £50. Where is the danger, and where is the want of cash reserve?

DR. ELLIS: It is never used in a run.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Would not that effectually stop any run, and would it not give ample time to obtain money from London or elsewhere?

DR. ELLIS: Mention any place where it has been used.

MR. FRANK WILSON: What is the good of it, unless it is used?

DR. ELLIS: It is not used, as a matter of fact.

MR. FRANK WILSON: It must be used, if you come to that position.

DR. ELLIS: It was not in Sydney.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The very thing you can do is to demand your right under the Act, demand the notice necessary. Therefore, the position appears to me this way—that the Treasurer has to see that he has sufficient funds to amply protect the natural withdrawals of the depositors, in a given period or by any given date. If he has sufficient to cover any probable withdrawals under ordinary business, he is amply protected so far as the reserve is concerned.

MR. MORAN: You are preparing the way for the new Ministry to get a little deeper into bankruptcy.

THE SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I was simply taking an ordinary view of an ordinary business transaction. Joint-stock banks do not keep more than 25 per cent. of cash reserve. The Western Australian Bank's cash reserve for the quarter ending in March was 24 per cent.; that of the Union Bank 25, and that of the National 35. These banks have to meet every run made upon them; and they are supposed to be so strong that they can meet not only runs on themselves, but can help the Government Savings Bank if a run should extend to it. I wish to show clearly that while the Government Savings Bank is paying depositors 3 per cent. on the daily balance for the use of their money, it cannot be expected that the bank shall keep the same cash reserve at their disposal as other financial institutions keep. When it costs the Government one-half per cent. to run the bank, and when 3 per cent. interest is paid to depositors, we must of necessity, if we are to make the bank pay its way, take rather more risk, if there is any risk attached to the business, than an outside bank will take. It seems to me that the reason why the Premier cancelled those local inscribed stock was that he wanted to have these funds to work on in the future as in the past; and I think one of his excuses, that he to some extent exceeded his authorisations in order to redeem local inscribed stock and increase the cash reserve of the Savings Bank, is (to put it mildly) a myth, a misconception, which ought not to have been put forth. Regarding the recent flotation of a loan in London, I wish to say that the business methods of this Labour Government do

not redound to its credit; because not only have we a bungling of the finances in Western Australia, but it appears we have a bungling in London also. I know that the Government secured as Agent General a gentleman whom they had just turned out of office as Premier—Mr. James. He was very anxious, very eager, to take over the duties of Agent General, and to show what he was capable of doing in arranging the finances of this State. But it is always dangerous for a novice to begin plunging in financial matters, especially in London. London is a small place, even, although it handles large sums of money. The story I am about to tell was common comment at the time in the city of London, and it has reached these shores. I heard it; and I may say at once that I spoke to Mr. Lefroy (formerly Agent General), who told me that what I had heard was quite correct. The overdraft arranged at the London and Westminster Bank was for a half a million, at bank rates, with a minimum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Government wanted to float a loan; and rather than employ this overdraft to the full limit, they paid £4 2s. 2d. per cent. for money to pay off the overdraft at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. That seems peculiar, to start with. Then they took a strange course. Although they were strongly advised, as I understand, by the Agent General in November last that they should not at that time attempt to raise a loan, and although they were told then that probably £98 per cent. could be got for a quarter of a million 4 per cent. debentures with a three-years currency, they set to work with their new Agent General—at least I presume with their new Agent General; perhaps I am wrong. They set to work, at all events through some outside agency, to undermine, unknowingly I believe, the efforts of their Agent General to meet the financial requirements of the country, and to arrange them on the best possible basis. Mr. James, I believe, arrived in London on the 6th November, but did not take over his office till the 21st November. On the 9th November, to the astonishment of everyone in the city of London, and especially the financial authorities, £500,000 worth of 4 per cent. Treasury bills with four-years currency was being offered by an outside firm at £97 15s. per cent. The Agent General

knew nothing about it; the manager of the London and Westminster Bank knew nothing about it; the brokers for Western Australian finance knew nothing about it. And the strange thing is that the very people who were offering this half a-million of money—the outside firm—came to the brokers and the financial advisers of the West Australian Government to see whether those brokers and advisers would take a portion of the loan—a portion of those Treasury bills! Of course, the transaction immediately upset the market; the fat was in the fire. Our financial advisers were disgusted with such treatment. I believe the London Stock Exchange actually threatened to boycott the bills altogether, if such hole-and-corner tactics were adopted; and the result was that the Agent General protested very strongly by cable against the Government endeavouring to raise money by selling 4 per cent. Treasury bills behind his back in London. Consequently, the whole transaction was quashed, the issue withdrawn, and the Agent General instructed to do the best he could as near to 97 as possible; and he ultimately sold the half a-million of Treasury bills, although the market was so unsettled by the unwise action of the Government that he had practically no hope of getting any more than the bills had been offered at previously, £97 15s.; and he was able to sell at that price, less the brokerage. The Government who undertook such a transaction were most unwise, to say the least of it. They were discourteous to their Agent General, and they were certainly unfair to their financial advisers. They were lucky to get their money at any price; and they themselves must acknowledge that their action was most injurious to the credit of the State. Why, it seems to me that the veriest tyro in finance would understand that if he wished to sell an article, or to buy an article, he should not put half-a-dozen rival agents on the market. If a man wishes to raise money, he does not go through the various channels and then put an outside house into competition with his own agent. If we employ an outsider to compete with our own Agent General, we are courting disaster. Undoubtedly if the Premier and Treasurer had known what he was about, if he had had any experience whatever of the London financial market,

he would have taken the advice of his financial advisers there, and of the Agent General, and would have saved something like £10,000 of the country's funds. To show that the advice was sound, I may say that the Agent General had, I believe, told the Government that he estimated there were sufficient funds to carry them on till the 31st January, and that they had better leave over their flotations till the early part of this year. Early in February, 1905, our $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. stock touched par; and yet we now have our $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents. bringing at the present moment something like £93 10s., expenses deducted. Why was not the loan floated in February? Why was it left over till the market fell and the loan practically "missed the 'bus'"? It seems to me that shows a sad lack of experience, to say the least of it. It shows that the Government were not in touch with the avenues through which they derive their financial support, and that they do not understand even the rudiments of finance. I hope that if such a state of affairs again exists, some Government other than a Labour Government will be in power; for I should certainly be very doubtful of the sanity of anyone who carried out a financial transaction on such a basis. As to the work of the Arbitration Court, I wish briefly to say that the paragraph foreshadowing preference to unionists, which is supposed to have the support of a majority of the members in this House, should be altogether struck out of the Governor's Speech, and ought never to have been included therein. The principle is one which I shall strongly oppose, because I believe it interferes with the liberty of the subject.

MR. MORAN: Is it in the Governor's Speech? I did not know that.

MR. RASON: A question was asked, and an assurance given that preference to unionists was meant.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am not quite sure whether the word is "preference" or "protection"; but I do not care which word is used.

MR. MORAN: It makes a terrible difference.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I do not think it makes any difference at all. The Speech states:—

The Conciliation and Arbitration Act requires amendment in the direction of

empowering the Court to grant the same preference to the workers as is already extended to the employers under the existing measure, and likewise for the purpose of rendering the legislation for the amicable adjustment of industrial disputes more effective generally than it is at present.

A question was asked whether this meant preference to unionists, and was answered in the affirmative.

MR. MORAN: A statutory preference to unionists, making it obligatory on the Court to enjoin such preference, is an entirely different matter from the preference proposed to be given.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I know that.

MR. MORAN: But some people misunderstand the facts.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I began my remarks, or at least intended to begin them, by saying that the proposal to grant power to the Court to give preference to unionists would receive my strenuous opposition, because I believe that preference to unionists interferes vitally with the liberty of the subject.

MR. MORAN: That is the old stock argument against the Arbitration Act itself.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Yes; and I may say that if the Arbitration Court awards cannot be observed more fully than they are now, I shall be quite ready to abolish the Arbitration Court. I think we shall be better without it. Three years ago, when addressing the House on the Arbitration Bill, I stated that unless the measure could stand the test of bad times as well as of good, it would be of no use to the country. Ever since the Court was established our industries have been on the up-grade. Increase upon increase of wages has been granted by the Court; but now we find a time of depression approaching. The tide has turned. The workers have in the ordinary course to put up with some portion of the loss which is borne by the employers, owing to the depression. Arbitration awards for the last twelve months have been somewhat on the down-grade; and what do we find? Objections on the part of the workers to accepting the awards, although awards were accepted as a matter of course when the wages were raised. At Collie the other day, after the Court had made an award, the unions would not allow the men to go to work; and all the mines are lying idle.

MR. HENSHAW: The hon. member has made a misstatement. He says the unions would not allow the men to go to work. The men spontaneously declined to accept the terms; and when the decision was come to in the Court, the Judge said that if the terms were not acceptable, those men could seek employment elsewhere. They considered the terms were so outrageous, the wages being insufficient to support life, that they would not go to work. They acted individually. It is unfair for the hon. member to say that the unions coerced them into that action, or compelled them to refrain from working.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member is misrepresenting the remarks of the Judge of the Arbitration Court. It has been contended by myself and all the members of the Court that no worker need work at the rate of wage prescribed in the award. But what constitutes a strike? The award comes out; the rates are posted on the mine to take effect on the following Monday; a meeting is held of all the members of the union; several meetings are held, and the result is, "We decline to go to work." [MR. MORAN: Spontaneous combustion.] Yes, it is a spontaneous action on the part of the men, united action, and it is very clear. I think I have Judge MacMillan's interpretation, but it is very clear that any united action of a body of workers—[MR. HENSHAW: Prove it is united]—to compel employers to pay a higher rate of wage or give different conditions of labour to those which are awarded, constitutes a strike. "Prove it," the hon. member says. What took place after this award, when all the mines were idle? The men immediately approached the employers to get better terms and higher rates of pay. With what result? Within 24 hours one employer gave way, and gave better terms and higher rates of pay; and within another 24 hours another firm gave way. Within ten days a third firm gave way after a conference and after giving better rates and better conditions of work—[MR. HENSHAW: Good luck to them]—and the other day a fourth pit gave way. The hon. member says it was not a strike. Judge MacMillan says:—

A strike may be defined as a refusal by the workers to continue to work for their employer,

unless he will give them more wages or better conditions of labour. A lockout is the converse of a strike. It is the refusal by an employer to allow his workmen to work unless they will accept his rate of wage, or the conditions of labour he imposes. In neither case is the employment finally determined; the intention of the workmen in the one case and of the employer in the other being that the employment shall be continued if a satisfactory settlement on the matter in dispute can be arrived at.

Who says it was not a strike after that? It was. If we cannot bring sufficient power to bear under the Arbitration Court to prevent men from going on strike, the sooner we do away with the Court the better it will be for all concerned. [MR. A. J. WILSON: Would it do to suspend the Act for two years?] I would suspend it for ever. Now turning to the question of preference to unionists, which it is suggested we should give the Court the power to grant, very many important men have spoken strongly against such a thing. The President of the United States, many members may not be aware of it, has pronounced against such a thing, saying—

I am the President of the people of the United States, without regard to creed, colour, birthplace, occupation, or social condition. My aim is to do equal and exact justice as amongst them all. In the employment and dismissal of men in the Government service, I can no more recognise the fact that a man does or does not belong to a union as being for or against him, than I can recognise the fact that he is a Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew or gentile, as being for or against him.

He will have nothing to do with it. He cannot recognise the fact at all. We have a very strong intimation from Mr. Judge Real, of Queensland, on the same subject. He designates it as being an unwarranted interference, and says that we have no right to force men into unions. He says:—

He had seen talk in the newspapers of giving unionists preference. If after that no one else could get work, the only thing, if the others were strong enough, was to have a revolution. To his mind it was an absolute violation of the principles of justice. The trouble was that the men seeking to dictate in this matter did not care a brass farthing for the principles of justice, and were in this matter piling up wrath against the day of wrath.

MR. HENSHAW: Quote Bernard Wise.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I have given the pronouncement of a Judge in a State which has no Arbitration Act.

MR. HENSHAW: Quote the Chief Justice of New Zealand.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I think I have it here—no; but I have the opinion of Mr. Justice Cooper. Will that do? Mr. Justice Cooper, President of the Court of Arbitration in New Zealand, on the hearing of the Auckland carters dispute remarked:—

With reference to preference, it is upon the union to satisfy us that preference should be given. In Wellington and Dunedin this was not practically opposed, but in Auckland the employers strongly objected to this demand of the union being granted, and we think that in the special circumstances of this particular occupation, preference to unionists is impracticable where the general body of employers is in opposition to such claim. We think where so many businesses are involved in this dispute, that to restrict the freedom of employers against their will would be to unduly embarrass them in the conduct of their respective callings.

That seems to be a fair declaration, and a strong intimation that the Judge did not approve of preference being granted to one body of men over another; and I quite agree, so far as I am concerned. I think we would be doing a most unwise thing even to give the Court power to consider an application of this description; and with regard to the section which already appears in the Act, we ought to strike it out. It has never been acted on. When has an employer of labour in this State appealed to the Arbitration Court to have preference of union labour? Never, to my recollection, and I do not think there is one case on record. The mistake that was made when the Act was passed was that half the section was left in, and the other half left out. [Interjection by MR. HENSHAW.] That is no argument. Some employers in the old country prefer to employ unionists, and others prefer to employ non-unionists. I should like to emphasise this opinion which I hold strongly. If the question was never raised, there is not one master in a hundred ever bothers his head whether a worker belongs to a union or not. In all my experience I have never heard a question being put by an employer of labour to workers on works with which I have been connected as to whether they are unionists or Protestants or Catholics or not. All the employer wants is to get efficient workmen who will give him an honest day's work for the wages paid.

MR. HENSHAW: They would not swallow that at Collie.

MR. H. BROWN: Give Collie a rest.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I wish to point out that the action of the member for Collie and the men's representative at the Court is irregular in the extreme, especially that of the representative. His remarks and comments are not calculated to uphold the good feeling that ought to exist between master and man; and certainly they are not warranted so far as they apply to the Judge and other members of the Arbitration Court, and I think the member for Collie will agree with me in that. We have the secretary of the union who is displeased with the award, saying that "it is a mischievous and dangerous concoction." We have him attacking Mr. Justice Parker, and saying "his primary object was to smash up the union and to reduce arbitration to a farce. Mr. Justice Parker seems anxious to become the Judge Jeffreys of Arbitration." When we have men who will so abuse their positions as this man has done and when we get men like the member for Collie to applaud his action, no wonder that the rank and file rebel.

MR. HENSHAW: I ask the hon. member to say where I applauded that action, and if he cannot do so, to withdraw the statement.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Do you deny it?

MR. HENSHAW: Prove your statement or withdraw it.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The man who made such remarks in face of what was a unanimous decision of the Arbitration Court should be had up for contempt of court.

MR. HENSHAW: I asked the hon. member to withdraw the statement that I had applauded the remarks made.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Do you deny it?

MR. SPEAKER: I can only ask for a withdrawal if the hon. member denies it.

MR. HENSHAW: I have not applauded it; and if the hon. member cannot show that I have applauded it, he must withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I withdraw; but I say the representative of the men is the worst enemy they

have. He is the man who is going to smash up the union, and land Collie in the same position as he landed Korrumburra in. The men will lose their work and the employers will lose the capital invested in the industry, and Collie will be a thing of the past, if this sort of thing goes on; because to bring such a charge against the Judge and the other members of the Court, that their one object was to smash up the union, is childish in the extreme. I want to make it pretty clear that if one party is always to succeed in these cases, the utility of the Court has gone for ever. The workers have succeeded in the past; and now that the tide has turned to some extent in keeping with the condition of trade, we have these vile charges against honourable men who are trying to do their best to bring in fair decisions in the Arbitration Court. The Court must, of necessity, find one party wrong. The employers have always been loyal to the decisions in spite of the fact that in many instances industries have had to be carried on at a loss, almost to the verge of ruin; and if the workers on their part cannot submit quietly and loyally to a small reduction on their wages when hard times come to the industries of the State, our industries are not going to extend or be progressive or prosper, and we are going to have a set-back which will have a disastrous effect on the whole of the country. I am not a pessimist in any respect, and before I touch on the general condition of trade in Western Australia I should like to say that my friend who has taken so much exception to my remarks seems to think that commercialism, as he classes it, is the great bugbear to the prosperity of Western Australia. He says that we must combine against commercialism, and he deprecated the increase of it "as the greatest foe of the Labour movement."

MR. HENSHAW: Give my words fully. Do not misquote.

MR. FRANK WILSON: He "deprecated the increase of commercialism somewhat, and he said it was the greatest foe of the Labour movement." If those words are not correct, I cannot read them. I should like the hon. gentleman to tell us what is the meaning of "commercialism." What does he gain his

living by but commercialism? He must be the secretary of some union.

MR. HENSHAW: We have a good example of it in the management of the Collie mines.

MR. FRANK WILSON: If not, he must draw his living from commercialism. I wonder how the great army of workers in Western Australia gain their livelihood. Do they by trade unionism, like the hon. gentleman, or by being a representative in Parliament, or do they gain their livelihood by commercialism?

MR. HENSHAW: The hon. member states that I get my living from trades unions. I ask him to either prove it or withdraw it. I absolutely deny it to be the position.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I said also "being a member of Parliament."

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Of course I must accept the denial and withdraw. I want to say that in almost every case recently in the Arbitration Court unions have cited for increases, and decreases have been granted on the evidence. And yet we have this disloyal action of the members of trades unions; disloyal to the court of their own creation, a court set up to avoid friction between the employer and the worker, and which, I venture to say, has caused more friction within the last two years and more injury to the industries of the State than anything one can conceive.

