

ment policy. I am not going to labour the position. Mr. Moss's speech dealt with it so fully, and so ably, that I am satisfied no hon. member will have any difficulty in deciding as to his duty. I am certain that the great majority of this House must condemn this policy; they must, in the dignified way of this remonstrance, indicate to the public the danger of allowing Ministries to depart from the safeguards of the Constitution and become a law unto themselves. At a later stage, when the general question is before the House, I shall desire to make a few friendly suggestions to Ministers, but I will not bring them into this speech on the amendment to the Address-in-reply. I want only to urge on all members the duty of giving a public judgment on this question. It is too serious for any hon. member to fail to indicate his judgment. I hope that when the amendment is put the great majority of this House will put on the records of the Chamber their emphatic condemnation of such unconstitutional procedure.

On motion by Hon. J. D. Connolly, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 9th July, 1912.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: Annual report of Department of Mines, 1911.

By the Attorney General: 1, Report on the Educational organization by the Inspector General of Schools; 2, Regulations relating to education.

By the Honorary Minister: 1, New regulations under the Medical Department; 2, New port regulations; 3, By-laws of the Meekatharra local board of health.

QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, FARMERS' CONFERENCE.

Mr. MONGER (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Is it the intention to call another conference of farmers and settlers in regard to the Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment Act, 1911, as promised on the 22nd April last, and when?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: I am getting data and I am communicating with the various local bodies at the present time.

QUESTION—ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE, CLAREMONT.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is there any system of classification of inmates of the Claremont

Asylum, if so, what is the system? 2, Are steps taken to ensure that patients whose mental illness may be of a slight or temporary nature are not brought into contact with confirmed lunatics? 3, If not, is it the intention of the Government to introduce such a reform at the asylum?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) replied: 1, Yes, the patients at Claremont hospital for the insane are classified. On the male side are six detached blocks, occupied as shown hereunder:—No. 1.—Quiet and chronic cases; No. 2.—Recent and acute cases; No. 3.—New cases, and sick and infirm; No. 4.—Epileptic and general paralysis of the insane; No. 5.—Violent and noisy cases; No. 10.—For quiet patients who work well, many of whom are detached. On the female side the same conditions prevail, except that there are not the same number of buildings; but the question of providing these is under consideration. 2, Cases of temporary and slight nature are kept with the quiet patients in the infirmary if their behaviour warrants it. Of course many cases of temporary illness are very violent and noisy, and cannot be kept in the infirmary until they improve. 3, Answered by Nos. 1 and 2.

QUESTION—TRADES' AND WORKERS' HALLS.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS asked the Treasurer: 1, What amount of money was granted towards defraying the cost of erecting trades' halls at Fremantle and Kalgoorlie? 2, What was the value of the land granted for the purpose of erecting trades' halls thereon at Fremantle and Kalgoorlie? 3, What was the amount of money, and value of land granted for the purpose of workers' halls throughout the State? 4, By whom were the various grants made?

The TREASURER replied: If the hon. member will move for a return in the usual way the information will be supplied.

QUESTION—COLLIE COAL AND STATE STEAMERS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Premier: 1, As Collie coal has proved itself satisfactory for bunkering purposes, is it the intention of the Government to use Collie coal exclusively for all ships under Government control? 2, Has the Government given directions to the shipping authorities to use Collie coal exclusively? If not, will they do so?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, Owing to a number of difficulties which present themselves at present, the Government has not given directions that Collie coal is to be used exclusively, but the shipping authorities have been requested to make use of the local coal as much as possible, and these instructions will be rigidly carried out.

QUESTION—HIGH SCHOOL GRANT.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Premier: 1, From what date has the Perth High School received the annual grant of £1,000? 2, What amount was previously paid, and for how long? 3, What assistance, monetary and otherwise, has the school received exclusive of the annual grants? 4, In view of the fact that there are several colleges, in addition to the State Secondary School, performing similar functions to the High School, will the Premier inform the House why this school should continue to receive special treatment.

The PREMIER replied: 1, From 1st January, 1898. 2, 1876, £700; 1877, £600; 1878 to 1897, inclusive, £500 per annum. 3, £2,000 as a special grant, 1897-8. 4, This matter is now under consideration.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE DOCK BORING.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Minister for Works: 1, What number of bores were made on the site of the Graving dock at Fremantle before that site was recommended as suitable? 2, To what depth was such boring made?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Seventy. 2, From a minimum of forty-one feet to a maximum of seventy two feet below low water.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, SUB- URBAN SERVICE.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Minister for Railways: Is it the intention of the Railway Department to accelerate the speed of the Perth-Fremantle suburban train service when the work of re-grading the line is completed?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Owing to the many stops it will not be possible to accelerate the speed very much. When the work is finished it will be possible to increase the accommodation on the trains; this has been urgently required for some time.

QUESTION — SAVINGS BANK, STATE AND COMMONWEALTH.

Mr. WISDOM asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to hand over the business of the State Savings Bank to the Commonwealth Government? 2, If so, on what terms?

The PREMIER replied: The question of the future control of the Savings Bank is now receiving the attention of the Government.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT HOUSE AND MINT GROUNDS.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Premier: Are the grounds known as Government House grounds and the land upon which the Royal Mint is built controlled by the Imperial or State Government?

The PREMIER replied: The Government Domain is a permanent reserve, classified as of Class "A" under "The Permanent Reserves Act, 1899." The Perth Mint is a branch of the Royal Mint in England, established by a Proclamation of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria, dated the 13th October, 1897.

QUESTION — PERTH TRAMWAYS PURCHASE.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government paid anything to the Perth Electric Tramways Limited for the option to purchase their concession? 2, If so, what amount.

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Hon. FRANK WILSON, leave of absence for one month granted to Mr. Male and to Mr. Harper on account of urgent private business.

On motion by Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON, leave of absence for three weeks granted to Mr. Price on account of urgent private business.

OBITUARY—HON. F. H. PIESSE, C.M.G., LETTER IN REPLY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform hon. members that I have received a letter from Mrs. Piesse, the widow of the late Hon. F. H. Piesse, C.M.G., which I shall read—

Kobeelya, Katanning,
July 8th, 1912.

Dear Sir,—I beg to gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter of the 4th instant. On behalf of myself, family, and relatives I desire to sincerely thank, you, Mr. Speaker, and the members of the Legislative Assembly for the marked sympathy shown in our recent sad bereavement. We all readily appreciate the respect shown to my late husband in the readiness of Parliament to place on record its recognition of services rendered by him to the State, as expressed in the resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly and which you so kindly sent to me. Yours sincerely, Mary J. Piesse.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 4th July on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam): This Speech may be described as one of length without breadth. It does contain some small amount of comfort to the people of the country, but for the most part it is without merit. The hon. member who proposed the Address-in-reply did very well indeed. At any rate, he endeavoured to inform this House as to the requirements of the great northern districts which, I daresay, he understands well. The seconder of the address, who, of course, has been longer in Parliament, and whose eloquence is very well understood, made a much more flowery speech, but I want to congratulate the member for Roebourne on the fact that his speech supplied more information to the House than the longer and more eloquent speech of my friend the member for Forrest. During the past few days we have seen a considerable waste of time occasioned by the partisanship on the Government side of the House. The member for Forrest stated that the members on this side consisted, for the most part of sound business men, and I venture to say that if he will contain himself for a while he will find that during this session they will fulfil their duty as they did last session. I ask him to remember, also, that even if one is eloquent, he does not necessarily possess all the wisdom, and that there are members on this side just as experienced and just as wise as he is, although they may not be so fluent in giving expression to their thoughts. The Premier in his remarks said that the speech was one "full of meat," and that farmers had so described it. I think I have heard the member for Subiaco use those words, and I venture to say that no farmer in the land understands them. That is a phrase used by journalists. To say that a thing is "full of meat" means that it is full of good things, and if the Premier were to ask the journalists, who know the meaning of the phrase, to judge, they would say the very reverse, and the farmers, I know, are greatly disappointed except in regard to the railway proposals. I want to say that I approve entirely of the provision that is to be made for the construction of

agricultural railways, and of the irrigation scheme that is to be undertaken. I believe that irrigation is absolutely necessary in this country which has such a high temperature. There are many other proposals in regard to which we have not been supplied with information, the Premier not having seen fit to take us into his confidence. This is regrettable, seeing that it relates to the expenditure of money belonging to the people, and there can be no reason for secrecy, particularly in regard to the negotiations with the Commonwealth. In any case it is always a pity for a Minister not to take the House into his confidence, especially when a negotiation is completed. Questions were asked on various matters and answered in such a way by Ministers as to give no information. On the great question of finance little has been said by the Premier, but the Government will find that that is their great trouble. It has been the experience of past Labour Governments, that finance is their principal trouble, and that whatever else they might succeed in, they were usually in difficulties with the finances. Finance is the beginning and the end of all things and so their weakness soon finds them out. I want to give the House some figures in regard to the financial situation. During the eleven months ended with May, 1911, the leader of the Opposition (the then Colonial Treasurer), collected £3,371,303, whilst for the eleven months of last year the present Treasurer collected £3,415,535 or £80,232 more than was collected in the previous year. The expenditure, however, tells a very different tale. For the eleven months of 1910-11, while my friend, the leader of the Opposition, was Treasurer, the expenditure was £3,316,473 as against £3,647,547 during the eleven months of last year.