MR. TAYLOR: One big strike would do more injury to the industries than all the friction.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Unfortunately the ex-Colonial Secretary has had no experience of running a business of this description.

MR. TAYLOR: I have had some experience of strikes.

MR. FRANK WILSON: On one side; the shearers' strike in Queensland. I want briefly to refer to the condition of trade in Western Australia. I say at once I have unbounded confidence in the State; I have always had faith in the country itself. A certain section of the people I have not much faith in: I have not much faith in the present Administration. We all admit the resources of Western Australia are magnificent. We

have any amount of possibilities, any amount of openings for the employment of capital, whether cash capital or the labour of the workers' hands, which is his capital. We ought to endeavour, without creating friction and barking and snapping at one another as we have been doing during the past four years in Western Australia, to work more amicably with one another, and to give one another credit for good faith and a proper wish to advance and benefit the general community. We have a depression in Western Australia, because the report of the Labour Bureau issued the other day gives it pretty well right throughout the State. During the past six months there has been an over-supply of workers of almost every description in Perth. In Yilgarn there has been little demand for labour except for building trades. The outlook for the next six months does not foreshadow any demand. At Coolgardie workers find it difficult to procure employment, and present prospects do not point to improvement. In Coolgardie East a good demand has existed for bricklayers, otherwise the market has been somewhat quiet, with apparent improvement in the immediate future. At Broad Arrow there has been little demand for labour in the building trade and none for unskilled labour. At Yalgoo the demand for any class of labour has been small. In the Murchison district generally the supply has exceeded the demand. The same thing occurs in regard to Mt. Margaret, Peak Hill, and Toodyay.

MR. HENSHAW: The hon. member is stonewalling now.

MR. FRANK WILSON: At Collie, owing to the uncertainty hanging over the coal mining industry, the stable industry of the district, the labour market has been depressed for the past six months without any immediate prospect of improvement. In the Sussex district labour has been dull, with little prospect of improvement. At Plantagenet and at Esperance the same thing occurs, and it is the same throughout the State of Western Australia. We are suffering under a depression and a plethora of labour. I do not know that it is very acute at present, but members who have been speaking on this motion admit that there is a depression, that

workers are seeking employment in these districts.

MR. BOLTON: Largely owing to this no-confidence motion.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Yes, it is largely owing to the loss of confidence in the Administration. What is the cause of the depression? Are we handling the country in the best possible way? We admit we have a good country to handle, that there is any amount of possibilities for the employment of labour and the investment of capital: are we handling the country properly? I think not; and the sooner we change those who are at present administering the affairs of the State the better for all concerned. We cannot say the depression on the goldfields is due to over-production, because gold has a standard value. There may be a depression in the timber or coal industries or other large industries where a market has to be sought for the product after it is won, but not so in regard to the gold industry. What is the cause? I say the goldfields are not extending. There are hundreds of miles yet to be exploited. Why are there no mines being opened up to take the place of those that are closing down? I have with deep regret to state that in my travels throughout the goldfields of our State I found that our mines are being gradually worked out, that mines which have given great and magnificent returns to shareholders in the past are now not paying their way, and many of them are scraping their plates at the month's end to get money to pay their employees. I have also found we have very few, if any, mines being developed in a proper manner to take the place of those closing down. [MR. HENSHAW interjected.] If I go out prospecting with the hon. member and strike a mountain of gold, it is not going to enrich the country. We have 13 dividend-paying gold mines in Western Australia to-day out of hundreds.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That is absolutely inaccurate.

MR. FRANK WILSON: There are 13 dividend-paying mines to-day out of hundreds in Western Australia. That is no good to us. The only criterion of the condition of an industry of this description is the number of men employed; and to say that prospectors going out and striking a pocket here and a pocket there

assist the industry, is only hoodwinking the public and misguiding them.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is you who are misguiding the public.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. member knows there are hundreds of mines paying which are not dividend-paying.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am perfectly aware of that; but I say prospecting shows do not permanently assist the industry, and the late Minister for Mines admitted that himself.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: When?

MR. FRANK WILSON: In a statement which appeared in the Press six weeks ago.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: It is untrue to say I made such a statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not make a remark like that.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: But it is inaccurate. I am sorry that is the strongest word I can use.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The Minister says I have made a statement which is inaccurate. I accept the denial, but I think I am correct in saying he did state that the prospectors went down to a certain depth, and then threw up their shows in some cases.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: I said "some prospectors."

MR. FRANK WILSON: I do not wish to misrepresent members, far from it. I thought the hon. member was taking the view that I did, that prospectors were good in their way. We want more of them. I am supporting prospecting parties in every way possible, but the prospectors only go so far, only open up the country for people with capital to come along and develop a mine. Not once in hundreds of cases do prospectors develop their shows into properly equipped, payable mines. Practical men will agree with me that if you are going to equip a mine properly like any of the large mines on the Golden Mile or in the Menzies district, such as the Westralia Mount Morgans, the Sons of Gwalia, and others, you have to sow a good deal of grain before you get anything for the shareholders. You have to put money into the mine, otherwise it will not become dividend-paying. I say you cannot properly develop a mine like the Wes-

tralia Mount Morgans without first expending a large amount of money on that mine.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: What about the Golden Mile?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are many properties formerly owned by companies now kept up by men, and being profitably worked.

MR. TAYLOR: And worked by syndicates.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I have the statement which the Minister for Justice and Labour made. This is the extract:—

Mr. Daglish, in speaking at Kalgoorlie some little time ago, said "It had been found that in some cases prospectors would not go down, and that as soon as they had scratched the surface they left for some other place. If this practice were to become general, the public batteries were sure to prove a failure." This statement was still more emphatically advanced by the Minister for Mines when, in addressing the Prospectors' and Leaseholders' Association at their recently held Coolgardie Conference, he "felt it incumbent upon him to refer to prospectors and their work, or disinclination to tackle real work," and said that "of the many hundred claims worked by parties, not more than one in ten were being properly worked and not one per cent. worked below water level."

Does not that support the statement I have made, that the prospectors do not properly work their shows and throw them up?

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: What I said on that occasion was that of the prospecting shows taken up I did not believe more than three out of ten were worked properly. I used very moderate terms in speaking.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I agree that the hon. member did use moderate terms. I should have been more emphatic. I wish to state, if I may do so without interruption, that in my opinion this country is capable of so much prosperity, is capable of so much development, that we ought to have no unemployed difficulty, and we ought not to have any unemployed difficulty for many years to come. We find at the present time that our timber industry is not flourishing. The hon. member will admit that it cannot compete in the markets of the world. Our coal industry cannot compete in its own market, let alone in the markets of the world, and the only relief that is proposed by this intelligent Govern-

ment is to increase the imposts. We have a new railway tariff which is going to increase the burden. If I ask any business man what he would do when depression came upon him and he found that he could not get contracts, whether he would raise the prices or lower them, he would laugh at me and think I was foolish. He would say, "Why of course, we must lower the prices to endeavour to attract business." But apparently when we have a depression in this country—it may be slight, but it looks as though it would be more—the only panacea for this ill, in the opinion of hon. members, is to increase the burden which the already over-burdened industries are struggling under. We take the new tariff and we find that in our timber industry the rates have been considerably increased. The rates on mouldings and skirting boards from different timber stations to Perth show increases. For instance, the rates from Mundijong to Perth have been increased 11½ per cent., from Yarloop to Perth 136 per cent., Wokalup to Perth 139 per cent., Worsley to Perth 147 per cent., Wellington to Perth 149 per cent., Yarloop to Kalgoorlie 179 per cent., Mundijong to Kalgoorlie 177 per cent., Dardanup to Bunbury not so much, but it is increased by 7·14 per cent. Then on the other hand we have moulding and skirting to the goldfields increased to £3 7s. 6d. per ton for 380 miles, that is from Perth factories. The old rate was £1 4s. 5d., so there is an increase of £2 3s. 1d. per ton. We have this injustice carried out farther, inasmuch as it applies to the produce consumed upon those timber stations also. The freights on flour, chaff, and bran, injurious though they be to the producers and to farmers on the Great Southern line, are still more injurious to those who consume. And the timber stations are going to suffer from these increased imposts to the extent of something like 5s. 6d. per ton, I think it is, in regard to produce from the Katanning and Narrogin districts to Perth and other ports on the coast. I find that taking the rate from Katanning, as a centre of produce of this description, to these different timber stations, the increase is something enormous. The increase in the cost to Mundijong—and large quantities of produce are consumed at this timber station—is

40 per cent.; Yarloop, 40 per cent.; Wokalup, 52 per cent.; Worsley, 54 per cent.; Dardanup, 54 per cent. also. One can see at once that here we have not only a blow struck at the agricultural population of our country, but also a double blow struck at the manufacturing population; and this is done not only in connection with the timber industry but also in the coal industry, as my friend opposite will probably bear out. It was indicated in the first instance that something like 9d. per ton increase would be put on between Collie and the different ports, Fremantle, Bunbury, and Perth. After I had interviewed the Commissioner he told me that this was a mistake, and he had it altered; but as soon as ever one gets past Perth, as soon as one goes towards the goldfields, the increased rate is there, an increase of 5s. 7½d. per ton on Collie coal to the goldfields, that is, to Kalgoorlie, over and above what it was previously. If anything is calculated to injure an industry at the present juncture, it is the putting on of an increased impost like this.

MR. THOMAS: Will the Federal Constitution allow you to do otherwise?

MR. FRANK WILSON: Most decidedly. Every one knows that Collie coal is subject to spontaneous combustion, and everyone knows that we cannot hope to have an export trade in Collie coal. Therefore, the question of rates to Perth, Fremantle, and Bunbury is not of much moment, but our hope is that the consumption will extend back — [MR. SCADDAN: It never will] — back up to Midland Junction, back up to the Midland Railway, back to the goldfields eventually. I think I have induced the Minister, at least he has given me his word, that he will assist to send 500 tons to Day Dawn for trial.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: But I am not reducing the rate below what is legal under the Federal Constitution, as intimated by one hon. member.

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am very glad to hear that, for we may hope for some permanency, if we can establish a trade.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The only way we can give you consideration is by bringing the coal from Bunbury to Perth or Collie to Perth.

MR. FRANK WILSON: At any rate I know that there is nothing in the Federal Constitution which at present necessitates our doing away with these preferential rates, if we wish to keep them on. [DR. ELLIS: The Act itself.] The Act itself provides for an Interstate Commission, and that Interstate Commission will have certain powers; but what are we going to do with fuel which is inferior to the fuel imported here, and is acknowledged to be inferior? Do members mean to say that any Interstate Commission is going to insist upon the railage charged on the imported coal being as low as that charged on the local article, the value of which is acknowledged to be some 25 to 30 per cent. below that of the imported? Is the Interstate Commission going to wink at the fact that the shipping companies are carrying the imported article practically for nothing to our ports, to compete with the local article? Certainly not. Are we going to commit suicide with regard to our industries? Are we not justified in protecting them as far as we legitimately can in honour with the other States? I maintain that there is nothing whatever in the Constitution which will prevent the preferential rate being in vogue which we had heretofore so far as local coal is concerned. It is time to sing out when one is hurt. It is time enough to haul our flag down when we are defeated. It will take years to establish an Interstate Commission; it will take years for that Interstate Commission to get to work; and I venture to say that the verdict of the commission will be in favour of the local fuel as against the imported article in this instance. I want to say that notwithstanding the fact that our rates have been increased so far as our local industries are concerned, some of them, notwithstanding the fact that our great agricultural industry in certain districts of this State is to be injured through this alteration in the tariff, and put into competition, in fact put out of competition with its neighbours, notwithstanding the fact that the whole of the commercial obligations of those engaged in these different industries are upset, that the contracts they have entered into to deliver for a given period must of necessity result in a tremendous loss to them owing to having to pay these extra

rates; notwithstanding all these facts, we are not, according to the answer to my question put to the Minister for Railways, going to receive one penny increase in our revenue. The answer to my question indicates that the railways will show an estimated drop of some £40,000. Then why are the rates interfered with? The Commissioner of Railways says that we must make the railways pay. Are we going to make the railways pay by increased rates on our main industries? Are we going to make the railways prosperous by making a drop of £40,000 in our revenue? I cannot understand the position. It is beyond my comprehension as a business man. On one hand we have the decrease in revenue estimated at £40,000, whilst on the other hand we have an increase of rates which is going to hamper the merchants and the manufacturers and hamper the main industries of our State. If we have come on bad times and if we have found that our railway revenue is falling away, I maintain that the same action ought to be taken as the manager of a private firm would take to meet bad times. One does not find rates being increased in bad times, but finds a determined effort made to reduce the cost of production and to reduce the working costs; and every effort ought to be made by the Minister for Railways to see that every reduction is made in the working costs of our railway system before he takes in hand or approves—because I blame him for approving—

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: I suppose you are aware of the power the Minister has?

MR. FRANK WILSON: No; but I know that if he has not sufficient power he has only to come to this House to get it. I presume the rates are subject to his approval. At any rate, I say that every effort should be made to see that the working railway costs are brought down to a reasonable amount, before one in depressed times talks about increasing the burden which the farmers, timber cutters, coal producers, and gold-miners have to bear.

THE MINISTER: The goldfields have been paying through the nose for a long while.

MR. RASON: They are paying more now.

THE MINISTER: They are paying less.

MR. FRANK WILSON: It seems to me something is radically wrong. My duty, I take it, is to point out to the Minister that he is wrong. He is the responsible head, and he must bring his subordinate officers to book, if they are wrong. It is his duty. I notice that the capital cost of the railways is increased enormously. Of course the improvements which have been inaugurated both as regards our railways and our rolling-stock ought to reduce working expenses; but we do not find anything of the sort. We find that the working expenses go up beautifully from 3s. 8d. per train mile in 1895 to 5s. 2d. in 1904; so that in nine years we have increased our working expenses from 3s. 8d. to 5s. 2d. per train mile.

MR. HOLMAN: The department is saving about £200 a week on Collie coal.

MR. FRANK WILSON: It has been spending the same sum on Collie coal for the past five years; and yet the working expenses have gradually increased every year, more particularly in later years—in 1897, 4s. 7d.; 1901, 5s. 1d.; and to-day, 5s. 2d. The much-abused Midland Company, which it is sought to drag into this debate, can run its railway at 3s. 2d. per train mile.

MR. A. J. WILSON: That is why the State should not buy it.

MR. FRANK WILSON: That may be a good argument; but does it not prove that the whole of our railway system has been overridden by its organisations? Does it not prove that it is in vain to expect efficiency in a department where the Minister has no control over his employees? And the Minister admits that he cannot dismiss an office boy without giving him a right to appeal.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: I cannot even give him the right to appeal.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The whole system is absolutely wrong; and I venture to state that if we do not give the responsible officers the power of dismissal, we cannot get a fair, proper, and legitimate return from the workers for the money paid them.

MR. THOMAS: Who gave the Commissioner of Railways his powers?

MR. FRANK WILSON: Parliament. What has the Government done to try

to restore confidence in the industries of the State, to try to induce the investment of capital, to solve the problem of the unemployed? Where are their efforts to employ those now seeking work? Where is the bold immigration scheme which was projected at the command of the four Independents, which was to open up our lands, bring increased traffic to our railways and increased trade to our merchants, and general prosperity to our workers?

MR. MORAN: The Government are waiting for General Booth's report.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Nothing has been done. We may say what we like about Canada, we may publish in our newspapers that the increase of population for the past decade is greater in Australia than in Canada; but we cannot get away from the fact that the representatives of Canada in the old country are doing twenty or a hundred times as much work to advertise Canada as ours are doing to advertise this country, and to get that population which we must have if we are to prosper. Speaking of Australia generally, I say we have a great country, a vast tract of land sparsely populated, merely sprinkled with a population; and it is against all the laws of nature that we should keep this country for the mere handful of people we have in it to-day. As sure as fate, as the years roll by—possibly not in our time—the congested people of other countries will overflow into Australia, unless we do something to build up a nation. I will again refer to the President of the United States, who said, addressing Australians, "You must let the world enter your gates, or keep your cradles full." That sentiment has my strong support. I feel that we are not doing what we ought to do. We are not educating our workers to be proud of the work they tackle. They are gradually adopting a system of work restriction. Every trend of trade unionism is to restrict the output, to restrict the advantage that the workman must of necessity derive from his labour. It is considered an honour to-day to get off with as little work as a man can do, instead of emulating the workers of olden times, who used to work for the glory of doing quickly and well the jobs entrusted to them, without considering what pay they were to receive. I do not for a moment

advocate that men should be underpaid, but that the worker should be advised to bear his fair share of the burden when depression comes over our State, and that each of the two parties, employers and workers, shall bear its share of that burden until better times return. I hope we shall in considering these matters remember that New Zealand, that socialistic country whose example has been so often dined into our ears, is beginning to find that she will to some extent have to amend her ways; that she has gone rather too far. We find that great old general, Premier Seddon, saying that no farther burdens should be placed on industries. Replying to a deputation from the New Zealand employers' federation, he said:—

It was the duty of the Government to hold the balance fairly between employers and workers. He realised that in the face of the keen competition, no farther burden should be placed on industries. He was almost in dread of what would happen to New Zealand when the Panama Canal was completed, and New Zealand and Australia were face to face with old-world competition. New South Wales was becoming Americanised, and if the New Zealand trades unions realised the danger threatening them and the fact that the industries could bear no more without business going back, he was satisfied nothing could bring them so closely in touch with the employers as that realisation.

There is a pronouncement full of warning to Australia, and to Western Australia in particular. The question is, have we not gone far enough? In support of that, let me repeat what has been published to-day with regard to the State coal-mine in New Zealand—an undertaking which has been cast in the teeth of members of this House as an example which Western Australia should follow by nationalising the coal industry. A board of inquiry has been appointed to investigate matters connected with the Seddonville State Coal-mine, the position of certain persons connected with the mine, also why there is not a greater demand for coal, why the coal is not being put on the market, why the mine is not paying, and why, as alleged, the mine is overburdened by officials. The cable continues: "Mr. Seddon stated that he hoped all would come out well; but there were so many complaints that he had thought of cutting the painter in connection with these mines." Surely a nod is

as good as a wink to a blind horse. Labour members are the blind horses in this team. They wish to follow blindly in the footsteps of their socialistic brethren in the Eastern States, regardless of the fact that socialistic measures have not been beneficial to those States, and that they are not likely to do us any good in Western Australia. I hope this House, when it comes to decide the important question raised by the leader of the Opposition, will decide that we are already overburdened with this class of legislation; that we do not want such interference with our industrial pursuits; that we do not want all those theories and those principles of trades unionism, preference to unionists, day labour, and so forth; that the greater liberty we give to our citizens, the more likely are we to advance the interest of the State. Let members emphatically pronounce their verdict by turning out of power the gentlemen who represent trade unionists, allowing the leader of the Opposition and his friends to take their places.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

DR. ELLIS (Coolgardie): With permission, I should like to explain a few observations which I made in my speech of yesterday. Unknowingly, I repeated two or three times that the leader of the Government went to the leader of the Opposition. I did not mean to use the word "went"—I meant "conferred with" the leader of the Opposition. I had not in my mind any idea of the controversy as to who are responsible for commencing negotiations. I wish at the same time to explain to the Minister for Mines (Hon. W. D. Johnson) that I did not understand that his interjection had reference to that, when he interjected that what I said was not correct. He was perfectly accurate in his statement. So far as I know, my statement was not correct.

MR. RASON: Why do you not go farther? Is this an explanation or a statement?

DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. A. J. H. WATTS (Northam): I wish to record my emphatic protest against the personal bickerings and recriminations which have taken up so much time of this House. I think it

deplorable that so much time has been wasted on personal matters which could well have been avoided. I do not think that many electors of the State will be found with aught but a feeling of disgust at the manner in which the country's affairs have been conducted during the last fortnight. I think it lowering to the dignity of this House, and to members individually, to have to listen to these bickerings and recriminations, and to such twaddle as fell from the last member who spoke on the Address (Mr. Frank Wilson).

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in reflecting on the House.

MR. WATTS: The remarks of that hon. member with reference to members representing trades unions and so forth, I take it, are not believed by the members who give utterance to them; and I do not think the time of the House should be taken up with such protestations. I think the attack made on the Government by the leader of the Opposition, by members of his side of House, and by members on this (Government) side who have attacked the Government and the Premier, have been very ruthless, and unworthy of the members responsible for them. I wish to refer to the matter of railway freights. According to the new rate book, there has been an alteration to which exception was taken by the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) in freights on the Government railways. The hon. member said that there had previously been some opposition by the people of Northam to a preferential rate. I should like to tell the House why the opposition arose. The freight on wheat between Katanning and Kalgoorlie is roughly 10½d. per bushel, and from Northam to Kalgoorlie it is 9½d. The freight from Katanning to Northam was 4d. under the old rate, making the figures 1s. 1½d. if wheat were brought from Katanning to Northam, and the product taken from Northam to the goldfields—a difference in favour of the local buyer at Katanning of 3d. per bushel. I am sorry the member for Katanning is not here. I told him I intended to speak on this matter. The farmers in the Katanning district are not the men who benefit by that difference of 3d. a bushel. I say that advisedly, and without fear of

successful contradiction. The business is in the hands of the Katanning wheat-buyers; there is always a margin of 3d. in their favour; and if a Northam buyer attempted to buy wheat there, the Katanning buyers could easily raise the price 1d. per bushel, and still have an advantage of 2d. over the Northam buyer. The sellers get 3d. less per bushel; and the actual difference is only 1d. This anomaly has always been a bone of contention with the produce-buyers at Northam, who tell me that the Katanning farmers have not got the price they should have got for their wheat; and the millers of Northam have been debarred under the preferential rate from producing wheat there.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. WATTS (continuing): This cry about the poor farmer and the rates of freight, that comes from the millers of this State, must be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt. When we consider that the prices paid for wheat by the millers here, by those gentlemen who make complaints about the rates of freight, are only equivalent to the prices paid for wheat in the Eastern States, and when we recognise they are charging pounds per ton more for the product of that wheat which the farmer should actually be getting, we can realise the value of their sympathy with the poor farmer and the poor price he receives. According to the rates at which flour and the products of wheat are selling here, a considerably higher price could well be paid for the wheat itself. When these gentlemen are charging these high rates for their flour, bran, and pollard, and when they talk about a little extra freight charged on the wheat from Katanning, I think we ought to be a little careful in accepting their statements in that regard. As I was pointing out, the Northam merchant has to pay at the rate of 9½d. per bushel for wheat sent from Northam to Kalgoorlie, while the Katanning merchant only pays 1d. more.

MR. BURGESS: Why should he pay more at all?

MR. WATTS: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman would be prepared to do some of my carting for 20 miles at the

price he pays for his own carting for one mile. I could give him plenty to do if he would.

MR. BURGESS: You believe in preference to unionists and not in fair play to other people.

MR. WATTS: They were paying only 1d. from Katanning to Northam, and had the advantage of 3d. to 4d. per bushel. That advantage should go to the farmer; but, as the member for Williams interjected a little while ago, they are giving 3d. less for wheat at Narrogin than at Northam, showing clearly that the advantage in freight given under the old rates did not benefit the farmer in those districts. With the advantage of 3d. per bushel, if the Northam merchant attempted to buy at Katanning, the Katanning merchant could raise the price 1d. and still have an advantage over the Northam man who would have to pay the freight to Northam and then on to the goldfields, and thus the Katanning merchant could cut the Northam man right out of the market and, when he got rid of him, revert to the old rate and get the advantage of the 3d. himself. What the Northam people have asked for, and what I would recommend to the members for Great Southern districts as what they should try to bring about, is that where the miller buys wheat at Katanning and takes it to York or Northam and grinds it into flour, bran, and pollard and sends on to the goldfields, he should only be called upon to pay for the wheat and its product the same rate from Katanning to Northam or York and on to the goldfields again as the Katanning merchant or miller would have to pay by sending the stuff direct to the goldfields. If this be done, the millers of York, Beverley, Northam and other parts of the country could go to Katanning to buy wheat, and could give top prices and enter into competition with the Katanning millers, and give the farmers there the advantage of that competition. With this advantage in freight rates they could take the fullest advantage of the wheat grown at Katanning. With regard to the attack made on the Government, we had to expect it from the gentleman on the Opposition side of the House. It was only to be expected that they would seek to get the fullest advantage that could pos-

sibly accrue from the present position of parties; but I think it is only the duty of members on this side of the House to put before the people of this country the position of members who have been traitors in their own camp. I think it is only just to the rest of the party and to the House and to the Labour party that the actions of the members for Coolgardie and Mt. Margaret in their attacks on the Ministry should be explained as far as we are able to explain them. There was no more staunch supporter of the Premier than the member for Coolgardie up to the time of the reconstruction of the Cabinet. [DR. ELLIS: Hear, hear.] In season and out of season, no matter when a member of this party dared to raise his voice or say one word in any shape or form against the Premier, the member for Coolgardie stood up and combated the statement made. It did not matter what was said, he was always on his feet combating it; but immediately the result of the reconstruction of the Ministry was known, that gentleman turned; and we have had him, I think ever since, combating his leader. The same thing applies to the member for Mt. Margaret. The member for Coolgardie said that their grievance was with the Premier only; and I can quite accept his statement, when it is remembered that the Premier was responsible for that hon. member not being included in the Cabinet and for the deposition of the member for Mt. Margaret. Their grievance is certainly with the Premier, and they do not object to stating it as strongly as possible. I say that the honourable action for men to take, if they are men, is not to hide behind their pledges and say "We are going to say everything possible to discredit the Premier in the eyes of the people of the State in words, but we have not the courage to back up our words with our votes." When members turn round and say they are going to say what they like but are not going to vote against the Premier, it is deplorable. When we find that men have not the courage to back up their words and take the logical conclusion of what they say, I say it is deplorable. If I have a grievance or think I have a grievance against the leader of this side, I will vote against him, and take the responsibility of my action

and appeal to my electors to justify my proceedings or otherwise; and I should like to point out that when a pledge was asked from members of this party, it was not that they should support the leader in words, but also that their actions should justify their words. Now, regarding the statement made that members of this party dare not vote against the Government, I wish to combat it most distinctly. Regarding the purchase of the Midland Company's concession for one and a-half millions, there would be no one found to oppose it more strongly than myself, and if the information I have is correct, I would follow it to its logical conclusion, and if made a party question I would vote against the Government and go to my electors to justify my action. [DR. ELLIS: What about the exemptions in the land tax?] As far as that is concerned, it has always been an open question as to whether there should be exemptions or not. At the last elections it was not stated whether there should be exemptions or not; but I advocated a land tax with exemptions, and I am quite prepared to stick to that, and to vote for it in this House. I do not think we would be wise in purchasing the Midland land at the price required, and not give facilities to people to take up Government land down the Great Southern Railway, or in other parts where it is available. Certainly, if we spent all our available cash in purchasing the Midland concession, there would be no money to build spur lines which have been suggested to open the back country. People cannot settle on the land without railway communication, and so it will mean that we will force people to buy land on the Midland concession and pay £2 or £3 per acre, which would need to be charged to recoup the Government, when one could get equal land from the Government in other places at 10s. per acre. If we have to buy the railway at the price mentioned and treat it as a repurchased estate, we must charge £2 or £3 per acre to recoup the money expended. With regard to the so-called Independents, I have looked upon these gentlemen not so much as Independents. We have heard a great deal of them as being Independents from the other side of the House; but I have always looked upon them as being

Government supporters, and when it was decided that they should be asked to meet the rest of the Government supporters of this House, I thought it was only an honourable proceeding which these gentlemen were entitled to accept, and a concession which members on this side of the House were entitled to give them. As far as members on this side of the House are concerned, a great deal has been said about the support given to us by these gentlemen on the front cross-bench; but I think if we do not get any farther support from them, we have to thank them for that which they gave us during the last session of Parliament. Their support was given ungrudgingly; and so far as we are able to judge, and so far as we know, I think I am correct in saying that they received no personal concession or consideration whatever for the support they gave. Whatever is the outcome of the vote, it will always be pleasant to members of the Labour party to remember that the support was given in a manner that was in the best interests of the country, and the proceedings up to that point have been honourable.

MR. F. CONNOR (Kimberley): Before entering on the subject matter of the debate, I wish to protest against the waste of time that has been caused by members who have spoken up to the present, and who had not up to the present been attacked during the debate. I question whether it is necessary for a man to defend himself before he is attacked. I resent, as this country should and will resent, the fact that the time of the House has been taken up with speeches on a no-confidence motion that have had nothing to do with the issue at stake; and I hold it will be necessary before long to have alteration made in the Standing Orders by which no member should have the right, without being able to place something new before the House, to take up the time of the House and the country for two hours at a stretch. I hold that there should be in the Standing Orders of this House an order fixing a time-limit, and I think twenty minutes to a half-hour is quite sufficient, after the leaders on either side have spoken. The sooner such Standing Order exists, the better it will be for this country. I would also suggest, taking into con-

sideration the length of time occupied by members here, that it would be a benefit to this House and the country if the number of members of the House were reduced. I will not go so far as to say it should be reduced to half, because if that were done, in my opinion there would be only one side. I want first to put myself right personally. Perhaps we are all talking personally here; everybody is talking, not about this no-confidence motion, but about his position. I want it to be clearly and distinctly understood, that since the present situation eventuated in regard to the political state of affairs, nothing has taken place on my part of which I am ashamed; and I say that if the same position occurred again, I should take the same action as I have taken up to the present. All sorts of people are accused of being influenced by their own position. Whatever the effect of this debate may be in the future, there is only one party responsible for it, and that party is not the Independent party, nor is it the Labour party in my opinion, as I think I shall be able to show; and indeed it has already been proved, so that it is hardly necessary to prove it. It was the greed for office of certain gentlemen in this House who at present do not hold office that was the means of stopping the works and the machinery of government, and keeping the affairs of the State back to the extent they have been for the last three weeks. Before I go farther, I apologise. I only intended to speak for a few minutes, but I suppose I shall have to do so at greater length. I have proved that it is not the fault of anybody sitting on this side of the House that this no-confidence motion was tabled. Did the much-abused Independents go and ask anybody on that side of the House to pass a no-confidence motion? I will not be personal, but did the gentlemen who are responsible for the moving of this no-confidence motion approach the Independents and ask them to join with them?

MR. GREGORY: Which do you mean?

MR. RASON: Whom do you mean?

MR. CONNOR: That bench, the Opposition. Did they ask them? Echo answers—nothing. I will go a step farther, and ask what is more important, a more important aspect than any of our aspirations here either as

Independents or Oppositionists—did the public ask for it? I say the public did not ask for it. I want to explain to members what was the position taken up by the noble four. What was their position when they were where everything was decided and should be decided, and will be decided, and that is before their constituents? What was their object, what did they say when they went before them? Did any of us four try to put that party sitting on that side of the House into power? I say no. I go farther and assert that two members of the then Opposition, myself and Mr. Pigott, late leader of the Opposition, went to fight a contest against the then James Government. We were both Oppositionists, but let me tell the House that the night before the election was fought in Broome, Mr. Pigott turned round and said he was in favour of the James Government; so I was the one straight-out Oppositionist to that Government in that constituency. I may be beaten in putting the case before the country. I do not care so much about the opinion of this House, but I want these things to go before the country. I may be heated, but I want to put my position clearly, that I could not under any circumstances be a party to help to put into power the people whom my constituents returned me to put out of power. I want to know whether the return of the four members sitting on this bench has been in the interests of the country. They were returned with the object which I say they have loyally and faithfully carried out. I want it to be put before the country in this way: Would it have been better that the then Opposition, represented so ably on those benches at present, should have taken the Treasury benches and the 22 solid Labour votes should have been on those benches, supported by people whose natural sympathies would cause them to assist them? Would the statute-book of this country show better to the advantage and the interests of the country than it does at present? I would not blame members who sit on these benches for not enforcing legislation which they could not enforce in the present position. I have no hesitation in saying, that if the members who sit in Opposition and aspire to govern this country had been

sitting here, certain laws would have appeared on the statute-book which are not there at present. The question arises, has the present Government failed in the objects for which it was placed there? It was placed in power not so much to make a few laws as to carry on the administration of the country. I will not labour the question. We have had long speeches on both sides of the House. But I will say that in my opinion we have met the charge made by the leader of the Opposition. I consider that if the Government have failed—I do not admit they have failed—they are in no worse position than hon. members sitting on that bench would have been in, because they only followed precedents created by the people who are at present in Opposition and would like to be the Government. If we as the so-called Independents—well, the Independents; we will call them by their proper name—have been of no greater advantage to this country, if we have done nothing else, we have done this much, we have defeated the swindle which was to be perpetrated in connection with the Midland Railway Company. That I hold is as dead as Julius Cæsar. One of the most able men who have had the honour of being Colonial Treasurer of this country, I refer to Mr. Illingworth, said in 1901—and if members wish for proof they can turn up *Hansard*—that the old Government, that was the one of which he was a member, could have bought the Midland Railway at a million pounds, but that it was worth £1,300,000. If the Midland Railway could have been bought for £1,000,000 four years ago, and in the meantime the company have sold a very large proportion of their best land, some of the eyes of the country having been picked out, which is now freehold, I say we are not doing our duty to our country if we are prepared now to condone such a thing and give £1,500,000. I think it is only two years ago there was in office the next-best Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner.

MR. MORAN: I do not think either of them was a patch on the old man.

MR. CONNOR: Just so; but I am taking what they think.

MR. GREGORY: May I ask if that quotation of Mr. Illingworth's is in *Hansard*?

MR. CONNOR: I think it is. I took this from *Hansard*. He said it anyhow. There are lots of other things he said in regard to which I do not agree with him, but I agree with him in this. Mr. Gardiner, a very able Treasurer who was looked upon with great respect by my hon. friends opposite, and whose opinion would, I think, be taken by them as being worthy of consideration and worth following, said in this House not long ago that the utmost this country could borrow or dare to borrow would be £500,000 per annum for three or four years. "Three," he said, and he was not sure about five. What is the position? We find that this gentleman, who resigned from Parliament without any very great necessity I think, because he might possibly have been elected even against my friend the present member for Albany (Mr. Keyser), but did not try—we find this Treasurer who is talked about and taken as an authority suggesting that this country, which according to him could only borrow £500,000 per annum, should be saddled with two millions this year. I think the position is bad. I am sorry that I have to give my sympathy to an institution in this country at present, a very valuable institution in some ways, but which in this particular case has been rather a failure, I desire to offer my sincere sympathy and condolence to the *Morning Herald* in regard to its falling off the 'bus over this transaction. I was going to put the question, which side of this House represents most the interests of the population? I do not think that is necessary, and I will not go into it any farther. The member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) in his wisdom the other night sought to impeach the honesty and public honour of men who sit upon this bench. I have been in this House nearly 13 years, and the hon. member has been in it a few months longer. I defy him to substantiate the words made use of in this House the other night in my case, and I defy him also to substantiate them in reference to the characters and actions of my hon. colleagues sitting on these seats. His attack was unjust, unfair, ungenerous, unmanly if you like. I cannot use any stronger words, because the rules of the House prevent me. How often, may I

ask the hon. member, has he ratted? Can he accuse me of ratting once? I stood by the old party (Forrest) from the day I first entered this House; and I have never moved. I have never crossed the House during the 13 years I have been in Parliament; and when I am attacked by the hon. member I resent it; I cast it back at him.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: You threatened many times to cross the floor if you did not get your own way.