Mr. Carpenter: That was not deferred expenditure.

Mr. MITCHELL: The hon. member will hear enough about that deferred expenditure before I have finished. In any case, it is an infinitesimal thing compared with the amount of £331,000 spent by the present Treasurer more

than by my friend, the leader of the Opposition. That is the point that the people must consider. They must remember that the expenditure is on an extravagant scale, and ask themselves, what has become of it. No one objects to expenditure if it produces something, but they do object to expenditure that gives so little result.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You ask the farmers.

Mr. MITCHELL: I have asked the farmers, and they say that the money has not been wisely expended. Of this amount of £331,000, £50,000 has been spent in providing water for farmers. We are told that the expenditure has been enlarged by £80,000 by the increase in salaries and wages—rightly given too, I believe, the only thing is they have probably not given enough—but if these two items are put together there is still an amount of £200,000 unaccounted for. It is true that the railways ran an extra 200,000 train miles in carrying water to farmers, costing say £40,000, but that is doubtless included in the £50,000 for the provision of water to farmers. If it is not, and the farmers have to pay £90,000 for water alone they will not bless the present Government. Seed wheat, of course, has been supplied to farmers, but it has been purchased entirely from loan, and the seed wheat, fertiliser, and hay that have been supplied did not interfere with the revenue. I am anxious for the public to realise that the present Treasurer had £80,232 more revenue than the leader of the Opposition, when he was Treasurer, and yet he has spent £331,074 more. While the leader of the Opposition for the eleven months effected a surplus of £54,830, the Premier (the present Treasurer) shows a difference of £196,012 between his revenue and expenditure. These figures will surely appeal to the people of this country. They will convince the people that, while the Treasurer has experienced a bad year, he was not justified in charging the previous Government with having saddled him with a large amount of deferred expenditure.

Mr. Gill: It was only the statement of the Auditor General.

Mr. MITCHELL: It was nothing of the sort. The Premier spent a lot of time in accusing the leader of the Opposition of having written a minute which was understood by the departments to be an instruction to carry forward expenditure from the year 1910-11 to the year 1911-12, in order that the previous financial year could thereby be closed with a surplus. This, of course, is absolutely contrary to fact, and the accusation has just as little foundation as that other accusation made by the Premier last year when he said that the late Government deceived the House in regard to Ministerial salaries. I have no doubt at all that when I have finished hon. members opposite will resent the statement he has made just as they resented his statement with regard to the Ministerial salaries on that occasion.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Premier proved it.

Mr. MITCHELL: Perhaps to the satisfaction of the hon. member, but that is not a very difficult matter. At any rate, the statement of the leader of the Opposition was accepted by hon. members with a result that all must remember. These charges have just as little foundation as had those charges on that occasion, and when I have finished, members will, I feel sure, show their independence and their desire to have a fair discussion. I am endeavouring to show that there has been deliberate misrepresentation on this occasion just as there was on that previous occasion. Now the minute which the Premier pretended to quote from, and which he has since kindly placed at the disposal of my friend, the leader of the Opposition, is dated—will members believe it?—the 20th September, 1911. This minute that was supposed to have influenced the expenditure of money and the collection of revenue, and to have affected last year's finances, is dated three months after the financial year closed.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Was it previous to the election?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The first excess in your own

department was for four months' expenditure last year.

Mr. MITCHELL: I do not mind that very much; it ought to have been paid before the end of the year, just as perhaps some of the expenditure which the hon. member has incurred should be paid now. The minute by the late Premier reads—

The daily card showing revenue and expenditure returns is not promising. Every effort must be made to collect as much revenue as possible this month and to keep down revenue expenditure, as I am extremely anxious to have the deficit wiped out, if possible.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That was just before the election.

Mr. MITCHELL: The then Premier was drawing a salary, and he had a duty to do to serve the country. The minute continues—

I desire to have an estimate of probable expenditure up to the end of the year, both Loan and Revenue, as mentioned to you a week ago, as I am leaving town to-morrow night for Albany, and must see how we propose to finance.

So destitute of argument was the Premier that he used this minute to show that the late Colonial Treasurer had by it endeavoured to influence the amount of money spent from revenue during the year 1910-11.

Mr. Underwood: He lost his halo.

Mr. MITCHELL: The hon. member's leader never had a very glorious one. At any rate, the public of this State will be surprised to find that the Premier, who draws £1,500 a year to lead the House—

Mr. George: No, to mislead it.

Mr. MITCHELL: The public will be surprised to find that he has been guilty of this misrepresentation. The minute dated 20th September is made by him to refer to a time before the financial year closed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is the minute with which you wanted to arrange the finances before the election.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The bait did not take.

Mr. MITCHELL: The bait that did take was very unpalatable anyhow. Let me repeat that this minute was dated 20th September, 1911. Members must recollect that the leader of the Opposition was in England just before the close of the last financial year, and could not have written the minute, but nothing deterred the Premier from using it. I sympathise with the Treasurer, he has financial troubles, but he should face them squarely.

Mr. Swan: Who told you?

Mr. MITCHELL: Every statement that the Premier publishes tells it, but he should endeavour to face the situation fairly. There is nothing in having a deficit and if the Treasurer cannot help it he should face the situation. But there is every reason why members of the House should resent the misuse of a minute as on this occasion for there may be no end to this kind of thing. The Ministry are in possession of every file in the department, and they have control of every officer. They can be absolutely accurate and they should be absolutely accurate. I wish it were possible for me to make the Premier feel that to have used this minute is a breach of privilege that he will find it difficult to explain away when he gets before the electors. What are we to expect if Ministers are so willing and ready to misquote and cover up their misdeeds by accusing others? I warn Ministers that this will come home to roost sooner or later. It cannot go on; if they continue to deliberately misquote, they will be found out. Here we have the Premier using a minute that was made three months after the close of the financial year to show that the expenditure was held over in order that we might make a surplus. It is impossible, I know, to make some people ashamed of their behaviour. There were many minutes written by the leader of the Opposition when he was Colonial Treasurer urging economy, and so successful was he that he financed this country in a way which is altogether beyond the possibilities of the present Treasurer.

His minutes are not all available because the files have been lost, but Mr. Wilson urged economy and that has been shown. The Premier in his remarks said the deficit was mounting up year after year during the time my friend had control of the Treasury. If the Premier had turned back the records he would have seen that the largest deficit which this country has ever known was in the year 1904-5, when the Labour party was in office, and then the deficit amounted to £129,885 for the year. It is true they expended £129,885 more than they received, but they created a deficit. They started that year's work with a credit of £83,364 and finished with a deficit of £46,521. Until we reached these past 11 months there had been no period in the history of this country when the deficit was greater than that found during the year the Labour party were in power previously. For the past 11 months just closed there is a deficit of £182,715, and if you take the credit balance that my friend, the late Premier, left to the 30th June, which amounted to £13,000, that shows that they have gone to the bad to the amount of £195,715. The largest deficit during the time we were in office was in 1909, when it amounted to £101,537. That was the largest deficit ever made during the reign of the Liberal Government. In 1910 there was a credit balance on the year's operations of £209,000. The accumulated deficit of £102,000 was not wiped out but on the year's operations there was a credit of £209,000. In 1910-11 there was a credit on the year's operations of £115,191. The public, perhaps, will now compare the work of the leader of the Opposition with that of the present Treasurer. The credit last year was £115,191, while there is a debit on the operations of the past 11 months of £195,715. There is another statement in the Premier's speech, and indeed it has been stated all the time by members opposite, whenever they thought of finance, that the farmer is causing all the trouble. The farmer is made to bear the burden of it all. All the blame is centred on the farmer. First there is the question of water supply,

which has cost £50,000; then we have seed wheat and fertilisers costing another £45,000. I wonder if these amounts affected the balance at all. As far as I can see from the statement the amounts have been charged to loan. It would be interesting to know if the Railway Department has collected the few shillings for the cartage of water to the farmers. Ministers opposite will be able to tell us whether the railway revenue has been made to stand the strain of the water supply to the farmers. No doubt the Railway Department has been recouped, and the whole expenditure, no doubt, in connection with the assistance to farmers has been borne by loan. If that is so, and after all the help given to the farmers does not amount to much, why have we not been told that it is so? The Premier said that his deficit had been increased by the fact that accounts that should have been paid were carried over from last year. The accounts are always carried over; there are outstanding accounts to-day and no doubt there will be people complaining around the Treasury offices because they have not been paid certain accounts during the last few months. It is impossible for all the accounts to be paid before the close of the financial year. I remember, when Mr. Gregory was acting for the leader of the Opposition he asked that all accounts should be paid before the end of the last financial year. That may seem possible to some people but Ministers cannot get in their accounts. Can the Minister for Works get in accounts for works which are carried out at Roebourne and other far distant places? People will not send their accounts in. The system is this: the department supplies the Auditor General each year with a statement of accounts outstanding, as far as it is possible. Last year the department stated that there would be £25,140 owing, but the Auditor General put the amount down at £53,509. There is no Minister sitting on the Treasury bench who can tell what amounts are owing in his department. Just imagine the Premier keeping the Treasury books, it is simply nonsense. The country is

asked to believe that the leader of the Opposition paid no heed to finance, but the result speaks for itself. There was a credit balance at the end of the last two years but there has been an enormous debit balance during the past few months, since the present Ministers have been in office. History repeats itself. In any event it is true £53,509 was outstanding, and if we give them all that, they have still £150,000 that is not accounted for, and to that amount we may add the money expended from loan, which we thought was spent from revenue, to help the farmers. I venture to say there will be as much outstanding at the end of this year as there ever has been before.