MR. CONNOR: I have never done so; and I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member denies the accusation of the member for Katanning.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: All I say is that he threatened many times to change his seat.

MR. CONNOR: I will refer to a little political history, for the hon. member's delectation. I will remind him of the time when, in opposition to the Leake Government, a very fair array of fighting talent sat on the Opposition side of the House. I will remind him of a good fight put up to eject the Leake Government, and he was the leader of the party which put up that fight. Consequently, he being the leader of the party, the Governor would have sent for him in the ordinary course when the party succeeded in ousting the Government. The party won by two votes, and the Government was defeated. And what did the hon. member do? He ran away. He was not game even to go to the Governor, after defeating the Government by a direct motion of want-of-confidence, on which he prided himself. He enlarged on the fact that there had never been a no-confidence motion put so directly. He was not game even to try to form a Cabinet; and he handed over the job to Mr. Morgans.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: If you were fair, you would say why.

MR. CONNOR: I will tell the hon. member more than he will like to hear; and I advise him not to ask me to tell him anything. Had it not been for the political cowardice—I do not mean personal cowardice—of the hon. member, the probabilities are that the Morgans Government would have lasted until today. Whether that would have been

well for the country I am not prepared to say. I cannot help enlarging on the pitiful figure the hon. member cut as leader of the Opposition.

MR. FOULKES: I thought you were protesting a short time ago against recriminations.

MR. CONNOR: So I was. The hon. member does not know that I am now talking history. I shall not continue my recriminations, but will refer to the time when the member for Katanning was the Minister for Railways. I would ask members whether they recollect what was then the price of water on the goldfields, that the Government were offered water at 25s. per thousand gallons when they were paying £3. Members will find the debate reported, I think in *Hansard* Vol. XX., pages 1865-6. They will see that the hon. member was blamed—not accused of being pecuniarily interested, but blamed as an administrator for that transaction; and the accusation has never been denied. Lots of other accusations of the same nature appeared in *Hansard*—Dalgety deals, for instance. Take the attacks on the hon. member by Mr. Holmes, when member for East Fremantle. Read the Davies papers. The hon. member (Mr. Piesse), who I think is correctly reported in *Hansard*, told us the other night that it is on account of the time taken up by his own business that he has not the affairs of the country in his hands. I ask members on both sides how it would suit them to have the democratic member for Katanning as leader of this House. He never put up but one fight in this House, and that is the fight I refer to when he as leader of the Opposition messed up and broke up a good fighting party. I am perhaps devoting too much attention to him; but I do it because when the hon. member attacked us (Independents) personally, and when it was pointed out to him that he was mistaken, his apology, if it can be called an apology, was such as I cannot accept, and I am sure that no other member is satisfied with it. He had not the manhood to withdraw his statement; but he tried to shuffle out of it by giving a qualified denial. The hon. member, when Minister for Railways, was very generous to the employees. He would never agree to giving the men any concessions; he

would never allow them to form a union. I have to congratulate the Opposition on the fact that a coalition was suggested by them. It was to be a coalition of the conservative member for Subiaco (Hon. H. Daglish), the conservative member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. W. D. Johnson), and other conservatives on this (Government) side of the House, with such democratic and socialistic members as those for Sussex, Katanning, and York. I congratulate the country that such a thing was possible, and that the services of those socialistic members should be available in the interests of the country to coalesce with members on the Government side. One other remark in connection with this new Government, if it comes into power. Probably it will be bossed by the member for Katanning, who when Minister for Railways said he was in favour of having the railway accounts audited by the department itself. I hope we shall never get back to that state of things.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: That practice rules all over the world.

MR. CONNOR: There are always two sides to every question. I come to the proposed purchase of the Midland Railway and lands. The present position of the Government and the company is not what I think it ought to be. Several settlers, and good settlers I hold, took up country from the Midland Company two, three, and four years ago. Those settlers went on their lands after buying them at £1 an acre—a fair price to pay. If the Government now owned the land, they would not sell any of it for less than £1 an acre, and should not if they would. The settlers cleared and fenced the land, and spent a lot of money on water conservation; and to-day they cannot get their titles. When they bought the land they paid 25 per cent. of the purchase money. I do not know how it has come about; but I have here a document which I think was issued by the Government. It sets forth regulations respecting the whole of the Midland Railway Company's lands which are mortgaged to the Government. Those settlers who bought that land some years ago cannot get their titles to-day; and they say that is the fault of the Government. If so, the Government are in my opinion wrong. I think those settlers have a right to the

fee simple of the land, seeing that they are prepared to pay the balance of the purchase money. [MEMBER: Those regulations are not retrospective.] They must be. I believe there was an agreement by the purchasers which to some extent binds them. But right is right and wrong is wrong; and if those men took up this land in good faith and spent their money on it, they have a right to the fee simple.

THE PREMIER: Have you read the conditions of sale?

MR. CONNOR: No; that is the trouble.

THE PREMIER: Do not the conditions of sale usually govern such transactions?

MR. CONNOR: They do not justify a person, a corporation, or a Government in taking from people what belongs to them. [MEMBER: Nothing is taken.] Undoubtedly this is a taking away from those settlers of all the money they spent in water conservation, clearing, and fencing; and there is enough "fencing" in this House without taking any more away. The hon. member (Mr. Rason), who aspires to lead the House if his party comes into power, sat some years ago with me in Opposition, and I am sorry to have to say that one of the reasons why I cannot follow him as a leader now is because of his action at that time. He was then Whip of the Opposition, and I fear that his sympathies, while acting in that capacity, were with the Government; because the moment the Morgans Government was defeated, or very soon afterwards, the hon. member took what in my opinion—

MR. RASON (on a point of order): At the time the hon. gentleman refers to I was not the Whip of any Government; and I ask him to withdraw the statement he has made.

MR. CONNOR: I withdraw the statement that the hon. member was Whip of the party; but he was a paid secretary to the leader.

MR. RASON: He was not. He was neither Whip nor paid secretary to the leader.

MR. CONNOR: Does the hon. gentleman absolutely deny that.

MR. RASON: I absolutely deny that statement; and I cannot ask for anything better than to be at liberty to put the

whole facts before this House and the people of Western Australia.

MR. CONNOR: All I know is that the hon. member was a very active member of that party at that time, and that as soon as the party was broken up he took office with those then in opposition to that Government. There is another reason why I could not vote with the members of the old James Government; because in the conduct of the last general elections practices were resorted to which I hold were unfair and not in the interests of the country. People were supposed to be able to record postal votes. If they could not do that, what was the use of having them? I was in the North at the time, and postal votes were recorded at Hall's Creek. I telegraphed to the Government that it would be impossible for those votes to reach the central polling booth at Broome, and I asked that they should be counted as the votes at Wyndham and Derby were counted. A few days after, when the tide turned in connection with my friend Pigott and when he thought allegiance was due to the James Government, a telegram reached me at Broome saying that these votes could not be counted at Wyndham; and it is well known that all those votes were for me. I immediately telegraphed and gave the matter into the hands of my solicitors, who approached the Government. I know my solicitors were able men who did not neglect their business; and I know they approached the members of the Government, particularly the Colonial Secretary; but I am not referring to any one Minister—I am talking of the Government. It was most unsatisfactory. If it had been that the votes at Hall's Creek were supposed to be for Pigott, they would have been counted at Wyndham or Derby; but because they were supposed to be for Connor, the votes had to go to Broome. A little piece of old reminiscence occurs to me; but let me be sure—it is very nice sometimes to look back on old history; and I recollect that the members for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins, East Perth (Mr. James), and Albany (Mr. Gardiner), who were sitting as loyal supporters behind the Leake Ministry, when it became known that the present leader of the Opposition was taking office, got up and walked and sat

down on the cross-benches. I am rather dissatisfied with the manner in which the Government are handling the black question in the North. I do not blame them, but I want to take an opportunity of referring to it. The question has not been handled as it should be; and whether my friends here or those opposite are in power, they must take up the question and grasp it firmly. I have telegrams here which I wished to read to the House; but I think it would be unfair to take up so much time. There is another thing that should have appeared in the Speech. It is not a no-confidence matter—I have more confidence in this side of the House than I would have in that side—but it is a matter that should have been in the Governor's Speech, and that is in regard to the unregistered racing which is becoming a huge curse to the country and a great sore, not only in a moral but a financial aspect; and whatever Government be in power it is time they took the matter in hand, and dealt with it properly. I compliment the Government for the manner in which they have dealt with the Pilbarra Railway question. There in the North-West we have a huge country undeveloped; and we have almost all the minerals that are known, and also a great pastoral country at the back of it; yet we have no means of developing these industries. The position of these industries would not be so bad if it were not for the fact that the country is almost timberless, and one cannot develop mining in that country until there is a railway, so that fuel can be carried at a cheap rate. There is another thing some attention might be paid to, and that is to watch what is likely to happen in the near future in the Federal Parliament. After all, what we are doing here does not affect us to such a large extent. Probably less machinery would do to carry on the affairs of the State; but we want to watch the Federal Parliament so that we can produce sufficient revenue to carry on; and to watch and guard against, as far as lies in our power, a protective tariff being put on this country. I do not for a moment say that we have any power to stop it; but I ask public men to keep the matter before them, and to influence the members who represent them in the Federal Parliament, so that the Commonwealth may

not go in for a high protective tariff on the Customs of this country which we could not carry at present. The leader of the Opposition moved a direct no-confidence motion, and then what did he do? I do not say personally he did, but his party traduced the Independents, who have not sought office. If they did suggest that office should be given to some section outside the Labour ranks, and that it should be of an honorary character and not paid for, would members on the opposite side of the House have done the same thing? Would they have offered their services and done hard work for the country for nothing? [MR. BURGESS: Yes.] The hon. member's services are not required. I am sorry for the hon. member. I admire ambition in any man; but we know that the hon. member's ambitions are huge, and that his intellect is not capable of carrying out those ambitions. I sympathise with the manner in which he is put in the background by the party he so loyally supports. With all earnestness and truth I say I am in sympathy with any democratic ideas, as long as they do not go too far. I am in sympathy with the members on this side of the House, else why should I be here? Do my monetary interests justify me in sitting on this side of the House? I say they do not; and I do not care. My ideas are such as that I want to sit with the people and the direct representatives of the people; and there I am satisfied. I say in conclusion that I am not satisfied with the constitution of Cabinet as it at present exists. I hold that in the Cabinet there should be some one man, I do not care where he comes from, who is not bound by the Labour pledge. I care not who he is or what he is, so long as he is not tied by the pledge and is a decent and honourable man. I think I have expressed my opinion in connection with this question; and I am rather sorry I have taken up so much of the time of the House.

MR. W. NELSON (speaking to Mr. Moran's amendment): I need not assure the House that in company with most members I have listened with a great deal of pleasure to the very eloquent speech of my Hibernian friend; and I cannot help thinking it should be almost my first duty to condole with the unfortunate members of the Opposition on

the fact that the last vestige of hope has utterly gone—[MR. RASON: Oh dear, no]—and that it seems tolerably clear that, much as our Independents may be inclined sometimes to criticise us, and despite the fact that they may not love us with a perfect love, at any rate they love us a great deal more than they love the members on the other side of the House. I should like to say here that I quite recognise, and I believe members on this side of the House recognise, that the hon. member who has just sat down, in expressing the sentiments he has just expressed, has proved himself to be one who, in spite of the fact that he possesses doubtless a considerable amount of wealth and may be fairly described as well-to-do, is nevertheless generous enough and broad-minded enough, due I think to his Hibernian tendencies, to recognise the justice of the claims of the working classes of this country, and to give them an independent and generous support. I believe there are two kinds of democrats: the democrat from conviction, and the democrat from circumstances. The democrat from circumstances is apt to change his democracy when he changes his circumstances; but the democrat from conviction is the truest democrat of all, because he remains a democrat all the time. I should like to begin by saying that the member for Coolgardie, who as everybody knows is always an interesting figure—though his figures are never interesting—last night in this House made an attack on the leader of the party to which I have the honour to belong, of such a character that I deem it my duty on this occasion to enter my protest against it. I cannot, however, proceed without first of all congratulating the leader of the Opposition on the high example he set this House in the splendid and high-toned speech he delivered here yesterday afternoon. It is good that we should have some men amongst us who can place the honour and dignity of the House above the miserable wranglings of party warfare, who can bear in mind that though they are politicians they still remain gentlemen, and who even in the heat of political controversy can express sentiments which shame, even if they do not silence, the miserable personalities of meaner men. The member for Coolgardie quoted, if I may be per-

mitted to give the substance, the following remarks of the leader of the House: The Premier had said he was quite prepared to appeal to any members on this side of the House who had not confidence in the Government to vote against the Government; that he went on to declare he was not prepared to hold office on suffrage, or hold it by the votes of those who attacked him by their words, and he added that if he found himself repeatedly attacked by those who voted with him, he would have no hesitation in submitting his resignation to the Governor, and was prepared if necessary to do so. I ask what more honourable attitude could any honourable man adopt under the special circumstances than the attitude indicated by those words? The Premier practically declared, and every honourable man would declare the same in such circumstances, that he refuses to be kept in office by men who give him their votes, but at the same time withhold from him their respect; men who support him not because they deem it right, but because they do so from compulsion. There are two kinds of loyalty. There is indeed a kind of loyalty so reluctant and so grudging that any member would willingly barter it for honest hatred and open hostility. The member for Coolgardie said the Premier has no right to urge on any member to break his pledge; and other members went so far as to hint that it was a cowardly thing for the Premier to do—[DR. ELLIS: Hear, hear]—because the Premier knew that these men were compelled by their pledges to record their votes in his favour. But if it be a cowardly thing for the Premier to act in that way in these circumstances, is it not an equally cowardly thing for men to attack their leader when they knew that under the conditions which govern us the leader cannot, as in other parties, expel or repudiate these men? It is as much cowardice on one side as on the other. These men would not urge the charge of cowardice if they had brains enough to realise the logical consequences of the charge they are making. I deny that the Premier has ever asked these men to break their pledges. On the contrary, he has called on them, as he had a right to do, to keep their pledges not only in the letter but also in the spirit. What

he wants, and what he has a right to demand, is honest loyalty or honest hostility. I believe that in asking the men who stand behind him to loyally abide by him and give him that support by word and deed which a leader can justly claim, he is making a demand which has the support and sympathy of every member in the House. The member for Coolgardie went on to say that it did not necessarily follow that because they did not believe in the leader of a party, they were to forsake the party and its ideals. To him his party and his ideals ranged pretty close to a religion. When did the Premier ever ask anyone to forsake his party or the ideals of his party? Up to the time of the reconstruction of the Cabinet, the member for Coolgardie never preferred that charge against the Premier. On the contrary, up to that period the member for Coolgardie was one of the most loyal, one of the most timid, one of the most humble admirers in the Labour party of the Premier; and on the day on which the reconstruction was suggested, such was the admiration, such was the loyalty of the member for Coolgardie that he favoured giving the Premier an absolutely free hand—[Dr. ELLIS: I could not do anything else]—and he even expressed by resolution his unbounded confidence in his ability, in his honour, and in his wisdom in making the reconstruction. Yet on the day when the Premier reconstructed his Cabinet, the member for Coolgardie reconstructed his opinion of the Premier, and from that day to this every wise member of this party has reconstructed his opinion of the member for Coolgardie. Seeing that the Premier's policy has not been altered one iota, seeing that the member for Coolgardie favoured a reconstruction of the Cabinet, and seeing that nothing since has transpired, there is only one reasonable conclusion to which a rational man can come, that the member for Coolgardie has become a malcontent, not because of any departure from the ideals of the party, not because the Cabinet has been reconstructed, but because the nature of the reconstruction has not been satisfactory to the hon. member. I leave this House to decide the particular defective feature in that reconstruction which has worked so sudden and marvellous a change in the

opinion and the loyalty of the hon. member. I have myself repeatedly differed from the leader of my party; but after a decision has been taken in my parliamentary party, I have always obeyed in the letter and the spirit whatever that decision might be. I affirm that the actions of certain hon. members are grossly disloyal, and their reluctant votes do not condone their disloyalty. I ask these men in all seriousness, and I ask the House in all seriousness, to ask the question: what would take place if the course of action followed by the malcontents became the course of action followed by other men? Suppose, for example, we expelled our leader from the office he now holds, and suppose we elected another leader in his place. Of course there would be a vote. We would have a majority and a minority. Suppose the new minority acted towards the new leader as the present minority are acting towards the present leader; I submit the result would be that ultimately no self-respecting man would ever hold the position of leader of our party. I say the very fact that the hon. member has been acting on a principle which, if usually acted upon, would bring ruin and chaos to the Labour movement, proves clearly that his action is one of treason, and one he should be heartily ashamed of. It might be contended, and it may be contended, that the Labour party and the Labour Government have departed from the principles of the Labour platform. I candidly confess that that plea could be with some degree of consistency urged by the member for Forrest. It must be admitted that his hostility has at least had the merit of consistency, even if it never possessed the merit of good sense. But that plea cannot be urged by the member for Coolgardie, and it cannot be urged by the member for Mt. Margaret. I need not inform the House that the ex-Colonial Secretary was long regarded by us, and always regarded by himself, as one of the most advanced and uncompromising Labour champions in Australia. In the old days he used to hurl the thunderbolts of his wrath on such timid triflers as Hastie, Bath, and Johnson. He even refused to sit with them on the same side of the House, although, strange to say, he did not refuse to sit with them in