The Minister for Lands: I venture to say there will not.

Mr. MITCHELL: I venture to say there will, because every department except the Mines Department shows an increased expenditure. They have been spending money fairly recklessly, and the accounts will not be got in with very great energy by the officials. Every department shows an increased expenditure. True, the Mines Department shows a decrease of £21,000, and it will be strange indeed, with this enormous expenditure going on, to find that there is not as much outstanding as there has been in previous years.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Did you not issue instructions that small accounts were not to be paid before the end of the financial year?

Mr. MITCHELL: Who issued those instructions?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You did.

Mr. MITCHELL: I have read the statement to the House showing that the minute was dated the 20th September last, and it did not say, "Do not pay accounts," but it said "Keep down the expenditure."

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: How did the heads of departments interpret it?

Hon. Frank Wilson: How can that affect last year's balance?

The Attorney General: It affects this year's.

Mr. MITCHELL: The expenditure of money is one thing, the paying of ac-

counts is another, as everyone knows. The expenditure was ordered to be kept down, that is, that departments were to be careful. Would it have been possible for the late Colonial Treasurer to have achieved his object, to square the finances, if he had not insisted on the expenditure being kept down? And he insisted that the trading accounts should be made to pay as far as possible and that all other revenue should be got in. The Premier cannot get away from the charge I have levelled against him of having quoted a minute that he knew had nothing to do with the case. He cannot get away from the fact that he deliberately made a misstatement in connection with these instructions. It is a desperate state of affairs to find a Premier so far forgetting the office he occupies as to descend to these tactics. He says that he is issuing instructions and that he is going to straighten the finances. He is quite satisfied that issuing instructions and a few circulars will do the whole thing. He says that he has issued instructions that for the future will guarantee there will be no waste. Those instructions go to the people who keep the books, but the Premier will not achieve any result. The fact that the finances have drifted to such an extent during the last eight months shows what little influence the Premier has had over his colleagues. I suppose the instructions have gone to them also. The Premier referred to the transfer of salaries. I want to show what little thought is given to this. Apparently some permanent officer has left and some temporary officer has been taken on. The vote is on the Estimates for the permanent officer, and cannot be used for the temporary officer, so apparently the vote for temporary officers had to be exceeded. Does it matter whether the money is paid from the one or the other? It does not affect the balance in any way.

The Minister for Lands: Temporary officers are often paid more than permanent officers.

Mr. MITCHELL: Do you object to that?

The Minister for Lands: No, but you said it would not make any difference. It will make a difference.

Mr. MITCHELL: It will not make up the £196,000 difference on the year's transactions.

The Minister for Lands: It is immaterial what difference it makes, so long as it makes a difference. The hon. member said it made none.

Mr. MITCHELL: I suppose there is no officer receiving less than 10s. a day whose place is filled by a temporary officer.

The Minister for Lands: Temporary officers are getting 11s. a day.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier will have us believe that money was paid away—as he paid away money for steamers—and not charged up. Money expended must be charged to some vote. I suppose the Premier has paid for the steamers out of the Treasurer's Advance—I believe he said he did—if so, and it is not charged up, the amount should be charged up to revenue. The Premier insinuated that expenditure was not properly charged up during the time of the late Government. Of course it is ridiculous! When money is paid away there must be a debit somewhere. Then there is the old story again, "We should have all the accounts managed by the Treasury," I have heard that time and again.

The Premier: They wanted it in your time.

Mr. MITCHELL: No.

The Premier: They wanted it badly.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is very easy to say that. The figures show that I did very much better than any other Minister controlling the Lands and Agricultural Departments. It is the old story, "We will straighten things up by transferring the control of all accounts to the Treasury." I have heard it time and again for many years. The Treasury are bankers for the different departments, and, unless the Treasurer induces the other Ministers to join with him in endeavouring to straighten the finances—and he has got them into a mess, and they need straightening out—he will get nothing done. There has

been not much control. The last eight months do not say much for the Treasurer. Where has the £50,000 expenditure for carrying water to the farmers been charged to? Is it charged to loan? Of course, the Premier will not answer; he will never answer anything.

The Minister for Mines: I will answer it. It is not charged to loan. The Premier said that the bad season resulted in the loss of £50,000 to the Railway Department.

Mr. MITCHELL: The railways have earned £30,000 more revenue than they earned last year.

The Minister for Mines: They could have earned more and still have lost £50,000.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier said he ran 295,000 train miles more than in the previous year, and that 200,000 train miles of this were run to supply farmers with water. It costs about 5s. a mile to run a train. I suspect the £50,000 has been covered by a debit to loan.

The Premier: No, it is a loss to railway revenue.

Mr. MITCHELL: The £50,000 has been expended in carrying water to the farmers, and the farmers have to pay it. Someone has to collect it, whether it be the Railway Department, the Agricultural Department, or the Water Supply Department. If the money has not been paid to the Railway Department, obviously it will have to be collected. Why cannot we have a plain statement of the position? The Premier says the balance is influenced by this £50,000, which I suppose he has loaned to the farmers.

Mr. George: Not he. He has not paid any money at all.

Mr. MITCHELL: Apparently he has not. The Premier said—

We have kept faith with the promise given by our friends opposite, also given just prior to the general election, that any increases that might be made by the re-classification of the civil service would be made retrospective to the 1st July, 1911. We have kept faith with that promise,

and it has cost us something like £13,000.

I should think he would keep faith with the promise. Why not? But this £13,000 is made an excuse for the deficit. Notwithstanding that the Premier has had £80,000 more revenue, this small sum of £13,000 is looked upon as an excuse for the deficit. Apparently the Premier regrets that he had to pay the civil servants this £13,000. I remember before the last general election the promises made to the civil servants.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What promises?

Mr. MITCHELL: There were many promises made on platforms throughout the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What increases were promised?

Mr. MITCHELL: They were promised at North Perth.

Mr. Swan: What about North Perth? The member for North Perth never promised them anything.

Mr. MITCHELL: In any event, the Premier knew of these increases before he brought his Estimates down.

The Premier: I did not say anything of the kind; the re-classification was not out.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier knew he would have to pay something and make provision for something. He also knew of the accounts that were carried over that would have to be paid for; still he is £100,000 out on his Estimates for 11 months.

The Premier: That is more than I know.

Mr. MITCHELL: The figures published show £180,000 for eleven months, as against £104,000 estimated for the year.

The Premier: That was at the end of May.

Mr. MITCHELL: Of course we have not the figures for June.

The Premier: If we got the same balance as you did last year it will look a bit different.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier says that they have not sold town lots. Why not? The Premier knew he would not sell town lots when he made up his Estimates. In any event, I question

whether the Minister for Lands had the right to withdraw these lands from sale. I know it will seriously embarrass the Treasurer in the future, because the sale of town lots provided a good deal of revenue in the past. There is a good deal of expenditure in connection with the opening up of townsites in the direction of clearing roads and providing water supplies, and in other directions; and if the Premier is going to do it on the £1 or 30s. a year from each town lot, the taxpayers will have to suffer a good deal. There is no reason why the Government should not sell town lots. There is no reason why the Premier should use this as an excuse for the deficit. The Savings Bank trouble is a serious one.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Where is the trouble?

Mr. MITCHELL: The trouble is that Mr. Fisher will have our money. I agree that the Treasurer has taken a wise course. It is not a bit of use fighting the Federal Treasurer; he has too much money. I understand the Premier has had notice to leave the post offices and transfer the business somewhere else, but the finances of this country will not bear the strain of opening up branches of the Savings Bank in every town throughout the State. Obviously, also, if we opened up these offices, it is still a matter of interest. If the Federal Treasurer will offer more interest than the State can pay—and the State cannot pay more than the rate at which it can borrow money—the Federal Treasurer then is bound to get the money. If the Premier says he is guaranteed as to the four and a-quarter millions on deposit, and 75 per cent. of future deposits—

The Premier: Of the excess of deposits over withdrawals.

Mr. MITCHELL: How are you guaranteed?

The Premier: That will be part of the agreement Mr. Fisher offered at the Premiers' Conference.

Mr. MITCHELL: How will he guarantee it?

The Premier: By making a final agreement.

Mr. MITCHELL: Obviously Mr. Fisher cannot agreeST that the people who have deposits now shall keep their deposits with the State. What is the Premier going to do? Suppose the people who deposited this four and a-half millions ask for their money. What is the Premier going to do?

The Minister for Lands: They will base it on the law of average.

Mr. MITCHELL: That will not pay a persistent creditor. I want to know what the Treasurer is going to do if the depositors come to him for their money. Is Mr. Fisher going to find it? The Premier should make arrangements with Mr. Fisher that he should find it.

The Premier: He has the bank.

Mr. MITCHELL: You have the bank. You are not going to hand over the £4,236,000 to Mr. Fisher are you? You cannot, unless Mr. Fisher will take over your loans. And if Mr. Fisher does offer more interest than you can pay you will be in a pretty glorious mess, because depositors have a right to demand their money. The Premier said, and he was supported by the Minister for Lands, that the goldfields people were largely Federal, and no doubt would pay their money into the Federal bank. At any rate it is quite obvious that this is another statement made by the Premier without inquiry. It is a very serious matter for the State, and the Premier should go into it at once. Mr. Fisher cannot guarantee that the depositors will not withdraw their money, nor can he guarantee anything else to the Premier, unless indeed he guarantee to advance him a loan equal to the amount transferred. It would be wrong to ask the people of the country to bear the expense of maintaining two banks in their respective townships, because, after all, the people pay. If the Federal Government have one bank and the State another there will be a tremendous amount of additional expenditure involved. That matter requires very much more attention than the Premier has given to it. I ventured to state the other night that probably Mr. Fisher would want two millions

of this four millions, and it seems that no definite arrangement has been made with him. One thing that, as much as any other, has had a bearing upon the financial affairs of the State, has been the influence of the Governments, Federal and State, upon private finance. I admit we had a bad season last year but, at the same time, the Federal note issue had a good deal to do with the locking up of money, and now Mr. Fisher's bank is also having this effect. The rate of interest is high, and money is very difficult to get. It is because of the influence of the several matters I have mentioned, and I think the position has been intensified by the regulation issued by the Minister for Lands.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did not you once have occasion to censure the private banks?

Mr. MITCHELL: I do not think so. What did I say?

Mr. Foley: The public had good reason to censure them.

Mr. MITCHELL: The public has good reason to thank them for what they have done. The rate of interest last September was the lowest we have had in the State for a very long time. Interest to-day is one per cent., probably two per cent., higher than when the present Government took office. I always consider that perhaps our greatest work was represented in our managing to get the banks to lend more money and at a lower rate of interest than ever before. This is a producing country, and a producing country needs money. When you remember that the Government have declared that they are in difficulties to-day because they have advanced a little money for seed wheat and fertiliser, you can understand that the farmer is even more deeply in trouble, seeing that the cropping last year cost £1,250,000. This year it will probably be £1,500,000. This being so, Ministers will see how easy it was to put the farmers in a hole, and how difficult for the farmers to find the money with which to put in their crops.

The Minister for Works. It was a simple matter for us to get them out of a hole.

Mr. MITCHELL : Then you did not do it.

The Minister for Works : We did.

Mr. MITCHELL : The Government say that the £50,000 advanced to farmers disarranged their finances.

The Minister for Lands : We said nothing of the sort.

Mr. MITCHELL : The Premier said so.

The Premier : Surely I can point out what we did without having it misinterpreted.

Mr. MITCHELL : Then, too, we were told that the Agricultural Bank was to do the work of private banks. What do we find ? The Minister comes down here with a proposal that the people were to have up to £2,000 advanced against their properties.

The Minister for Lands : No.

Mr. MITCHELL : That is the law. If the Premier did not mean them to have £2,000, why is it the law ?

The Minister for Lands : They cannot have it without the security.

Mr. MITCHELL : The law says that a land holder may have £2,000, will the Minister tell me if he has provided the Agricultural Bank with sufficient money for this ?

The Minister for Lands : I will tell you in due course what the Bank has done.

Mr. MITCHELL : I know what it has not done. I know one man who, notwithstanding that he had £8,000 worth of security, was refused the £2,000. The Minister knows there is no money available for the purpose. However, the work of the Government has produced a demand for money from the Agricultural Bank, and it will be interesting to know how Ministers intend to meet the obligation. Do they intend to advance the £2,000 ? We know that accounts due by the Agricultural Bank have been held up for months, apparently because there is not enough money to pay them.

The Premier : Who told you that ?

Mr. MITCHELL : No officer.

The Premier : Then how do you know ?

Mr. MITCHELL : I am assured the money has not been paid.

The Premier : Of course. It is all based on assumption.

Mr. MITCHELL : The public tell me they have not got their money. At any rate, the Minister for Lands took on a grave responsibility when he made his regulation, and a still more serious responsibility when he refused to give the people their money. In respect to the dismissal of officers, we asked the other day what pensions would be paid to them, and the reply was that each would be informed when a decision was arrived at. That is no reply. The House and the country have a right to know what these dismissals are going to cost, and why these officers were dismissed. There was Captain Hare, who could ill be spared in the department ; then there was Mr. Despeissis, of whom Professor Lowrie said he was the most useful man in tropical agriculture that could be found in the State. Yet Mr. Despeissis had to go. Why ? Of course Ministers cannot say, but the public have answered the question.

The Premier : What do they say ?

Mr. MITCHELL : That Ministers did not approve of his politics.

Mr. Heitmann : Why did Professor Lowrie go ?

Mr. MITCHELL : Because he had a better billet.

Mr. Heitmann : No ; because he was tired of you.

Mr. MITCHELL : We are entitled to know why Mr. Despeissis had to go. He was a very useful officer, but unfortunately he was a political opponent of the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works : He was never very effective in that regard.

Mr. MITCHELL : At any rate Ministers had hardly got rid of the Tropical Commissioner when they selected another to go to the North, showing clearly that they had need of a good man up there. Admittedly Mr. Despeissis was a good man. The Premier says that more land has been sold by the present Ministry than was sold in the previous year. I hope it is so, but I question the statement all the same, and I will be glad to get the return when I have an opportunity of moving for it. Under the

system that now obtains land has to be surveyed before approval, and no doubt much of the land recently approved was surveyed in my time. In any case the area surveyed is 600,000 acres less than in the previous year. That is deplorable. The Premier said his Minister was not sending people to the back-blocks. Seeing that I took them to the nearest land available I do not see exactly where the Minister can be settling them.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Why did you not give them water supplies ?

Mr. MITCHELL : I did more for them in respect to water supplies than anyone else has done. As a matter of fact the work I did in that connection is still being carried on to-day. I created the department, and I will prove that I had more wells and bores put down in a month than my friend has done in four months. I know, for the very men who served under me are serving under the Minister.

The Premier : You are blossoming into a deRougemont.

Mr. MITCHELL : You always were one. I give the Minister credit for the work he is doing, and I am glad that he is carrying it on. The Avondale estate is being hung up by the Minister for Lands. Why is he refusing to sell it ? It has been withdrawn from sale. Applications for it have been refused. The Ministers made a good deal of capital out of the Avondale purchase, but immediately they get into office they refuse to sell the estate.

Mr. Underwood : You hawked it about the country.

Mr. MITCHELL : Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Underwood : How many blocks did you sell ?

Mr. MITCHELL : I sold a few blocks, and the Minister for Lands could have sold the balance, but he has withdrawn it from sale. That is what I complain of. The Government boast about what they are doing for the farmers, but all the same the farmers are not satisfied. They want these railways pushed on. They want their roads made and they want money from the Agricultural Bank.

Workmen, too, are dissatisfied. There is a depression in existence, and it is of no use Ministers saying there are no unemployed. Only yesterday and to-day Ministers have found work at Kalgoorlie for the unemployed. The Premier says they have fulfilled all their promises, but that is far from being correct. It is true that the Government have bought steamers, have tried to trawl for fish, and have set up a milk supply from these ten unfortunate cows at Crowley.

Mr. Lander : They are not "tuber" cows like those you kawked around.

Mr. MITCHELL : In regard to powellising, I agree with the Minister for Works that if this process is successful, it ought to be State-owned. The experiments made by the past Government no doubt have helped the Minister for Works in coming to some conclusion in this connection. Most assuredly the powellising system should not be owned by a private person if it is such a success ; but the Minister will need to see that it is. I would urge the government to consider seriously the financial position of the country, before going into further enterprises. We know they have in mind a State brick works, and the manufacture of agricultural machinery.