the same Cabinet. What I want to ask is, what did the hon. member do, when a member of that Cabinet, to urge on that Cabinet the advanced Labour legislation for which prior to joining it he used so loudly to clamour? The reply is, absolutely nothing. When the Government proposed a land tax with an exemption up to £1,000, I and other members of the party protested, but the member for Mt. Margaret was silent. When the mark-time policy was first propounded by the Premier, a quite consistent policy for the Premier who has never been a very advanced man—[DR. ELLIS: Hear]—I once said that though a splendid leader, the hon. member's one defect was that he did not adopt the platform. What I desire to say is that when the mark-time policy was propounded I and other members protested, but the member for Mt. Margaret was silent. When the wicked Pilbarra Railway was adopted by the Government, I and other members of the party raised a voice of protest, but the lion of Labour was silent. Does the member for Mt. Margaret reply that he was in a minority in the Cabinet, and that therefore it was his duty to be silent? I say if that applied to the Cabinet, it ought to apply to the party, that if he submitted in the one case, he should submit in the other. No man could reasonably blame moderate men like the Premier, like the member for Kalgoorlie (Minister for Mines), like the member for Kanowna (Minister for Justice) for adopting a moderate policy; but we have a right to complain of the moderation of the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor). We have a right above all to complain of his silence, particularly when that silence, as soon as he is ejected from the Cabinet, is suddenly transformed into a loud roar. The change in the attitude of the member for Mount Margaret has not resulted from any change in the policy of the Government, for the policy of the Government has remained unchanged. And yet though it was once good, it is now wicked. I can only conclude—[MEMBERS: Do not stop]—oh, I have not done with you; I can only conclude it is possible the difference in the two cases results from the point of view. Viewed from the inside of the Cabinet the policy was the very

essence of perfection; viewed from the outside it was the very incarnation of wickedness. I make no imputations; I simply state plain facts, and leave the House in silence and in sorrow to draw the obvious and lamentable conclusion. I desire to say just a few words in relation to the coalition. [MEMBER: Which one?] I will deal with both coalitions. I want to say right here that when I first came into this House, in the first speech I delivered—in fact the leader of the Opposition quoted from that speech the other night—I stated, and I did so in absolute sincerity, that I was sent here not to keep this Government or that Government in power, not to attach myself to this party or to that party, but to take that course which is most likely to secure the greatest instalment of the measures to which I was pledged, and to secure which my electors had returned me to Parliament. That is my position now; and I hold both in regard to the negotiations with the Independents and the negotiations with the members on the other side of the House, that nothing transpired which is not compatible with the highest political honour of the gentlemen on both sides of the House. Let me say that in Queensland—the country from which my honourable friend the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) hails, and where undoubtedly in his younger and better days he suffered for the cause of Labour—in that great State a coalition has done for Labour, for progress, and for the general well-being of the country what the Labour party, standing by itself, brave though it was, consistent though it was, capable though it was, utterly failed to accomplish. Members know that for something like ten years we had what was known as the continuous Ministry. Sometimes it was Philp, sometimes Dickson, sometimes Griffith, and sometimes McIlwraith. The Labour party could never succeed in influencing in any material way the legislation of that country. What was the result? About two years ago the liberals, the old liberals in Queensland, united with the Labour party and formed a coalition Government, with the result that the finances have been vastly improved, the Treasurer, a Labourist, being a man of great financial capacity.

The finances have been vastly improved, the franchise has been altered so that Queensland has been placed side by side with the great democratic communities of the continent, and altogether the result has been of a most beneficial character. I desire to quote briefly from the *Queensland Worker* in order that it may have some influence on my friend the member for Mount Margaret. The *Queensland Worker* is the most thorough-going and uncompromising organ of Labour and democracy in the whole of Australia. In fact, it is really ultra-socialistic; far more advanced, far more aggressive than even I am, wicked as I am. And yet the *Queensland Worker*, while it admits that the coalition, like everything else in the world, is imperfect, expresses itself in these words in a leading article written on July 8th:—

The *Worker* has no feeling of antagonism towards the coalition; it is grateful for the good work it has done. . . . There is still work for the coalition to do; there is no reason why, if the Morgan section plays fair, it should not easily and usefully last out the present Parliament.

So that we have an example in Queensland of the value of a coalition. I have always held that when no one party, no homogeneous party is strong enough to carry on the affairs of the country, it is the clear duty of Parliament under those circumstances to have some kind of an arrangement entered into with at least a sufficient number of members of Parliament to secure a stable Government, and to promote and carry on the work of the country. And I submit, if it had been possible to enter into a coalition here with members on the other side, if they had been agreeable to give us a reasonable instalment of those measures which we were sent to Parliament to secure, such a coalition would have been quite compatible with political honour, and would have been conducive to the well-being of the country and to the strengthening and consolidating of the Labour party. But while I think that such a coalition, had it been possible, would have been perfectly reasonable, I am of opinion that the coalition with the Independents is all that is necessary. [MEMBER: It is an impossibility.] No. There is no doubt whatever that a coalition with the Independents would be a more natural one,

and I think on the whole a more feasible one, than a coalition with members on the other side of the House. I am afraid that some members on both sides of the House have been utterly unfair as to the action of the Independents with reference to their treating with us in regard to a coalition. I want to say right here that from the beginning I have been an ardent advocate of a clear and complete understanding with the Independent members. I believe the member for West Perth is a man of undoubtedly high capacity and personal integrity; and I think it is perfectly just and perfectly reasonable for a man dowered with so many gifts, possessed of many high qualities, to be imbued with a legitimate ambition to serve the country in a capacity for which he is admirably fitted. I believe the same can be said of all the other members of the Independent party. If I can read the signs of the times, I have no hesitation in saying that in the very near future, possibly early in the next week, my unhappy friends on the other side will have realised that this motion of no-confidence, that has wasted the time of the House unduly, and for which they are responsible, has resulted in nothing but this, in consolidating and making stronger than ever the unity between the Independent party and the Labour party in this House.

MR. RASON: We will fix the responsibility, at all events.

MR. NELSON: Before sitting down I desire to make one or two other remarks. The member for Sussex (Mr. Frank Wilson), undoubtedly one of the most able and at the same time one of the most reactionary members of this House, has made an assertion which has been made over and over again in this House, to the effect that members on this side of the House are controlled by Congress and by outside unions. I desire to repeat that is utterly unjust. It is utterly unjust to say the Labour Congress unduly coerces any member of this House; and even if it were true that the labour organisations try to influence members of this House, members should remember we are elected by the same kind of process as they are elected by. I have been returned to this House by the same kind of votes, by the same process as members who were elected on

the other side were; and if the electors of Hannans, for example, in spite of the fact that they know I am a unionist and that my sympathies are with unionism, in the exercise of their right send me into this House, then I have as much right to sit in this House and I am as truly a representative of the people when I do so as any member who has been returned by the votes, not of those in favour of Labour, but of those who are opposed to it. I desire also to say a few brief words in connection with what has been said in reference to preference to unionists. I cannot understand my friend the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) when he holds up his hands in horror because we are about to introduce a clause into the Arbitration Act in favour of preference to unionists. I remind him that the Government with which he was connected brought in a Bill into which was introduced precisely the same clause as is to appear in the Bill we are about to lay before the House. I consider it is an act of strange political inconsistency for the member for Menzies to condemn a principle introduced by the Labour Government which he upheld when introduced by the Government with which he was connected, and which was actually carried in the House without any dissent, and only struck out, I believe, by another Chamber. It proves either that the member for Menzies is retrogressive or that he was guilty of supporting a Bill in this House which he had never taken the trouble to read.

MR. GREGORY: That is quite possible, is it not?

MR. NELSON: Let me say that all the talk about preference to unionists involving an act of injustice to non-unionists is talk indulged in by men who have never taken the trouble to understand what preference to unionists really means. As a matter of fact, it means simply that the Arbitration Court, pending an award, shall have power, if the court is appealed to and if evidence of the necessity for interference is forthcoming, to prevent an unscrupulous employer defeating the ends of justice by victimising the men who have been brave enough to assert their rights. [MR. DIAMOND: Why not call it protection, and not preference?] Wise men do not differ about terminology. The word is possibly not

the best that could be used. I should call the principle the prevention of victimising. But whatever name we may give it, the principle remains the same. It is simply a provision to be introduced in the Arbitration Act, a provision absolutely necessary to make that Act a living and a real thing. And I submit that those who object to preference to unionists either do not understand what it means, or are absolutely opposed to the principle of arbitration, and are advocating something which would ultimately destroy the measure and stultify its effects. It is said that preference to unionists is a violation of liberty. It is amazing to me that men who enter this House to make laws do not know the very nature of the laws they make. What is the end of all legislation, the meaning of all law? I submit that the effect of every law is to regulate the activities of the individual in the interests of society. All law has for its end the restriction of liberty; and the question is not, Does this measure restrict liberty? The real question for intelligent men is, Does this measure restrict liberty in a manner that the facts justify? I need not point out that no sensible man believes in unqualified liberty. Unqualified liberty, as I am sure members in Opposition are aware, means simply anarchy. I should certainly be the last man in the world to accuse a gentleman like the member for Sussex (Mr. Frank Wilson) of the crime of favouring in the slightest degree the wicked principle of anarchism. I am sure Oppositionists do not believe in unqualified liberty. They believe that sometimes and in some cases, under certain conditions, liberty must be restricted; and the question really is whether it is justifiable to restrict liberty in the industrial relations dealt with by the Arbitration Court. If my friends will carefully observe the trend of history during, say, the last hundred years, they will discover that the great British peoples with whom we are connected have extended liberty in certain directions and have restricted it in certain other directions; the underlying principle being that liberty is good where liberty is found to be beneficial, and that the restriction of liberty is justifiable where that restriction is necessary in the public interest. For example, take the great question of

religion. We know that at one time the law regulated even to the minutest details the religious creed a man might entertain. But we know that course has been abandoned; and the great Commonwealth of which we are citizens declares in its constitution that every man shall be free to hold and to express his own opinions on that great and fundamental subject. In other words, we have found that restriction of liberty in the department of religion is injurious to the State. But we have found also with reference to industrial activities, the regulation of factories, trade disputes, that to permit absolute liberty is to permit injury; so we have determined in the public interest to restrict that liberty. I submit, therefore, that it is just and right to give preference to unionists, because that preference is absolutely necessary to the wise regulation of industrial disputes and the wise settlement of industrial conflicts. In concluding this portion of my speech, and before sitting down, I should like to remind the House of the great truth that the very Commonwealth of which we form a part is a great union. My friends opposite hold up their hands in horror at unionism. They are all members of a union; they are all bound by a vote of the majority of that union, whether they like it or not. If in the interests of this great country the Commonwealth can compel men to obey in the smallest details of life the law of the majority, if this great union can regulate the lives and activities of men, if by its majority vote it can compel a man if necessary to give his life in its defence, surely there cannot be anything seriously wrong in the State compelling men, even if only by indirect compulsion, to join a union, if by joining such a union they are laying the foundation of that industrial peace and prosperity which are necessary to the permanent well-being of the community? I desire to say in conclusion that I have no hesitation in predicting the results of this long and somewhat unfortunate discussion. I am glad to see my friends opposite smiling, for that proves that at least the vain desire is flitting from their minds, that they are beginning, like wise men, to reconcile themselves to the inevitable. I believe, and say unhesitatingly, that they have performed the functions of an Opposition in a manner altogether worthy of the

undoubted capacity they possess; and I am glad to be able to assure them that for the next two years at least they will have ample opportunities of exercising in that part of the House the admirable qualities which they unquestionably display. I should like to say a word more. I feel sure that the Premier is at last relieved of the worry with which he has been undoubtedly afflicted. I say in absolute sincerity, as one who frequently deemed it his duty to oppose him, that both in and outside of the parliamentary party, our leader has manifested an ability, an absence of personal likes and dislikes, and a general desire to sacrifice himself if necessary in the interests of the country, and has in fact conducted himself in such manner that in spite of the criticisms I have offered, I feel at this moment a far more loyal supporter of his than I ever felt before; and I have no doubt whatever that, now that this turmoil is over, now that victory is practically won, he will lead us on to greater and still greater victories; that the members on the other side will become gradually fewer day by day and week by week, until at last our only difficulty will be an entire absence of opposition to the good work we shall be doing in this House.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I should like to make an explanation. I cannot let the attack of the preceding speaker remain unanswered. The hon. member attacked me for attacking the Government and the policy of the Government.

MR. NELSON: I did not. I never attacked the hon. member for attacking the policy of the Government. What I said was that prior to entering the Cabinet the hon. member was a very advanced radical, while the other members of the Cabinet were moderate men. What I objected to was that he did not try when in the Cabinet to make those moderate men a little more progressive.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. member pointed to the Pilbarra Railway and other items in the Government programme, such as land taxation; and accused me of viewing these in one light while I was in the Cabinet, and in another light after I left the Cabinet. I have

never spoken about the policy of the Government.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot reply to arguments advanced. If he has a statement of fact to offer in explanation, I cannot object to his making it. But I cannot allow him to reply to arguments with additional arguments.

MR. TAYLOR: It is not my desire to reply to an argument, but to point out to the House the fallacy of the statement made by the hon. member. I never questioned any portion of the Cabinet policy that was drawn up while I was a Cabinet Minister. The portion of the policy about which I did raise my voice was the Midland Railway question, which was decided without my knowledge. My quarrel with the Premier I clearly explained to the House; and the hon. member when he attacked me as he did was unfair in the extreme.

DEBATE RESUMED.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. H. Daglish): Before this amendment goes to the vote, I desire simply to offer one or two remarks; remarks the necessity for which I regret; remarks that would have been unnecessary but for the personal attacks made on me. I hope that before we leave this evening both motions of no-confidence in the Government will be disposed of; and I express this hope, not from any personal motive, not from any selfish motive, but in the interest of the country at large. Every man who has any knowledge of or connection with business of any sort is aware that a state of political unrest and political turmoil means a heavy financial loss to a very large section of the population of Western Australia; and the longer that turmoil continues, the worse it is for a very great proportion of our people. I regret exceedingly that the debate now proceeding has been allowed to extend over so long a period; and I trust that members will join with this Government in endeavouring to secure a settlement of the issue one way or another to-night. When I say that, I want farther to say that I am personally indifferent as to what will be the issue of the vote I hope will be taken to-night. A lot of members have accused me of holding on to office at all cost. That accusation is one that cannot be truth-

fully laid against me; and I can assure this House that I have held office for nearly twelve months, or for a large portion of that time, against my personal inclinations. I have held office at a great sacrifice, because I have felt that my duty to the party with which I was associated demanded that I should continue to retain the position I am at present filling; and had I been satisfied that the interests of my party could have been served by my retirement and that my friend the member for Forrest could have stepped into my place and filled the position in this House nearly twelve months ago, I should have retired in order to give him an opportunity of doing so. I have stayed on for twelve months bearing personal abuse, not only in this House, and not only from those who are supposed to be politically opposed to me—and here I want to make a qualification, because perhaps my words are too strong. I have borne personal abuse, not from those who are politically opposed to me, but from those who were returned pledged to carry out the same principles as those to which I am committed. From those who sit on the Opposition benches and from those who sit in the Opposition corner and from those who sit in the Independent chairs, I have received the greatest consideration and the fairest criticism and even the most favourable and kindly support; but from certain members of my own party I have received votes—and abuse. I challenged those members the other night to have the courage of their convictions; and what am I told? I am told that my challenge is a cowardly one, and that those hon. gentlemen have not the power, without breaking a pledge, to vote against me. What then is the position? It is this, that if they vote against me they break the letter of the pledge, but if they speak against me, if they try to injure by their words the Government of which I am the head—and they can do it as effectually by words as by votes—if they try to injure that party, (because it is not the Government after all, it is the party) only by words, without voting, they protect themselves. They protect themselves; they are only guilty of breaking the spirit of the pledge; they are only firing from some safe shelter that enables them to try and put a bullet into

me while they themselves cannot be assailed by me or by their electors; and I am accused of cowardice for inviting them to come out from their cover and to vote as they speak for inviting them to have the courage to take their responsibility to the country and to this party; for inviting them to have the courage to depose me by their votes in the House if they cannot depose me by their votes in the party. What I want to say, and what I have said before, is that I have held this position with no degree of pleasure to myself. Some people talk of "the sweets of office." I have tasted a good deal of the bitterness of office. The sweets have never come my way, so far. Some members talk about "the emoluments of office," and about the advantage a man enjoys by drawing the salary of a Premier. I assure the House that if we could live our lives for the past twelve months over again I would not have been Premier of Western Australia during that time. I am speaking now when I know that no words of mine can affect the division about to be taken, when practically the minds of all members of this House are made up; and therefore I know that I cannot affect any votes, unless indeed I can affect the votes of my friends who have spoken against me and who have declared their intention to vote with me. I should very much indeed like to be able to affect the votes of those members; but as I cannot affect the votes of any other members by my speech, I am taking the liberty of speaking plainly and straightforwardly to this House; and I hope my words will reach beyond the limits of this House to the country. I am speaking possibly for the last time from this particular chair; and no one will be less sorry than myself if it be for the last time I do speak from this chair, at all events on the present occasion. I have pointed out that I have experienced a great deal of the bitterness of office. From the very inception of my premiership I have had attacks from the members of my own party—from a few members, a colleague reminds me. Having already acknowledged the generous treatment I have received from other sections of the House, I may diverge for a moment to thank the great majority of the Labour party for the loyal, favourable, and fine

support they have extended to me and the Government of which I am a member. Better supporters no Government could ever wish to have than the majority of the rank and file of the Labour party; and it is a pleasure to me to be in the position of leader of those gentlemen. I want to point out that I have been during my short term sometimes in a position to have to thank some members for forbearance, greater perhaps than I had the right to expect. I have at other times had to meet attacks like those made upon me last night, for instance. One member last night made upon me an attack so gross that I do not think it worthy of reply. The hon. member was good enough to quote an old play, portion of the *School for Scandal*, and to endeavour to apply it to me, and to imply that I had endeavoured to induce the leader of the Opposition to break from his political faith.