Mr. Lander. Let us hope they will have a cut at the baking business, too.

Mr. MITCHELL : They are going to have a sanatorium.

Mr. Lander : They have it, and it is doing good work.

Mr. MITCHELL : The question of the manufacture of agricultural machinery was before the country.

Mr. Carpenter : So was the proposal for Government steamers.

Mr. MITCHELL : The machinery idea has a greater chance of success than the other ideas of the Government, because there is a high protective duty in their favour. I do not think the Government will be able to supply machinery more cheaply than at present. I think it would be much better for the farmers if the Federal Government removed the duty. However, the Government have determined to make an attempt at manufacturing agricultural machinery, and I hope they will succeed. I now

come to the charges that were levelled at me by the Premier, in the course of his speech the other night. Before coming to this, may I explain that all this is due to the regulations made by the present Minister for Lands. He determined to pass the regulations, that no land should be transferred under Section 55 until the five years' improvements were carried out, and that no land should be sold under Section 56 until the ten years' improvements had been made. That has had a most disastrous effect. I do not deny that there has been speculation. I never could find that speculation was being carried on, though I was always conscious that it existed, but, if there is to be no buying or selling, the land will have no value. The Minister has administered his department sympathetically, notwithstanding this regulation. Transfers go through just as they did before; in fact, with greater ease; but the regulation has had a disastrous effect. It has had the effect of depriving people of the value of their holding; then, too, it is against the law. It is quite true that holding under Section 55 is not saleable, because of the personal covenant, just as with the Homestead Farm. Neither a Homestead Farm nor a lease can be sold; the Act provides for that; but the Act provides that a holding under Section 56 may be sold, and no person would hesitate to buy land under that. The Minister for Works was negotiating for a block under Section 56 and the conditions required were merely those of working. Why does not the Minister obey the law? The Minister knows full well that until Mr. Hopkins' time transfers were never questioned; people were encouraged to take up land, and they ought still to be encouraged. The Government do not lose by these sales, except in the case of a Homestead Farm, because the money to be paid, and the work to be done, are the same. It matters not whether the Premier holds a block of land or whether Mr. Bath holds it, as far as the State is concerned. I want the Minister for Lands to discriminate between the genuine purchaser and the speculator,

and to remove the restrictions. There is more land offered for sale to-day than ever in the history of the State, and there are fewer buyers. Nobody wants it, because they cannot borrow on it. The leader of the Opposition referred to land held originally by the Premier and transferred to the Minister for Lands; it would not be necessary to refer to this except to show the stupidity of these regulations.

The Premier: That was not the reason given.

Mr. MITCHELL: No, but that is the reason.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is an illegal transaction.

Mr. MITCHELL: There is another thing in connection with these regulations which says that no man may select under Section 56 until he has complied with Section 55. I complain that the Minister for Works has been allowed to transfer his under Section 56, and the Minister for Lands also.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. MITCHELL: In any event, I should have had no objection or hesitation in granting permission to the Minister for Works to live off his block, because the Act provides that residence may be for any five of the 20 years, but it is altogether wrong to allow the Minister for Works to acquire a block under Section 56, when the public are denied that right. I know persons who have applied for land to complete the Section 56 right, and who have been refused because they have not complied with Section 55. Is it fair that the Minister for Works should get his block under Section 56?

The Minister for Lands: Absolutely; Anyone can transfer to Section 56.

Mr. MITCHELL: Not until he has effected substantial improvements. The Minister for Works has gone before the Land Board, and undertaken, on oath, to live upon it—

The Minister for Lands: You are all askew.

Mr. MITCHELL: No, I am not. In any case, it comes with very bad grace, from the Minister for Lands that he should have allowed his colleague to

transfer his land to Section 56. The law provides for it, and under that it could have been done, but not under the Minister's regulation, which has had such disastrous effects over the State. It has caused more trouble and misery than any other regulation.

The Minister for Lands: That is absolute nonsense.

Mr. MITCHELL: I repeat that it has.

The Minister for Lands: You ought to be ashamed to say it.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is absolutely the case; the banks are calling up money everywhere. What applications have you refused from the Agricultural Bank?

The Minister for Lands: The banks have done that all through history.

Mr. MITCHELL: The banks took over the security, and people are now seeking to transfer to the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You advanced too much money.

Mr. MITCHELL: The trouble is that they cannot get at any at all from the Agricultural Bank, notwithstanding that they have been injured by this regulation. I do not want to repeat what has been said in regard to the land held by the Premier and his colleagues.

Mr. Green: Give us Narratarra.

Mr. MITCHELL: The public want to know why there is one law for one man and another law for another. I venture to tell the Minister for Lands that, unless he allows a fair chance to sell, there will be no value in the land. Being a valuable security, it is important that the security should be available. In the course of his speech the hon. the Premier saw fit to make a vindictive personal attack on me in connection with certain lands at Cowcowing and Narratarra, held by me and by members of my family. Before I reply to his assertions there are three points that I should like to have clearly understood. The first is that these matters were not brought forward by the Premier because of anything illegal or improper that I had done, but merely because the leader of the Opposition had mentioned illegal, and, consequently, improper acts on the part of the Premier, the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Works. In-

stead of replying to the statements made by the leader of the Opposition, the Premier merely pleads that his transactions were of small amount, and seeks to hide their illegality under large transactions of mine, quite irrespective of whether or not my transactions have been legal or proper. In the second place, I would point out that ever since I entered political life I have endeavoured to persuade people throughout this State to take up land for themselves, and for their children. I have preached this doctrine from many platforms, and in many pamphlets, and it would be strangely inconsistent if I had not followed the practice I urged on other people. Consequently, I am taking up the position that there was nothing wrong in my children taking up land, providing they observed the laws of the country, and I shall content myself with showing that they did this. I shall also show that wherever a circumstance arose requiring special Ministerial approval, such approval was refused, although it would have been readily granted in similar circumstances to any other member of the general public. The Minister for Lands has been good enough to supply me with information for which I asked in connection with this and other matters, so that this statement is made on information which I have obtained from the office. Thirdly, I wish it to be understood that the files covering all the facts in connection with the transactions in question were in the possession of the Hon. the Premier before he made his speech. Consequently, if he has misstated the facts—I have too much respect for the rules of this House to say that he has done so—and if such misstatement of facts was calculated to prejudice me in the eyes of the public, he must have been guilty of deliberate untruth and premeditated slander.

Mr. Thomas: That is a pretty strong statement.

Mr. MITCHELL: The facts in connection with the Cowcowing lands are that early in 1899 my son, R. F. P. Mitchell, selected two areas, one of 888 acres, under non-residential conditions,

and one of 1,000 acres under residential conditions. The leases are dated 1st July, 1899, and the conditions of improvement date from the 25th January, 1910, in the first case, and from the 15th February, 1910, in the second case. These leases were subsequently transferred in a perfectly legal, open and proper manner to my second son, R. B. Mitchell. As he had not completed his studies, he was unable to comply with the residence conditions, and consequently the 1,000 acre block was at once brought under Clause 57, which provides for the payment in one sum of the money necessary to make the land freehold. That money was at once paid, and the improvements carried out on the land are of twice the amount required by the Act. These improvements, I may add, have been carried out, despite water difficulties, which, in the case of other holders, have been deemed sufficient to warrant the granting of extensions of time for the making of improvements. The Minister for Lands told me that he would extend the time, if it were necessary. I will undertake to get the improvements done within the time specified by the Act, although it will cost £50 more. In this case so far from receiving any special concession my son has not applied for the consideration that would have been readily extended to any other holder. It is true that my wife also selected two areas at Cowcowing, and after holding them for a few months transferred the rents paid upon them to two blocks at Narratarra. This is in accordance with the usual practice of the department. Selectors who discover after paying the first half year's rent that they would prefer to select elsewhere are invariably allowed to transfer the amount paid. The amount was paid within a few months.

The Minister for Lands: It should not have been within a few months but within 30 days.

Mr. MITCHELL: Certainly not. In my time it was.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They should always forfeit if the rents are not paid, and you know it.

The Premier: We would have to refund thousands of pounds which you collected in your term.

Mr. MITCHELL: The survey fees were not transferred until after they had been paid into the department by a subsequent selector of the original blocks, and this action is entirely in accordance with the usual practice of the department. In regard to the Narratarra estate of 22,000 acres, this was thrown open to the public and advertised in the usual way. Due notice was given that applications would close on March 1st, 1910, and by that date a number of applications were received, but not one for any of the blocks now held by me or by any member of my family. Up to the time of closing when there was a chance of going before the board no applications had been put in by anyone. On March 7th R. F. P. Mitchell, having transferred his Cowcowing land to his brother, applied for lot 11 containing 1,995 acres.