DR. ELLIS: He endeavoured to induce you.

THE PREMIER: I wish here to say a word or two in regard to the intercourse that took place between the leader of the Opposition and myself, an intercourse that was in no way dishonourable to him and in no way dishonourable to me; an intercourse the hon. member who made the speech knew was in no way dishonourable to the member for Guildford or myself. Knowing that, the hon. member should have refrained from making that speech; and after I had drawn his attention to the errors he made he should to-day have apologised for that speech. The hon. member knows that the facts of the case are these. The hon. the leader of the Opposition informed me that the members of the Opposition thought it desirable that representatives of the two sides of the House should discuss the desirability or otherwise of an arrangement whereby a coalition Government could be formed. That is the position as it originated. This was followed by my submitting the question to Cabinet. Cabinet thought it desirable to discuss the matter with their fellow members of the Labour party. A meeting of the Labour party was accordingly called. At that meeting of the Labour party it was decided that there should be appointed certain members of the Labour party to discuss the

desirability or otherwise of a coalition with certain gentlemen who had been appointed to represent the Opposition. That discussion accordingly took place. Now every man in the House knows the truth of what I am stating, that when I with my colleagues met the members of the Opposition, I met them, not as a leader of a Government which was threatened with a no-confidence vote, and not as Premier, but as a delegate from the members of the party which I have the honour to serve. I went therefore with a mission entrusted to me by the other members of this House.

MR. MORAN: One party only. You did not go as a delegate of ours.

THE PREMIER: I went there with a mission with which I was entrusted by the Labour party. What was that mission? It was to determine by conference whether in the opinion of those delegates the interests of the country could be more efficiently served by a fusion for the time being of the two sides of the House than they could be by the two sides remaining apart. The result of that conference, I think, convinced both sections who were represented at it that the interests of the country could not be better served by even a temporary union between both sides of the House, but that the advantage to the State lay, in the opinion of the representatives, in both sides of the House remaining different as they were. But the discussion that took place at that conference was one that was creditable to both parties. It was a discussion, not of what advantage should be given to individuals, but a discussion of what legislative programme should, in the interests of the country, be adopted if a coalition were arranged; and the whole question on which we split was the only question on which we might naturally be expected to split. It was the question which I thought before I went there was the one we should split on, that is our relative opinions on political issues. The whole conference was called in the interests of the country, and I believe was held in the interests of the country; and the tone of that discussion, so far as it went, was one that was not discreditable to any member who took part in it. That is all I desire to say in regard to that particular meeting; but I do say that no circumstance

connected with that meeting in any way justifies any member attempting to cast the slightest discredit on any member connected with it. I have been attacked by one of my ex-colleagues. I very much regret that any of my ex-colleagues should think it necessary to drag into a public discussion what has or has not transpired at a Cabinet meeting. Always in the past, throughout the whole of the British Empire Cabinet secrets, so far as my reading of history goes, are strictly observed by all Ministers and ex-Ministers. It has not been the rule for an ex-Minister, if there has been a quarrel, to drag into a public discussion any matters which have transpired or not transpired in Cabinet. But the member for Mt. Margaret has given as a reason for want of confidence in me that I have withheld facts from him, and quoted that on the 13th January there appeared in the *Daily News* a statement in regard to the Midland Railway Company, and in consequence of that he asked me certain questions and received a certain reply. I want to say that, to the best of my knowledge, no such conversation took place. I have no recollection of such conversation, and I want to go farther back and say I am not going to state whether this question was or was not discussed in Cabinet, because if I did I would be breaking Cabinet secrets. I want to recall the recollection of members back to September of last year, four months before the date the hon. member quoted. In September of last year, the member for Geraldton rose in his place and asked me, after notice, a question; and the effect of that question was whether the Premier would inform the House if the Government intended to negotiate with the Midland Railway Company in regard to the purchase of the line and lands belonging to that company. The reply I gave to the member for Geraldton was that the matter was under consideration. From time to time between September and January, certain statements appeared in the newspapers. The member for Mt. Margaret states the matter was never mentioned in Cabinet until after the 13th January. Now I ask members simply to form their own judgement. In September I publicly stated the matter was under consideration; and the hon. member for Mt.

Margaret heard and read the answer to that question. He read, no doubt, the numerous statements that appeared in the Press as to what the Government were doing between the date of that statement—that is between September and January—and he states the matter was never brought under the consideration of Ministers. I wish to make no statement one way or the other on the subject. I merely draw attention to the answer and ask members to recall to their minds the fact that many newspaper statements appeared between September and January on that question. The member has raised another point and accused me of not consulting him as to financial operations. He accused me that I did not consult him in regard to the last loan. I am prepared to admit that statement, and to farther state that when I took control of the Treasury, I took control on condition that I should be responsible for the work of that department, and that I alone should control the financial policy adopted by the Government; and as long as I am Colonial Treasurer I shall insist on exercising that control and taking that responsibility. I do not intend to enter afresh on the many subjects raised by the leader of the Opposition in moving his amendment. I would not be justified in doing so. Some of the matters have been renewed by members who have spoken during the discussion on the present amendment. I do not desire to take advantage of that fact to reopen the matter. I think I have already given a full, clear, complete and satisfactory reply to the arguments of the hon. member. The hon. member may perhaps take an opportunity of differing from me; but I am quite prepared to rest my case on the statements already made. I hope that when both questions go to a division it will be found—it is impossible for me to speak again on the first one—that a majority of the House has confidence in the Government. I stated at an earlier stage in the debate that personally it did not matter to me what the decision of the House would be; but I wish to modify that to this extent, that during the time the Government have been in office we have endeavoured to serve faithfully the people of the State of Western Australia, and in consequence

of that I should like to find the Government justified in the opinion of the House by a vote cast on these two questions in our favour.

AMENDMENT ON THE AMENDMENT.

MR. MORAN: I want, by leave of the House, to withdraw the amendment moved by me, just briefly stating that the amendment has served the purpose of entirely removing from the political atmosphere the danger of the Midland Railway purchase for the time being. Also an opportunity has been given to the leader of the Government and the leader of the Opposition of making a statement of their policy to the country. They have failed to respond and to indicate their policy; therefore I ask leave to withdraw the amendment, with the permission of my seconder (Mr. A. J. Wilson).

Question put, that leave be given to withdraw.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.

THE SPEAKER: The amendment must be now put.

MR. MORAN: Question.

MR. THOMAS: I would like to know if we are not dividing now on the amendment of the member for Guildford?

MR. SPEAKER: On the amendment of the member for West Perth.

MR. THOMAS: Then we shall still have the amendment of the member for Guildford before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: It will still be before the House.

Amendment (Mr. Moran's) put, and a division called for by two Opposition members.

MR. MORAN: Only one voice was heard. There cannot be a division.

MR. SPEAKER: I heard two voices.

MR. MORAN: Where were they?

MR. GORDON: The member for Nelson also called "No."

MR. MORAN: Every member calling "No" must vote for the amendment.

MR. GORDON: If the member for West Perth claims my vote (having called "No"), I certainly shall vote with him, and subsequently give an explanation for my vote.

Division taken, Mr. Gordon and Mr. Layman being the only members on the side of the Ayes.

MR. RASON: I rise to a point of order. I understand that the amend-

ment on which this division is being taken was moved by the member for West Perth and seconded by the member for Forrest. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether the mover and seconder of an amendment are not bound to vote for the amendment on a division.

MR. SPEAKER: Unless the hon. members took part in the call when I called for voices on this question, they may vote in whichever direction they please. There being only two members on the side of the Noes, it is not necessary to count the division. I declare the Ayes have it.

Amendment (Mr. Moran's) on the amendment thus negatived.

Amendment (Mr. Rason's) on the motion for adoption of the Address-in-Reply now stated.

MR. HARPER moved that the debate be adjourned.

Motion negatived.

MR. HOLMAN (ex-Minister for Railways and Labour) rose to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: As I have put the question to the House, the hon. member is not in order in addressing the Chair, unless I inadvertently overlooked him when I put the question.

MR. HOLMAN: I did not know you were putting the amendment. I was informed by one of the Ministers that the question was not going to be put, and that they were going to allow me an opportunity to speak if I desired.

MR. SPEAKER: After the amendment is disposed of, the hon. member can have that opportunity. The hon. member still has an opportunity, if he so desires; but I am afraid I cannot break a very strict rule.

MR. HOLMAN: The reason why I did not rise to speak was that the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) was on his feet, and I was waiting for him.

MR. SPEAKER: I will put the question again, and the hon. member may have an opportunity of speaking.

Question again stated.

DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): I am sorry indeed that I have to speak to-night, on account of the state of my health. I dare say that I shall not be able to last very long, because my voice is almost gone at the present time.

However, in the position in which I am placed I desire to make a few remarks to the House before this debate closes. I have been very pleased indeed to hear the remarks made by the various members, especially on this side of the House, as regards the administration during the last 12 months. It has been gratifying on my part to know that I was one of those who did my little to administer the affairs of the State during that time, and I am very pleased that even at the present time the Labour Administration of this State has in my opinion the entire confidence of the great majority of the people of Western Australia. There have been some changes made in the Ministry. Upon that matter I will dwell later on. The present position of this House is to my mind very unsatisfactory. At present we have two parties in the House who are almost equally divided, and the balance of power is held by those four Independents who have, during the past 12 months, given us a generous support. And I believe that, had the Administration which conducted the affairs of this State gone on again, there would have been no question about the support of those members being given to the Labour Government during its whole term of office. In my opinion, the attack made by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rason) was very weak. We have also the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who has charged the Administration with being very weak. Of course, we all know the member for Boulder makes a lot of noise, but carries very little weight. I am very pleased that the debate has in one respect prevented the Midland Railway deal from coming off. Unless we have a great many more particulars than we possess at the present time, I shall be in duty bound to reject the proposals of the Ministry. I consider it will be too great a responsibility for the people of this State to take over the Midland line at the price offered, and I disagree entirely with the terms or mode in which that agreement was made with the Government. We are not going to take the line. I do not think there are men in this House who would decide to take the line at the price offered, and I believe that had there been any intention on the part of members of the House or the Government in power at the

present time to take over that line at the present price, there would have been sufficient members in this House to hold the matter over to the 30th August, had the company thought fit to extend the period to that time. During the past 12 months I have been criticised a great deal—whether rightly or wrongly I do not wish to say—for the administration of the Railway Department. I was responsible to this House, and am willing to take the responsibility for the administration of the Railway Department during that period. We all know that by the Railways Act passed in 1904 the Commissioner of Railways has entire power in the management, maintenance, and control of every Government railway. That leaves very little for the Minister for Railways to do other than to see that the finances are carried out to the best of his ability. Owing to an affection of the throat, I shall be unable to deal as fully as I should like with the railway finances; but I shall take an opportunity of again referring to them at a future time. In the first place, I took office as Minister for Railways on the 10th August, 1904. On the 18th August I received the departmental estimates, which showed an expected surplus at the end of this year of £631. In 1903-4 the railway revenue was £1,610,394, and the expenditure (including interest) £1,498,690, showing a surplus of £111,784. For the last financial year 1904-5, the revenue was £1,628,327, about £8,000 above the estimate. The expenditure, including interest, was within about £20,000 of the revenue; so the department will show a surplus for that year of about £20,000. The net earnings of the railways during the past year were £1,610,000, and the net working expenses approximately £1,260,000. Since I left office I have not received any figures from the department; hence my figures are approximate only, but I think they will be found fairly accurate. The interest for this year will amount to £330,000, and after paying interest and working expenses a surplus of something over £20,000 will be shown. I am looking forward to the forthcoming report of the department, and will then criticise it if necessary. I look back, also, on my 12 months in office as

a time when I learned much about the working of the railways. Though it has been said that the Commissioner dominates the Minister and is practically an autocrat, so far as I am concerned I can say that the Commissioner, during my term of office, treated the Minister with all possible respect. Last year the railway revenue was abnormal. During the year prior to my taking office, £60,000 was received from the contractors for the Laverton railway. This year the railway receipts have increased; and though this year we paid away for maintenance about £100,000 more than we paid in the preceding year, and although we paid away £35,000 more for interest than we paid last year, still, we come out with a surplus of £20,000. This year also we have to pay away £6,500 more than we paid last year to replace obsolete stock, and there have been increases of salaries and wages; but in every branch of the department with the exception of the Ways and Works—the branch dealing specially with maintenance—there have been savings. During the past 12 months the department has done work worth about £100,000 more by way of maintenance than was done during the preceding 12 months. This work was absolutely necessary; and the cost of it could well have been spread over several years. That course was not taken, because it is always better to disclose in Parliament the exact state of the finances. Had we decided to spread the expenditure over a number of years, we could have found a precedent in the Coolgardie condenser, erected a few years ago, the expenditure on which was spread over some three or four years. I must say a few words as to my relations with the Press. A little time ago, since leaving office, I made a statement to representatives of the *Morning Herald* and the *West Australian* in connection with the working of the department. The statement as published in the *West Australian* was accurate, except in one or two details. The reporters came to my house for information; and I asked to be allowed to see proofs before my statement was printed. I corrected the *Morning Herald* proof; but the corrections were never made. The reasons for that I do not know; but the *Herald* saw fit at the same time to write a leader in

which it attempted to misrepresent the statement I made. I do not know why it did so; but on the following day I saw the leading reporter of the *Herald* staff, explained the matter to him, and he assured me that he would publish the corrections. They have never been published to this day. When we find a leading paper in the State descending to ignoring alterations in a proof after promising to make the alterations, and when we see how unfairly it attacks public men, as it has attacked them during the past few days, I do not think the public will take much notice of such an organ. The editor of the *Morning Herald*, Mr. Dreyer, has had some reason for opposing me in the past. Some time ago he contested a seat in the Central Province. I was chairman of the committee of the man who opposed him. Shortly afterwards there was another vacancy in that province. Mr. Dreyer wrote to me asking for my support. I wrote in reply that his was not a policy that I could support; and though his request was backed up by a letter from the leader of the Labour party, I absolutely refused to support Mr. Dreyer, whose policy was not one with which I could agree. Mr. Dreyer, in reply, said he did not see why I could not support his policy, as he was quite willing to change the policy he had enunciated at the previous election for a policy more in accordance with popular opinion. I have the letters he wrote to me, and I have a copy of the reply I sent to him. I think it is hardly fair that the editor of a paper like the *Morning Herald*, because I was man enough to say that I could not support his policy, should deliberately make false statements in a leading article dealing with a subject on which I made a statement for publication in his paper. In respect of one matter the newspapers of this State have during my administration had some reason for not treating me with the consideration they might otherwise have shown. One of the first matters I inquired into after taking office was whether the newspapers had to pay railway freights, as they have in the Eastern States. I found they had not. This was about the 17th August of last year. Some few months afterwards freight was charged on newspapers; and the department is now deriving from that

source a revenue of something over £1,000 a year. That, perhaps, explains why some newspapers have not given me fair treatment. I saw on inquiry that other Governments had taken up the question, but they did not charge freight on newspapers. I found that our railways were carrying 28 tons of newspapers per fortnight, for which service no payment was received. I maintain that we do not run the railways of Western Australia for the benefit of the newspapers. We now get over £1,000 in revenue for carrying newspapers, and the people who read the newspapers have not to pay a cent more for them when they get them right out in the back country. We charged exactly the same to carry papers a short distance as we did to the utmost limits of the railway.

MR. GREGORY: You put a farthing stamp on a single newspaper.

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; but through the post they pay a halfpenny, so we carried single papers at half-price. Dr. Hackett has informed me that it was costing the *West Australian* £700 a year for the carriage of newspapers, and that he had instructed all his agents throughout Western Australia not to charge any more for the papers. I have been charged, rightly or wrongly, with neglecting to look after the finances of the railways. The extra work that I told the Press had been done during the twelve months was no new proposal, because we see in last year's report:—

During the year 151,701 sleepers were supplied for works (74,541) and renewals (77,229) on the various lines of way. This is, however, considerably below the number ordered. It is important that the supply should be largely increased during the forthcoming year, when at least 250,000 will be required.