The Premier: Was he then the registered owner of the other block?

Mr. MITCHELL: It is really immaterial. One son took the land at Cowcowing and the other took land at Narratarra. The transfer was made to allow this to be done. The transfers were dated the 4th. The Minister for Lands will tell the Premier all this. He need not go for his information to the member for Narrogin who is vindictive. The price at which he applied (£4 15s. per acre) and all the conditions were exactly the same as those at which the same block had been open to the public for weeks before.

Mr. Heitmann: But why 2,000 acres?

Mr. MITCHELL: Because the law stated 2,000 acres.

Mr. Underwood: It was bought for closer settlement, was it not?

Mr. MITCHELL: I will show the hon. member that it is closer settlement. At any rate I think hon. members might listen while I make this explanation. Approval of the application was not given at once for the reason that I heard that Mr. S. Burgess desired the property, and I was unwilling that my son's application should prevent

selection by anyone else. Even then the day appointed had long passed. It was not until Mr. Burgess intimated that he would not take the block, giving as his reason that the price was too high, that the application was approved. This was on March 22. The rent for this block was £737 17s. 10d. per annum, and it is quite true that the rent was held over for a time, as is repeatedly done whenever a request is made. I was under the impression that the only penalty would be payment of interest at the rate prescribed in the Re-purchase Act, viz., 5 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: Six per cent.

Mr. MITCHELL: But when I found that only by permission of the Minister could this be done, I at once told the Under Secretary that I would give no such permission and that the fines must be paid. This was another case in which so far from giving any special concession to my son I refused him the consideration that in similar circumstances I would have given to any member of the public, just as the present Minister for Lands is doing in many cases to-day. The Premier said that this holding over of lands had never before been allowed in regard to re-purchased estates, but I would point out that in the case of the Denmark Estate, where the land is selected at £10, £12, and even more per acre, the selectors are only charged 6d. per acre per annum for the first three years. If the Premier had asked the Minister for Lands for this information instead of the member for Narrogin, he would have been told this also. At the time my son took up this block, improvements had been done on it to the extent of £2,992, and these of course were included in the purchase price. The total improvements required in the conditions amounted to only £1,998, but he has nevertheless expended a further sum of over £4,000 since taking up the land. As to his having rented the river bed of 25 acres, that was done because at the time the river bed was within his boundary fence. This a paltry thing to have brought forward, and I do not know why the Premier should have referred to it. The river bed is open

to the public, and in any case, it can be resumed on three months' notice, or even five minutes' notice. Would it not have been unreasonable to have refused this, seeing that it was within the fence surrounding the holdings. I have three sons, all of whom I wish to make farmers. I have already explained the provisions made for each of two of them. After my son R. F. P. Mitchell took up land on the Narratarra estate we decided that my third son should join in when his school days were completed. My wife consequently selected lot 4, of 1,052 acres, and I selected lot 14, of 804 acres, both adjoining R. F. P. Mitchell's holding. Both these lots, like the one selected by my eldest son, had been open to the public some time without any applications coming forward. I want to make it clear that no one would take them, and they were consequently selected by us. It being the intention that the two properties should be worked in partnership and in conjunction, permission was secured for the concentration of improvements. This is a usual thing and was not done to evade the law or restrict the improvements, but merely in order that the land might be cleared in the way it could be most conveniently worked.

The Premier: Do not forget that this is a re-purchased estate.

Mr. MITCHELL: I know; the Minister for Lands has repeatedly given permission to concentrate improvements. Naturally the whole place cannot be cleared in a day or two. The Premier has made reference to the size of these holdings, and has stated that the first applications for areas of over 1,000 acres in re-purchased estates made after the amendment of the Act were made by my wife and my son. This is one of the matters on which the Minister, having the files in his possession, must have known the true facts. One of those cases in which any mis-statements of fact calculated to prejudice me, must be at once a studied falsehood and a malicious slander. I have already told the House that many blocks on the Narratarra Estate were applied for on or before 1st March, 1910, and that I and

members of my family took up only blocks for which there were no other applicants. The Narratarra estate, of 22,000 acres, includes blocks of 1,300, 1,500, 1,600, and 2,002 acres irrespective of those taken up by members of my family. The blocks were made large because they included a good deal of rough country, a circumstance which applies to our blocks as well as the others. The block taken up by eldest son was made large because the improvements on it which the applicant had to pay for were altogether out of proportion to a 1,000 acre farm.

Mr. Heitmann : That does not indicate poor land.

The Premier : You are too good a judge to take up poor land.

Mr. MITCHELL : I do not want to be misunderstood. This block was made large because of the improvements on it. It was the same in the case of the Oakabella Estate. There were too many improvements on 1,000 acre blocks, and that induced us to amend the Act, so that re-purchased estates might, when necessary, be sold in lots of more than 1,000 acres. That I am not alone in considering that about 2,000 acres of this class of mixed country is necessary to make a good wheat and sheep farm can be easily demonstrated. Only a few days ago, on 3rd July, the Department threw open some land at Totadgin, and the lithos. show in more than one instance that if the applicant wished to secure an Agricultural Bank advance he must take up two lots totalling upwards of 1,900 acres, of which no less than 1,700 acres is classified as 'first-class land.'

The Premier : That is not re-purchased land.

Mr. MITCHELL : It makes no difference.

The Premier : It does. The large estate was re-purchased for closer settlement.

Mr. George : No one would take it.

The Premier : Then why did you purchase it ? Another of the former Minister's blunders.

Mr. MITCHELL : It is not a blunder to re-purchase an estate of 22,000 acres to divide among 11 people.

The Premier : I hold you have no right to re-purchase large estates and do what you did in the case of Narratarra.

Mr. MITCHELL : It is the law of the land, and you helped to pass the Act. It was not made for me at all, and it is not fair to make the insinuation that I passed the Act because I wanted my son to have a 2,000 acre block.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MITCHELL : Before tea I was dealing with my connection with land in the Narratarra estate. So far from having monopolised the Narratarra estate, I and members of my family hold only 3,851 acres out of a total of 22,000 acres and the land we took up was land that no one else would apply for. Neither I nor any member of my family has selected land that we were not fully entitled to select under the laws of the country. We have never asked for nor have we been given any special concession—on the contrary, I have refused to give my sons Ministerial permission that I would readily have given to a member of the general public. Contrary to the practice of Ministers opposite, I have never since I became a Minister of the Crown had any transaction with the Agricultural Bank, and all the land I hold is highly improved. So far from having anything to hide, I am proud to be able to show my consistency and my faith in the country, in that, whilst urging the people on every occasion to take up land from the State for themselves and for their sons, I have provided farms for each of my sons in a manner open to every member of the community. I would like to emphasise that point. The Minister for Works says that this is all picked country. I admit that 2,000 acres of mixed country suitable for wheat and sheep is not too much.

Mr. O'Loughlen : But we should not have to re-purchase it.

Mr. MITCHELL : It depends entirely on the price, and unfortunately in this country land is a good deal mixed. The Attorney General will tell the House that he does not consider 2,000 acres too much for a man to make a living on; at any rate, the law says that a man can hold 2,000 acres and the law of the land is good

enough for me, and I hope it will be good enough for members opposite. I have already said that the statement made by the Premier was not provoked by any illegal act on my part, but was intended to distract public attention from the illegal acts on the part of the present Ministry instanced by the leader of the Opposition. So far from desiring to baulk inquiry, I seek the fullest possible inquiry. This is not the first time that my land transactions have been brought up in this House. Members opposite on a previous occasion made all sorts of wild charges concerning my land dealings, and when asked to take them before a Supreme Court judge where they would be examined on oath not one of them turned up. I do not hesitate to say that my record will bear comparison with the record of any other member of the House; I have done my duty to this country faithfully and well. I want to make my sons farmers in this country, and I do not want them to take up less than a living area. I want it to be borne in mind also that this land was not acquired in competition with the general public; I selected it only after other people had had the opportunity and had failed to take advantage of it. These charges, wild though they be, do the country a considerable lot of harm; they must disturb the feeling of the people here, and they must also disturb the feeling of people elsewhere in regard to the integrity of public men.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are they any worse than the charges made by the leader of the Opposition against Ministers?

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes, because the charges made by the leader of the Opposition were proved and the charges made by Ministers were not. The hon. member knows that the facts in regard to the land transactions of the Premier, the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works are absolutely as they were stated.

The Minister for Lands: Absolutely wrong.

Mr. MITCHELL: I do not want to repeat them, because no good can come of so doing, but the statements are absolutely in accord with facts.

The Minister for Lands: They are not.