That goes to show that during the last year those responsible for the safety of the way and works of the railways were seized with the fact that the railways were not in a safe condition, and that it was absolutely necessary that a large amount of re-sleeping would have to be done. The result was that we laid between 300,000 and 400,000 sleepers during the last 12 months. I was forced to make inquiries into that matter because of a serious accident taking place last September at Mokine, where a

ballast train ran off the line and a driver was killed and several workmen injured. At that time the whole of the condition of the line, as shown by inquiry, was exceptional. When the relaying of the heavy rails was done three or four years ago the rails were laid down on light sleepers, which were somewhat worn at the time. It was found that where they had been dogged before they could not be dogged again. They were worn in places, and a considerable number had to be adzed down, and they were too light for the heavy rails and the heavy loads passing over the rails at the time. The question was brought plainly before me, and I considered in the interests of the safe-working of the railways and of the State that we would have to do such re-sleepering as was necessary to render that line as safe as a railway line could possibly be. I would prefer to see the railways of Western Australia with a considerable deficit before I, as a responsible Minister of this House, would see one person killed owing to the fact that necessary work had not been done. Previously the sleeper used was 8in. by 4in. Now they have changed it to 9in. by 4½in. This re-sleepering resulted in the first place in the safety of the railway line and in the fact that we can run heavier loads. It will mean a reduction in maintenance, and it also meant that at a very critical time in this State a considerable amount of employment was given to those who should have had it. We spent during the year something like £100,000 on necessary work, of which £50,000 went in wages and the rest for the purchase of material for this necessary work, consisting mainly of sleepers and ballast, so that almost the whole amount was paid away in wages. The members for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) and York (Mr. Burges) spoke about this employment. The member for Boulder put it "that I made a statement to the Press that we had 500 unnecessary men at work, probably sand-shifting or doing work that could have stood over for a year." [MR. BURGESS: What did the Commissioner say, according to your report?] He reckoned there were 500 unnecessary men at work. Either purposely or by mistake, the member for Boulder absolutely made a misstatement in this House. What was

said in the Press was that it was necessary work that had to be done and that had been recommended for over twelve months, and that a portion of it was work that should have been carried out during the financial year previous to our taking over the control of the railways.

MR. BURGESS: Why did you not contradict that statement, that it could be extended over three or four years?

MR. HOLMAN: I made one alteration in the *Morning Herald*.

MR. GREGORY: The quotation was from the *West Australian*.

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; but it was misquoted. The alteration I gave to the *Morning Herald* was this:—

The cost of the work that had been done could have been fairly extended over several years.

Instead of putting it in the *Morning Herald* as I gave it, they put it "that the work could have been extended over several years," thus giving it a totally different meaning. I say that this work will last over a considerable number of years, and that its cost could be fairly extended over the period the work will last. The work had been saved up for a number of years and had to be done in order to make the railways safe. They are now running heavier loads over the rails and the danger is greater, so that the work was necessary. The *West Australian* made the alteration, but the *Morning Herald* did not, for some reason best known to themselves. [MR. BURGESS: What about the duplication?] I shall explain that. After being down for a certain number of years the oscillation renders the re-dogging of sleepers necessary, but no sleeper can be re-dogged more than three times and although we re-dogged a number of the sleepers at different times, and although the timber in these sleepers is good, it is impossible to keep the sleepers in position because they cannot hold the dogs.

MR. N. J. MOORE: Oscillation is largely due to faulty maintenance.

MR. HOLMAN: That might be so. The worse the condition of the railways the more the oscillation. That is one reason why the work was absolutely necessary to take in hand at once, because the worse the line is getting the longer the oscillation continues. A great deal has been said about the timber wasted.

The whole of these timbers taken up have been utilised in other directions. Something like 200,000 sleepers have been used during the past 12 months in works such as building platforms and other works in the railway yards. At present members can see thousands of sleepers being utilised in erecting new carriage sheds near the Perth station. Instead of buying new timber we utilised the old sleepers and thereby saved the department a considerable amount of money. I have been accused of stating that the Commissioner could have done without 500 men if necessary. What I did state was that some hundreds of men could have been displaced if I had been willing to take the responsibility of ordering the Commissioner to dispose of their services when they were required to do necessary work. The Commissioner informed me that if it was the policy of the Government to dismiss the men to save the cost, he could displace them, but he would not take the responsibility and maintain the safe running of the railways. I told him that, rather than run the risk, not one man's services were to be dispensed with while there was necessary work to do; and if I had to resign my position in the Ministry or as a member of Parliament I would do the same thing again. I am rather pleased that members on the Opposition side have attacked the Government in regard to the duplications from Burswood to Armadale, and Lion Mill to Chidlow's Well. If members took an interest in the work of the railways, they would see that these questions were settled long before the Government took office, and that these duplications were necessary, and I maintain they were, from the knowledge I have gained, and I have the reports from responsible officers. I will read a report which appeared last year on the Burswood-Armadale duplication. Members on the Opposition side who talk about the unnecessary duplications should support the Government, and vote against their leader because he authorised the duplications to be carried out. The report last year said :—

Burswood-Armadale Duplication.—Owing to the increasing traffic on this line it became necessary to lay down another line, thus giving to this district the benefit of an up and down road. This will enable the suburban district to be extended, and give to the department facilities much needed to deal with the ever-

increasing work on the South-Western Railway. The work was authorised by the Government in November, 1903.

That was some time before the Government took office, and when I was not Minister for Railways. In regard to the Lion Mill-Chidlow's Well line the report of last year stated :—

The policy of the department is, as quickly as funds will permit, to duplicate the Eastern Railway from Lion Mill to Northam, which will result in a great saving in the expenditure, increase the factor of safety, and enable the distances to be travelled in much less time. With this in view the duplication from Lion Mill to Chidlow's Well was authorised by the Government on the 22nd April, and has been steadily pushed forward. At the same time the deviation of the Smith's Mill line was undertaken, and when carried out will do away with the menace to the safety of travelling, namely the Diamond Crossing, etc., at this place, and also save considerably in loss of time, shunting, etc., and materially reduce expenditure.

If these can be called charges, then they should have been made by the member for Bunbury and the member for York against their own leader. If the duplications were unnecessary, the next time the Opposition meet in caucus the member for Bunbury should move a vote of want of confidence in his leader because he authorised the work to be carried out.

MR. N. J. MOORE: We have nothing to do with the last Ministry. I am talking about a principle.

MR. HOLMAN: If the principle was bad it was brought about by the Opposition leader, and the present Administration should not be attacked for it. We have carried out the works which were authorised by Parliament. Speaking in regard to duplications I may say that in my opinion the duplications were warranted. There will be a large saving on the railways when the duplications are carried out to Northam. When in office I asked for reports, and I received one from the Traffic Branch, and if there is any doubt as to whether the duplications were necessary members will do well to have an inquiry into the matter, and they will find by evidence that the duplications were necessary. There is one matter on which I have been attacked by some members, the removal of men from Southern Cross. That was decided on long before I became Minister for Railways. I made an inquiry into that

matter when I took charge of the railways, and I was satisfied the removal of the men from Southern Cross was absolutely necessary; the removal was effected so as to introduce the eight-hours system on the railways. Some men were working 12 and 14 hours a day. Men who should have been receiving four guineas a week driving engines were earning £6 and £7 a week. It was necessary to employ more men and allow all to work eight hours. I will deal with this matter more fully at a later date. In regard to the question of the Coolgardie Water Scheme, it is said that the scheme costs the State at present £80,000 a year. It is strange but true that at the present time the Railway Department has to pay 6s. 3d. per thousand gallons for water to the Coolgardie Water Scheme, when water is supplied to dividend-paying mines on the goldfields for 5s. per thousand gallons. Last year the Railway Department had to pay £4,000 more for water than would be paid by dividend-paying mines for the same quantity of water supplied. We should supply water from the Coolgardie scheme at as low a rate as the water is supplied to the dividend paying mines. I know the railways take more water than most of the mines do, as much as nine or ten of the mines put together, still the railways have to pay the extra charge of 1s. 3d. per 1,000 gallons. It has been asked, who purchased the dams on the Eastern Goldfields?

MR. GREGORY: Bought from private people.

MR. HOLMAN: The Government of which the hon. member for Menzies was a member authorised the purchase of one of the dams. It is absolutely necessary for the Government to have dam water on those goldfields. The engines travel all over the State, and when they travel towards the city they have to use different water. Unless the Government use a certain amount of dam water on the engines the boilers will not last as long as they should.

MR. GREGORY: It is strange they do not need that kind of water down here.

MR. HOLMAN: The engines run on the lines down here and on the goldfields line also. The railway dams on the Eastern Goldfields cost £180,000, and is it a wise policy for the railways, if they are to be run as a commercial undertak-

ing, to pay 6s. 3d. per thousand gallons for water when water can be obtained at the cost of a few pence for pumping? Better water can be obtained from the railway dams than from the Coolgardie Water Scheme, and I maintain it is good policy to use the water from the dams. But I say also that we should supply the unpayable low-grade mines on the Eastern Goldfields with water at the lowest possible rate, and help as many non-paying mines as we possibly can. Another question dealt with during my time on the railways was that of Collie coal. For 12 months previously to my taking office the price of Collie coal was 10s. 6d. Contracts had been called for by the James Government from the mines at Collie. The James Government refused to deal with those contracts, and they were left with us to deal with. One price was 12s. 9d. per ton, providing the coal contained a certain calorific value, and another price was 11s. 6d. per ton, provided that it was of lower calorific value. Those tenders were put in by two companies who had combined in tendering. We knew we had to do everything possible to encourage the coal industry, and decided, so as to give the mines a chance and the workers every chance, to give 11s. a ton for the Collie coal, and also appointed a commissioner to inquire into the question. That inquiry has been held, and the report is here. While the inquiry was going on, I took the best means to see what reduction could be brought about in the price of Collie coal. Those two companies supplied the coal at 11s. per ton. Last year an offer was made by the Co-operative Company to supply the coal at a less rate, namely 10s. 6d. per ton, and I accepted the offer. My instructions were to allow them to supply coal at their own price provided they paid the ruling rate of wages. Afterwards another company came on the scene and offered to supply coal at 9s. per ton, and we accepted that; so we first made a saving of £7 10s. per week, and the next reduction of 2s. per ton brought the amount up to £37 10s. Then we got the offer of another reduction of 6d. per ton, the company which had supplied coal at 10s. 6d. offering to supply it at 10s.; so that those companies supplying about 50 tons per day increased the quantity,

and at the present time we are saving considerably over £100 a week in the cost of Collie coal. I also made inquiries as to whether these companies could pay the rate of wages ruling in the district and supply us with Collie coal. I asked for a return of wages paid in each of these mines, and found that those companies which supplied us with coal at 1s. to 2s. a ton less were paying a higher rate of wages than the Proprietary and Cardiff mines.

MR. GREGORY: Was Holmes the manager of that mine?

MR. HOLMAN: I do not know who was the manager. I know the companies which sold their coal at 1s. and 2s. a ton less paid a higher rate of wages to their men than the companies receiving 11s. a ton. The saving on Collie coal as regards the Western Australian railways, at the price prevailing at the present time will be, during the next twelve months, in my opinion about £10,000, as compared with the sum paid prior to our taking office. We have had great complaint by the member for York (Mr. Burges) with regard to bush fires caused by the use of Collie coal. We are convinced that Collie coal did not cause those fires. Inquiries were made, and in most cases the reports received showed that the fires resulted from carelessness; that those who should have looked after their property did not exercise due care. We found in some instances exorbitant claims made by individuals. An inspector was sent there to report. Pounds and pounds were claimed; in some cases the amount being over £100. The inspector went all over the property and stated that where it had been alleged that hundreds of posts and scores of sheep had been destroyed, there were only half a dozen posts found to be burnt, and the carcasses of two or three sheep. That only goes to show that some of the claims were not just. In some cases they may have been justly prepared, but in almost every case the people were quite willing to accept the valuations by the officers of the Railway Department. Some remarks have been made during this want-of-confidence motion on the rate of wages paid in the Collie district. I say this, that in every case where a company supplied coal at the very low rate to the Government, they paid a fairly high rate of wages; and

when the recent dispute occurred and the recent award was given, it was found that some mines which were receiving 11s. per ton practically reduced the wages down to the lowest point; whilst those receiving only 9s. per ton were quite willing that things should go on almost the same as they were previously to the giving of that award. Another matter dealt with during my time in the department was the question of timber rates. I may say that application was made to me from time to time from the Timber Combine for a reduction of freights on timber. I refused to countenance any reduction, because through information I had I found that the timber freights on our railways were less, practically, than on any of the railways in the Eastern States. [MR. N. J. MOORE: Not in Queensland.] Yes; less than Queensland. I will just quote the Queensland rates. We will take from Bunbury to Mundijong, a distance of 86 miles. In Western Australia the rate per ton, including sleepers, is 9s. 6d. The rate per ton in Queensland for the same distance as for class A is 12s. 11d. per ton. For logs, piles and girders a special scale of 9s. 8d. is charged in Queensland. Our rates are less than the special rates in Queensland and considerably less than their rates for the ordinary timber, as 9s. 6d. against 12s. 11d. [MR. N. J. MOORE: Is 12s. 11d. Queensland?] Yes. There was one occasion in which a special rate was given, but it only related to one contract. These are the Queensland rates I got specially for this information. On one occasion a deputation waited on me consisting of Sir Edward Wittenoom, Mr. Teesdale Smith, and several others in connection with the combine, and they asked for a reduction of freights amounting to £3,500. It happened that Mr. Teesdale Smith had made a statement in the Press some little time before in which he stated that it was not the railway freight or the rate of wages or anything else here which caused the stagnation of the timber industry; but that people in other countries would not use the timber. They asked for a reduction of freight amounting to some three thousand odd pounds, and I informed them that if they got that reduction at that time they would very soon come for a reduction of £30,000, and refused to reduce the

freight. Before I left office a request was made by the same combine for a reduction of freights on timber on the Western Australia railways, which would have amounted to £30,000 a year. That request was not granted. As to the remarks of the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) regarding preference to unionists, I cannot now deal with the question; but I shall have ample opportunity when discussing the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill. I have every hope that we shall grant the unionists of Western Australia preference and protection. During my experience in the Arbitration Court, several cases were brought under my notice of officers of unions being needlessly sacrificed and dismissed from their positions. We must protect the unionists of the State, because they are the only men who can move the Arbitration Court; and if they do not receive the protection they deserve, the Arbitration Act will soon be of little use. Means will be found to evade the Act by cancelling the registration of unions; and the workers will have to go back to the old weapon of a strike, which has been disastrous not only to the State, but to England and America, in spite of all that was said by the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory). From returns I saw a few days ago, it appeared that in the year 1900 employees in the United States lost over 28,000,000 dollars through strikes.

MR. GREGORY: And they had their labour boss as well.

MR. HOLMAN: In the United States are labour bureaus and a Labour Department. It is one of the leading department in America, and costs scores of thousands of pounds; yet members like the member for Menzies quibble at and object to our spending £5,000 on the Labour Department of this State, which saves thousands of pounds to employers and employees alike.

MR. GREGORY: The American department tries to do some good for the State. Our department only writes letters to employers.

MR. HOLMAN: Our department settled over 60 disputes in Western Australia, at a cost of £2,000 to the State. If the hon. member does not think that is doing some good to the State, I maintain that his thinking capacity is not

great. Last year the Labour Department cost £5,286. Included in that was the whole of the work for the friendly societies, £1,000; and the Arbitration Act work, Factories Act work, and the work of the Labour Bureau. That is not a great expenditure on all those branches. The cost for the Arbitration Court alone amounts to something over £2,000 a year; so not much money is wasted on that department.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: But the Arbitration Court cost nearly as much before the Labour Department was established.

MR. HOLMAN: Yes. The total extra expense incurred by the Labour Department while I held office was not more than £500, that is for the factories branch—the result of the legislation of the preceding Government. In that time the department received between £400 and £500 as revenue from the factories branch; so the increased cost of the Labour Department will not amount to more than a few pounds. A great discussion was raised here and in another place owing to the action taken by the Government in connection with the Potosi mine at Yundamindera. The mere fact that after a conviction in the court of petty sessions that conviction was upheld by the Supreme Court, proves that my action as Minister for Labour in suing the company for being guilty of a lock-out was right; and although the case cost a little money, and though we have Messrs. Moss & Barsden interfering with industrial matters in this State, and though Mr. Moss brought his private business into the Legislature of this State, I do not think the firm have done themselves much good by so doing. I may say a threat was held out, because it was said that I interfered with the firm of Detmold & Co. in the matter of a labour dispute. A threat was made by Mr. Moss, solicitor for that firm, who advised the firm to take a certain course of action which was wrong, and caused the firm to violate the law of this State as embodied in the Arbitration Act. Mr. Moss in another place brought the matter forward, and made use of a threat.

MR. GREGORY: Is the hon. member in order in discussing the actions of a member in another place?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot criticise anything that may have occurred in another place on the motion of an hon. member.