Mr. MITCHELL: Whilst the Minister for Lands is an artist in making things look not quite what they are, I venture to say he will have some difficulty in disproving this charge. At any rate, the files can be laid on the Table and members can then see the facts for themselves. In regard to myself, I court the fullest possible inquiry and I hope that in future members opposite when dealing with transactions of mine will be careful at least to see the file. If the Minister for Lands had been consulted by the Premier he would have been given the facts, but the Premier consulted the member for Narrogin-Williams and thought that the member for Narrogin-Williams had seen the files.

The Minister for Lands: The Premier had the files.

Mr. MITCHELL: He also had the member for Narrogin-Williams. I have no objection to having my transactions made public, but they should be made public in a calm and deliberate fashion and not in the violent fashion adopted by the Premier. The member for Narrogin-Williams has had some land transactions himself, and I have an interesting plan here of his transactions with land in the Esperance district showing the plan which he deposited with the Titles Office and the plan on which he sold.

Mr. George: He is only young; leave him alone.

Mr. MITCHELL: In truth Ministers should remember that the public know that they have got these files and expect them to state facts. It has been shown that the Premier has an absolute disregard for the position he occupies. He showed that disregard in connection with the minute written by the leader of the Opposition when Treasurer. Time and again he connected it with the period prior to June, 1911, when actually the letter was written three months after that date.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That was only one of the minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL: But that was the minute the Premier quoted.

Mr. George: He led the House to believe that it referred to June.

The Minister for Lands: He did not.

Mr. MITCHELL: Most assuredly the Premier did quote words from it, and he told the leader of the Opposition to-day that this was the minute he referred to all through his speech. I have finished my explanation in regard to these land transactions. In conclusion, let me say I am staggered that the Ministry have not got a better grip of the finances of the country and a better understanding of their own proposals. The Premier evidently knows nothing of the arrangements he says he is making with the Federal Prime Minister in regard to the Savings Bank.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Is it wise to disclose them?

Mr. MITCHELL: Certainly negotiations between the Premier of the State and the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth can be disclosed to the public.

The Premier: We are the best judges of that.

Mr. MITCHELL: No, the Premier is not the best judge of that.

The Premier: Well, I am going to be.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Premier was not able to give me any information at all; he did not seem to understand that he had four millions at stake, he does not know where he will get the money from if Mr. Fisher takes it.

The Premier: I can reply to you, at any rate.

Mr. MITCHELL: It would be a wise thing to do. Great proposals have been made to the House in regard to sawmills, steamers, and other things, but absolutely no information has been given. Have the Government calculated the cost, do they know whether they are financial, have they got any information at all?

The Premier: I will give you some now. It is our intention to re-christen the "Darius," which is now at Fremantle, on Friday afternoon.

Mr. MITCHELL: That reply well illustrates the flippancy of the Premier. Thousands of pounds are at stake and all that he knows is that he is going to re-christen a boat. It is deplorable that the Premier should come here with these proposals and not only not give information to members but apparently not know what the intentions of the Government are.

The Premier: Ask some of the members of the meat ring; they will tell you.

Mr. MITCHELL: Ask some of the members of the meat ring? Why, this boat is going to load sheep for Mr. Gooch, one of our richest men, and it came over loaded with coal for McIlwraith, McEachern and Company, and yet the Premier complains about the meat ring. I ask the Premier is he going to reduce the freight to Mr. Gooch on these sheep? Is he going to carry these store sheep at less than ordinary rates? The matter is far too serious to be treated by the Premier in this way. His finances are already overstrained. He is undertaking great new works, his borrowings in the future will be enormous; he has from six to eight millions to borrow in the very near future, and he treats it all so lightly. I hope that when other Ministers rise to speak they will give the fullest possible information. The public have asked me time and again—"why cannot we get information?"

The Premier: Where do you hold your conferences with the public?

Mr. MITCHELL: I meet the public from time to time in very respectable places; I never see the Premier there, it is true, because he does not happen to go there. In any event some information came from a chauffeur, a friend of the Premier, probably, and of course if the Premier will associate with people who repeat what he says, naturally the public must know. We cannot get information from the Government or from the officers, but we do get it from the man in the street because he is a friend of the Premier. It is fortunate for the public that the man in the street knows so much.

Mr. Thomas: Did you say that you got information from the Premier's chauffeur?

Mr. MITCHELL: No, I did not. This discussion during the last few days if it has done nothing else has shown up the proposal of the Premier to make a grant to the Trades Hall. I believe we will hear no more of it. It has been said that this discussion will have no good result, but that result alone, I venture to say,

will more than repay the time taken up in this debate.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): The Premier's reply to the leader of the Opposition, more particularly in relation to the financial administration of the present Government, was so effective in regard to the transactions of this Government, and so effective in showing up the lack of administrative capacity and lack of intimate knowledge on the part of those who have been so apt in the past to pose as financial authorities, that it is hardly necessary to traverse any of the ground. Evidently, however, the leader of the Opposition still accepts the member for Northam at his own valuation as a financial authority, and has entrusted to him the task of doing what he was unable to do on the occasion of his speech here last week. But, if anything, the member for Northam has made a worse job of it; and not only this, he has sought to twist a statement of the Premier into a misstatement of the actions of the leader of the Opposition when Treasurer of this State. I deny that the Premier attempted to lead the House to believe that the particular minute referred to was written in June or July. If hon. members will carefully peruse the speech of the Premier they will observe that he based his statement that liabilities had not been met and had been carried over to the next financial year in order to make a better position, on the clear statement in the report of the Auditor General. That report says, in words which cannot be misunderstood, that these liabilities to the amount of £54,000, or thereabouts, which should have been brought to account in the financial year 1910-11, were carried over, and, of course, had to be met by the Scaddan Administration. But further, in order to indicate that this must have been part of a policy, the Premier referred to a minute which had been penned by the leader of the Opposition, when Treasurer, that gave considerable colour to the assumption that this was a practice which had been previously resorted to—

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And it matters not whether it was January, June, or September.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, it does.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If it were done in September, prior to the election, with the idea of putting a good face on things when an appeal to the country was made, it is strong presumptive evidence that it was the practice to do it on previous occasions.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Read the Premier's remarks.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I read them. I am pointing out to hon. members that there is no misstatement of the position, and that not only that minute, but the other minutes to which the Premier referred, written by officers of the department when applying for excesses, are substantial evidence which in the aggregate is convincing proof to me that this practice has been resorted to in order to put a good face on things at the end of the financial year. It may have made it look well for the previous Government at the end of June, 1911, but I want to emphasise the fact that it loads us with £54,000 of expenditure which should have been taken into account in the previous year, and justifies our attitude—an attitude which I may say will probably make our expenditure look larger for this financial year—in asking that, so far as all the efforts of the officers of the department are concerned, they shall be concentrated on completing to the fullest possible extent, the transactions of each financial year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That has always been the custom.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Those instructions have gone forth.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Every year they have gone forth.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Never! The instructions have gone forth, and not only in minutes; I know that, so far as my departments are concerned, I have urged more than once, since the first minute was issued, that they should concentrate their efforts as far as possible on bringing the expenditure to account with—

in the term permitted so that the balance sheet for the financial year 1911-12 will show the true position of affairs.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We have always done that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then we have the member for Northam repeating parrot-fashion but certainly in more halting tones the statement of the leader of the Opposition that the Premier should have been able to forecast the position more accurately than he did, and at the same time waxing indignant at the bare idea of the Government having a deficit, using it as a means of attacking the Government for their lack of administrative capacity so far as finances are concerned. This, coming from hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, is nothing less than colossal impudence, when we remember these gentlemen accumulated from 1908-9, throughout years in which seasons were good and the harvests abundant—

Hon. Frank Wilson: And finances very bad and the revenue falling.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Throughout these years they accumulated a deficit of £312,000. These gentlemen, who accumulated this deficit in good seasons, now turn round on us and say that, because we have a much smaller deficit in a year with a bad harvest and bad conditions, it shows bad administrative capacity. I repeat again, it is nothing less than colossal impudence.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We had no seasons at all. There was no land settlement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. gentlemen were controlling the affairs of the State; they were controlling the Lands Department; and if they were disposing of the land without regard to whether it was being put to productive uses, it is only an additional argument and proof that the country was well rid of them in October last.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We settled the land for you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then we have these gentlemen in a new role, evincing a great thirst for information. They want information on every conceivable subject; and yet, when they

were occupying the Government benches, they were as close as oysters; there were no Ministers in the records of the State more skilled in the art of avoiding questions by answering them without supplying information; there were no gentlemen more scrupulous, when they were, perhaps, collectively or individually attacked, in taking care to see that those who alleged the charges were denied any opportunity of securing the files.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am afraid you are unscrupulous enough.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am glad to say that there is a wholesome change in that matter in connection with this particular debate, and that these gentlemen have had an opportunity of seeing the files that were the subject of criticism and of securing from them the information they required.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not at all. I have not been able to get the files, except those since you took office.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does the hon. gentleman want to have the run of the record room?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, on this subject.