MR. HOLMAN: I will deal with Mr. Moss himself. Mr. Moss's advice to Detmold & Co. was that when an award expired which governed Messrs. Detmold they could employ whom they liked and pay any rate of wages they liked. Detmolds thought that the advice of a man of Mr. Moss's standing was good: they acted on it, and employed an apprentice to their trade. The matter was brought before me as Minister for Labour. I inquired of the firm and of the union. I convinced the firm that their action, taken on Mr. Moss's advice, was wrong. That dispute was settled satisfactorily to both sides. I received the thanks of Detmold & Co., and the thanks of the union, for the part I had taken in solving the difficulty. That shows Mr. Moss's remarks were untrue, and unworthy of a man in his position. I will go farther. In regard to other matters the firm of Moss & Barsden do not come out too well. I am now speaking of the Factories Act. I do not care to deal at length with this question; because it is in some respects *sub judice*, as the case will shortly come before the Supreme Court. But I think I am in duty bound to give the House a few particulars. The Factories Act provides that no Asiatic or Chinese shall work in or be the owner of a factory, unless he was in this State, in a factory, prior to November, 1903. Acting on the advice of Messrs. Moss & Barsden, a number of Chinese, instead of working as individuals in a factory, formed themselves into a company. Seven or eight Chinese were acting instead of one person, with a view to carrying on cabinet-making. I, as Minister for Labour, refused to register the company, because it was an evasion of the Act, an evasion brought about by the advice of Moss & Barsden. The Supreme Court granted a *mandamus* against me. The case was subsequently heard, and was upset on a technicality; and it will shortly come before the Supreme Court again. In the meantime, when Moss & Barsden found that the department would not register the company of Chinese as factory owners, they got hold of another idea. They got three

white men, one of whom was their own clerk; and though there were 650 shares in the Chinese cabinet company, the three so-called white men were given only one share each. They tried to evade the Act in that manner. Is that proper conduct for a firm of repute, to lend one of their own clerks to a number of Chinese to try to evade the laws of this State? I may say that was not the worst feature of Messrs. Moss & Barsden in connection with the See Wah Company. The department refused to register the factory. The company sent in an application in which none but Chinese names appeared. A Chinaman named Hoy Coy made a declaration asking for the registration of the factory; and the declaration came to the office of the Chief Inspector of Factories. Mr. Barsden, of Moss & Barsden, was acting I dare say with the consent of his partner, Mr. Moss; and after this application was handed to the Chief Inspector of Factories, after it had been declared on oath, Mr. Barsden got the application and made an alteration in it, which practically meant that he was interfering with an oath. The department sent the Chief Inspector of Factories to See Wah & Co.'s registered office to see who was on the register of the company. He could not find a register there; it was in the office of Moss & Barsden. After consultation with the Crown Solicitor, we made farther inquiries for this register, and could not get it in the registered office of the company. Some little time afterwards it was available for inspection. Before leaving that office I issued instructions that proceedings should be taken against those Chinese for keeping unregistered premises constituting a factory, for selling and offering for sale furniture not stamped in accordance with the Act, for failing to keep a register of shareholders open to inspection (Companies Act), for failing to lodge annual return with the Registrar of Companies (Companies Act); and against Mr. Barsden for altering a statement after it had been declared to. Owing to the fact that this case was pending in the Supreme Court, action was not taken at the time; but I hope and trust that, although I am out of the office of Minister for Labour, as soon as this case is settled action will be taken against the firm to show them

that they cannot under any consideration violate the laws of this State any more than other individuals can. I was rather surprised to hear some remarks from the Premier in connection with the purchase of land in Phillimore Street, Fremantle. That matter came before me in my capacity as Minister for Railways, when I had to authorise the payment for some of the land. I did not authorise it for a considerable time until after inquiries had been made. I found that the Government of Western Australia had paid I dare say over £20,000 more for that land than they should have done. The Premier's remarks in connection with this matter had reference to two lots of land, lots 143 and 144. It would appear that these lots were offered through Learmonth and Company to the Government for £6,000, and that six months later they were bought by the Government for £8,800.

MR. GREGORY: Is that not the case into which the Government promised to inquire?

MR. HOLMAN: I do not know. In looking through the railway report we find the names of those who sold the land to the Government for £8,800. They are honourable men, so far as I know, and men I respect; but I do not think any charge should hang over men without an inquiry being made; and I think one of the first actions of the Government in power in Western Australia should be to make full inquiry into that matter.

MR. GREGORY: I drew attention to this matter the other night. The member for Collie (Mr. Henshaw) made some remarks with reference to this matter, and certain other statements were made. Last session a distinct promise was made by the Government that as soon as they got into recess, inquiry would be made. I hope no statements will be made in regard to this matter by any member until we have had that inquiry. I object to statements being made until we have that inquiry.

MR. HOLMAN: I am making no statement. I have only said that the Premier has remarked in this House that a leakage occurred whereby some information had got out, and the Government of Western Australia had to pay more

for the land than they should have paid for it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That does not affect you.

MR. HOLMAN: I does not affect me, but it affects the State. It affects me moreover as a public man sent here to safeguard the interests of the people. I maintain that every inquiry should be made into this matter to see upon whom the fault is to be laid. A suspicion is cast upon public men that I would not like to have over my head, and also on the Cabinet in power at the time of the purchase. One of the first things we should do is to hold an inquiry into it. I do not remember the circumstances as to how the promise was made last session; but if that promise was made, I maintain it should be carried out.

MR. GREGORY: The promise was made most distinctly.

MR. HOLMAN: I desire to make a few remarks in connection with the Lakeside wood concession. I do not think it should be granted, and I trust it will not be granted by this Government. When speaking in connection with the Norseman Railway some time ago I mentioned as one of the reasons why that railway should be constructed that we could cart our goods down to Norseman and bring wood back again, thus having loading both ways and a good chance of making the railway pay from the start. I was very pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Dundas when he gave the full explanation of what took place at the conference between the two parties. It has been insinuated in this House that the actions of some members have been affected by the reconstruction of the Ministry, because they were deposed from their positions and received a smaller salary. That is a statement as unfair to me as to the other Minister who was deposed. I intend to give the House and the country my exact opinion of the reconstruction and the reasons for it. I owe this duty to my constituents and to the House. I am sorry the Premier cannot reply—[THE PREMIER: I am sorry too.]—and because of that I will not say as much as I would have said had he a right of reply. However, if there are any statements the Premier wishes to contradict he is at

liberty to do so. I do not want it to be said that I am attacking a man in any respect when he has no right to reply. I would prefer that charges were made direct; but it has been said by a section of the Press that my administration of the railways was weak. If I was weak as an administrator I did the best I possibly could; and I consider the work done on the railways in Western Australia during the past year was a credit to myself, seeing we have spent £100,000 more than in the previous year in extra maintenance work, seeing we came out with a surplus of £20,000, that £33,000 was spent in interest, and that in other directions the expenditure was greater than in the previous year. I am sure my work in the railways was a credit to myself, as far as I had the power under the present Railways Act, and so far as I had experience in Ministerial duties. I will inform the House of the manner in which I was treated during the recent reconstruction. Let me say at the outset that, owing to my state of health, I am glad I was deposed from the position. I do not think I would have been able to carry on another year with the same responsibilities as I had last year. Of course that is outside the question, and I do not desire any consideration for that fact. On the 29th May we held a Cabinet meeting. After the business of Cabinet had closed, I informed the Premier and all the Ministers present that I was going to make a tour of my constituency, and that if there were any announcements to make it was the time to give them so that I could make them to my constituents. We were informed that there were no announcements. They all knew that I was leaving on the following Thursday to go to my constituency. On the same afternoon the Premier issued instructions for a caucus to be called to deal with the question of reconstruction, so that the Premier must have known at the time what his intentions were. I went to my constituents and addressed one or two meetings as a Minister. I informed the electors that I did not think I should remain a Minister long as in my state of health I could not do so, and my health was of more consideration to me than any position I could hold. When I had been in my

constituency one or two days I received a wire from the Premier which I will read to the House. I do not desire to make any charge against the Premier, but I ask members of the House and the people of the country if I was treated in a loyal and friendly manner, such as the Premier should use to a man who had been loyal to him, to the Labour party and to the Labour principles. When I was at Nannine I received the following wire:—

To Hon. J. B. Holman, Nannine. Urgent. As I am reconstructing, please telegraph your resignation to me to-day. Word it as follows:— I hereby submit my resignation of the offices of Minister for Railways and Minister for Labour for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor.—(Signed) H. DAGLISH.

That was received at 11:50 a.m. at Nannine, but it was 1 o'clock before I received the wire. The telegraph office was closed, and I could not reply to ask for information. The train was leaving just at that time and I came on to Perth, having to disappoint my electors. I received another wire at Moora, when the Premier knew I was on my way back to Perth. This is the man who expects loyalty. He knew I was coming to Perth, and he knew the Railway Department had offered, if necessary, to send an engine to bring me on with more speed if the case was urgent. He knew that I was willing to resign at any time, and this is the wire he sent to Moora; I received it at 5 o'clock at night; it was sent from Perth at half-past twelve:—

Resignation of all Ministers but yours in my hands yesterday. Desire to receive yours to-day. I am not prepared to await your arrival in Perth. Telegraph as desired.

I maintain, as I told the Premier to his face, as I told him in caucus, as I tell him in the House and in front of the people of Western Australia, that I was treated in an absolutely shabby manner, unworthy of a man who is the Premier of this State. I have never said a word against the Labour Government. I maintain that there are as good men on the Labour side as on the Opposition side. We have shown as much ability as is shown by others. The Labour party of Western Australia have done credit to the position they hold. The Government have done good work, and if the Labour Government are allowed to remain in office I

shall do my utmost to keep them there. I will vote with the Government. They will find there is no more loyal man than I am. During the time I have been a member of the Legislature I have taken a deep interest in labour matters. As a member of the last Parliament I was thanked by every member of both Houses of Parliament, by the business people of Western Australia, by the employers and the workers for the action I took in preventing what would have been one of the greatest industrial troubles in Western Australia, and I do not think any member of the House has a word to say against me. I may not be the ablest man, but I have tried to do my duty, and I think I should be treated as a man if occasion arises; but on this occasion I was not so treated. My constituents were insulted, and I was insulted. I was not allowed to carry out my programme. I was allowed to address some of my constituents as Minister, but had to break my engagements with other constituents. It was unmanly for the Premier to treat me as he did. I am forced to speak in this manner because I must make my position clear. No question of bad administration has been brought before me by the Premier. Only on one occasion was I spoken to by the Premier on any matter. It was my intention, had the trip which I was then taking through my constituency not improved my health, to have resigned my portfolio immediately the House met this session, because my health was not good enough to allow me to make another fight similar to that of last year. I would have resigned and taken a trip which I require, and which I have been ordered to take by four or five doctors. I would have been compelled to take that trip to save my health from breaking down; and as soon as this trouble is settled and we have a stable Government in power I intend to take that trip. There was one complaint, in connection with the administration of the Railway Department, made against me. The Premier rang me up in a great state one day; it was some time after a statement had appeared in the *Sunday Times*, that the railways were losing something like £400 a day. The Premier had worked it out that I had overdrawn the railway account by some thousands of pounds, and that our income had not

amounted by some thousands of pounds to what was anticipated. I informed the Premier he was mistaken. That was the only complaint made, and when the Premier looked into the figures more closely he found that he had made a mistake. I informed the Premier that the railways would come out better than was expected when we took office. After making fuller inquiries, the Premier rang up and apologised for the statement which he had previously made. That was a manly action on his part. I mention this to show that the only time a complaint was made against me for bad administration, the charge was found to be incorrect. I have no complaint to make in regard to meetings of Cabinet. Had I any complaint, I should not make it. I recognise that when Ministers go to Cabinet meetings, they sink their individuality, and that if anything is done there that a Minister does not like, he must submit to the majority. I have had no disagreement with any of my colleagues, but I complain that I was not treated in a manly manner by the Premier. I could make statements, but I will not, for the Premier has not the right of reply. Still, I will speak more fully at some future date as to the appointment of inspectors under the Factories Act. Inspectors have been appointed, and I will speak on that matter when the Premier will have an opportunity of replying. There is one matter I intend to deal with at the present time, and that is the coalition. On my return after the reconstruction of the Ministry, the Press waited upon me and asked me to make a statement. I made a statement at that time in which I informed them that it did not matter to me who the Ministers were; I was prepared to support right loyally the Ministers so long as they were drawn from the ranks of Labour. I do not believe in any coalition, and I think myself the Labour Government and the Labour party did not act in a creditable manner when they approached the other side for a coalition. In the first instance a meeting was called of the Labour Government supporters, and I had no idea there would be any question of a coalition mooted. When it was mooted I expressed my opinion that it was undesirable. As is known from the statement made by the member for Dundas (Mr.

Thomas), many expressed themselves in favour of a coalition. I do not believe in coalition myself until we have had an appeal to the country. If the parties in this House are so evenly divided that business cannot be carried on, we should appeal to the people of the country and allow them to alter the existing state of affairs. I believe that the only solution to the present difficulty is a dissolution. We should allow the electors to change the condition of affairs. It has been said that we would come back the same, or practically the same, members in this House. If so, we should not be blamed, but the electors themselves would be to blame. But I think myself the electors would return one party or another sufficiently strong to carry on the affairs of the State. They know what previous Governments have been and what the Labour Government has been, and the people of Western Australia are quite able to judge which is the best Government for the people of this State. The deal with the Opposition to my mind is not one to the credit of our party. I opposed it, and I assure this House that had the coalition been brought about, and had the Labour party outside this House decided to send a man forward to oppose an Oppositionist if he accepted a portfolio in the Coalition Government, I would have opposed the Minister and supported the Labour candidate on the platform so far as I possibly could. This is my opinion of coalitions. I stated long before that I did not believe in them. I will now read a few remarks from "Selections from the Speeches and Writings of Edmund Burke." In regard to "False Coalitions," Edmund Burke said :—

No system of that kind can be formed which will not leave room fully sufficient for healing coalitions; but no coalition which, under the specious name of independency, carries in its bosom the unreconciled principles of the original discord of parties, ever was, or will be, a healing coalition. Nor will the mind of our Sovereign ever know repose, his kingdom settlement, or his business order, in efficiency or grace with his people, until things are established on the basis of some set of men who are trusted by the public, and who can trust one another.

We cannot trust the Opposition, neither can they trust us, and we must have entire trust before there is any coalition.

We come to another one of his selections, on "Political Outcasts" :—

In the meantime, that power which all these changes aimed at securing remains still as tottering and as uncertain as ever. They are delivered up into the hands of those who feel neither respect for their persons, nor gratitude for their favours; who are put about them in appearance to serve, in reality govern them; and, when the signal is given, to abandon and destroy them, in order to set up some new dupe of ambition, who in his turn is to be abandoned and destroyed. Thus, living in a state of continual uneasiness and ferment, softened only by the miserable consolation of giving now and then preferences to those for whom they have no value, they are unhappy in their situation, yet find it impossible to resign. Until at length, soured in temper and disappointed by the very attainment of their ends, in some angry, in some haughty, or some negligent moment they incur the displeasure of those upon whom they have rendered their very being dependent. Then *perierunt tempora longi servitii*; they are cast off with scorn; they are turned out, emptied of all natural character, of all intrinsic worth, of all essential dignity, and deprived of every consolation of friendship. Having rendered all retreat to old principles ridiculous, and to old regards impracticable, not being able to counterfeit pleasure or to discharge discontent, nothing being sincere or right or balanced in their minds, it is more than a chance that, in the delirium of the last stage of their dis-tempered power, they make an insane political testament, by which they throw all their remaining weight and consequence into the scale of their declared enemies and the avowed authors of their destruction.

In my opinion it would have been the same had we brought about a coalition with the Opposition. It would have brought about the destruction of the party on this side of the House. I am very pleased indeed to know that no coalition has been effected, and I hope that so long as we are in this House, until we have made an appeal to the electors no farther attempt will be made to degrade the party in this House and the country by bringing about a coalition which in my opinion would not uphold the dignity of the House as it should be upheld. I intend to support the Labour Government. I have always supported the Labour Government. I was returned in opposition to the Morgans Government at that time. I maintain that we can get a better Ministry from this side of the House than from that side. How is it possible for us to have faith in men like the members for Guildford (Mr. Rason), Menzies (Mr. Gregory),

and Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), after their attitude in the previous Parliament? I have not made an attack on any individual member of this place, but I have referred to those members to ask members and the people of this State to look back upon their past political career, and they will see what stamp of men they are. I have no confidence in them. I have more confidence in the Government at the present time, although I maintain that the Premier did go outside his province when he used that little bit of bluff about those members who did not have confidence in him showing it by voting against him. He knows that, although we have a personal feeling against him, and justly so, that feeling will not compel us to declare ourselves traitors against the cause we are sworn to uphold and carry through. I maintain that the policy of the Labour party is the policy for the people of this State, and that the Premier in the past has not acted the part of a man by his bluff, which I maintain is bluff, when he says we can vote against him. The heroics he went off into to-night will not cause me to vote against the Government, which I am sure has done better work, or as good work at least as any previous Government, and which is a Government the people have confidence in. Although there may be personal differences in our party which we may express in private and in public, I say I have expressed no opinion behind a man's back which I would not express to his face. If I have expressed opinions which are wrong, I willingly apologise for them, but until I am proved wrong I maintain I have a perfect right to express my opinion the same as any other man, and I am going to uphold my opinion and express my views. I do not think the Premier was right in his remark that if members were opposed to him in any way they should vote against him. I have been opposed to men in our movement time after time, but when it came to fighting I have sunk my personal feeling and acted as one with the party, and fought the fight out victoriously, which I intend to do with the Labour party in Western Australia, whether our present Premier remains as leader of the party or not. I am quite justified in laying my views before the House. I have been loyal during my

connection with the Labour cause, which has extended over about 12 years in Western Australia, and I have endeavoured to bring about industrial peace, and intend to do so in the future. I hope and trust that so long as I am in this House, although I express my opinions against the Premier or any policy he may bring forward, when it comes to a fight I shall be fighting on the side I have always fought for ever since I was able to fight at all, that is the fight for freedom and justice. Some have said that a dissolution will bring about stagnation in the country. With that I do not agree. I hold that, though we may have a little trouble as a result of a dissolution, it is far better to have stagnation for a few months than degradation and stagnation for a number of years, as a result of an unholy alliance between Government and Opposition.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

THE PREMIER: I have been informed that during my remarks I accused the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) of having divulged the confidence of Cabinet. I wish to withdraw any accusation of that sort against the hon. member. I do not desire to level any accusation against any member who has been associated with me in Cabinet, or who is now associated with me; and if I made that charge, I now desire to withdraw it.

MR. TAYLOR bowed in acknowledgment.

On motion by **MR. QUINLAN**, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until 3:30 to-morrow. In doing so, he wished to express the desire of the Government, a desire which he believed was shared by the House generally, that to-morrow the very protracted debate would be finished.

Question passed.

The House adjourned at 27 minutes to 12 midnight, until the next day.