The Premier: Who issued the instruction that no information would be issued except through the Treasurer? The hon. member did.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Quite right too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. gentlemen are desirous of going beyond the information referring to individual matters, and if they want to get behind the confidential character of the executive offices, then I can assure the hon. gentlemen that the Government are not likely to gratify them in that particular.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I never suggested it, but I want my own minutes, those I wrote. I could not get those.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member does not know what he wants. If he is tackled on the point he wriggles like an eel until one never knows where one is going to catch him.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are doing the wriggling.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It has been said that no information has been

supplied to the public. That is absolutely incorrect. The public have been informed from time to time of what the Government have done in connection with the purchase of steamers. Where transactions have been completed the information has been supplied to the public. In regard to the meat supply, involving as it does, an outlet for stock in the Kimberley and north-western areas, ample information has been supplied from time to time to the public to enable any hon. member of the House or any member of the public to be acquainted with the full facts of the situation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There has never been a statement from the Premier on the subject in the Press.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This subject was very prominently brought forward at the time of the last general election. The present leader of the Opposition stated that if the need arose a steamer would be purchased.

Mr. Allen: "Put on," not "purchased."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Purchased, or put on. He said at first they would charter a boat, but later on he said that, if necessary, a steamer would be purchased. Then during the course of the campaign, and afterwards in his capacity as Premier, the leader of the present Government repeatedly stated that if the investigations pursued justified the Government in the purchase of steamers, this would be undertaken. The Government have not taken a leap in the dark. They have not gone into this proposal without the fullest investigation, and without the advantage of all that had previously been gathered together by way of information on this important question, while in my capacity as Minister for Agriculture I communicated with all the known pastoralists, both large and small, in the north-western areas in order to ascertain the position in which they were placed, and in order to ascertain their views in regard to the proper means of providing an outlet for their stock. In a great many instances replies were received, and those replies fully convinced

the Government that we would not be likely to meet with any success if we stopped at a proposal which would charter boats for only a season, or even for two seasons. It is not necessary, and I have never laboured the point, to prove that there is a ring in existence, or a trust of a rapacious character, as we know them in the United States. It is sufficient for us to be able to prove that a few firms are in such a big way of business that, by the terms they can offer, they practically monopolise the space on the chartered boats engaged in bringing stock to the metropolitan markets, and that by the exercise of the influence of that predominating position they can preclude the possibility of the small pastoralists finding an outlet for the stock they raise in the northern areas. That being so, and without any desire on our part to interfere with those engaged in the trade, it appeared to us necessary, in the interests of the development of the North-West, and in the interests of small pastoralists, a class whom we require to encourage, that we should supplement the existing means of communication for the carriage of stock, and provide boats which would afford an outlet for the small pastoralist, and, at the same time, keep in view the necessity of developing the North-West in common with other parts of the State. Now, as a matter of fact, all this fuss, all these notes of exclamation in regard to the illegality or the novelty of this proposal of running boats to the North-West, are ridiculous when we judge the position from the point of view of providing transit facilities for those settlers, just as we provide transit facilities for those who have settled on our inland areas. There is not one member of the House who will raise his voice and question the necessity and advisability of providing railway communication, at as speedy a rate as possible, to afford facilities for the agriculturists of our inland areas; and by a parity of reasoning it is just as much our duty to provide transit facilities for the settlers in our northern areas. Now it happens that these transit facilities take the shape of steamers, instead of rails and locomotives, and carriages, and

if we are to do our duty we have no right to leave those people neglected, to refuse to do whatever we can, whatever is humanly possible to afford to them facilities equally as good as those afforded to settlers in other areas of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then your boats are to benefit cattle growers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our boats are to have all-round benefit. They are to benefit the producers in the North-West, and they are to benefit the consumers in the South, and, as a matter of fact, they are going to prove of more material benefit than any other facilities which have been provided in recent years to any body of citizens in any portion of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you going to reduce the freights then?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. gentleman will give notice of all these questions he will elicit all the desired information.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you going to benefit the cattle grower?

The Attorney General: Talk about interruptions!

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you going to benefit the cattle grower, Mr. Sam McKay for instance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are going to benefit them all; we are going to benefit the producers in that we are going to give them an outlet for their stock, which has previously been denied, and we are going to benefit the consumer in that we are going to give him an increased supply, and I hope and believe, a supply at a cheaper rate. Now we have heard a great deal of the fact that the leader of the Opposition and his followers are just as desirous as the Government of reducing the cost of living, but the hon. gentleman tells us that his plan was to establish freezing works at Wyndham. Now that appears to me to show a lack of business capacity on the part of the leader of the Opposition; certainly the Government, in undertaking this scheme, do not follow the desire of the hon. gentleman, which is to meet a certain loss for a considerable period of

time until we can educate our consumers to take frozen meat—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Chilled meat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Or chilled meat, in place of the fresh article.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They would not know chilled meat from fresh meat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is true. I quite admit that consumers might be taking chilled meat, or even frozen meat, and not know it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They would scarcely take frozen meat without knowing it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I believe some of the people have frozen mutton traded on them to-day and accept it as fresh; but the Government are not in the position of carrying on this deceit. If we were to embark on this proposal, not only the man in the street, but every member of the public, would know that we were bringing chilled or frozen meat to supply the metropolitan area, and we would have a long and hard row to hoe, and would involve ourselves in considerable loss, before we educated the public to accept it in lieu of the fresh article.

Mr. George: Does not the law provide that frozen meat must bear a label?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member knows that people do a lot of things contrary to what the law provides. That applies to frozen meat, and I may tell the hon. gentleman that at the present time we are investigating that subject with a view of taking action; but action is very difficult, owing to the insufficiency of the law. Now that is the position. We are not prepared to spend the taxpayers' money in a propaganda campaign of convincing the people they ought to eat chilled meat, because the leader of the Opposition, in order to be contrary to us, says that the only way of dealing with the problem is to establish chilling or freezing works at Wyndham.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not merely to be contrary; it has always been my policy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And then we also have to determine that while it is a comparatively easy problem to market frozen mutton, it is agreed on all

hands by those who are authorities on the subject—and I go for my authority to a work recently published on the freezing of meat—that it is a much more difficult project to market frozen beef, and that, so far as our north-western areas are concerned, the number of stock of the quality available for freezing which could be sent to the markets of the world to compete with the best qualities of frozen beef, are small in the extreme, and of such a limited character as to make the probability of the project being successful a very visionary one.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Your expert does not tell you that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am taking the accepted opinion of the best authorities in the world, those who give a great deal of thought to the subject. Until an attempt is made, either by co-operative or Government effort, to improve the stock in the North-West, I am quite satisfied from that point of view, and also from the point of view of the remoteness of the area where the chilling works will be established, and the necessarily high cost of production involved, that the proposal to meet the difficulty by freezing and chilling works is a visionary one indeed, and one which will not stand comparison with the scheme the people require, namely, the bringing down of fresh meat and placing it on the market at the cheapest rate. Now the member for Northam got himself hopelessly involved when dealing with the question of the increase of expenditure, and the loss of revenue in certain quarters, which, as the Premier pointed out, involved the deficit which was foreseen and predicted when the financial statement was made last December. For instance, the £50,000 matter, upon which the member for Northam got so mixed, the £50,000 which was extra expenditure, or rather which really represented loss of revenue-producing power on the railways, was the £50,000 which was involved in hauling water where, in previous seasons, with a normal rainfall, it was not necessary to haul water, or only a very small quantity indeed.

Mr. George: Is there no return from that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Premier was referring to the water which was required for the Railway Department's own purposes. Along the Great Southern the department had to haul water considerable distances, and along the Dumbleyung railway, for their own use. Water was hauled also along the Dowerin-Merredin line, the Collie-Narrogin line, and along the railway in the Geraldton district; and naturally this haulage of water, caused by the abnormal season, reduced the revenue-earning capacity of the railways. Then the Premier was quite justified in referring to the amount involved in fulfilling the promise that the reclassification would date back to July, 1911. We could not then determine what the award of the re-classification board would be, and therefore it could not be taken into account in predicting the amount of the finances for the year just ended. Then the amount of revenue which we would lose through the postponement of the payment of rents could not be forecasted, and, as a matter of fact, the amount exceeded even the expectations I formed when the Estimates of Revenue for my particular department were being prepared. We found that a very much larger circle of settlers were affected, and this has resulted in a loss of revenue which has been roughly estimated to be no less than £37,000, if not more than that amount. In regard to the sale of town lots, I readily admit that we have lost revenue for this current year. We have lost revenue for the years over which the payment for town lots would have been spread if we had effected the sale, but the Government is giving some consideration to posterity, and in the consideration we have made for the disposal of Crown lands, we can say, with all justification, that the revenue from this source will be really revenue, and not, as in the case of sales, a disposition of part of our capital. Then the hon. member for Northam is very much concerned because he said we had not sold as much land as was sold in previous years, and he went on to assure us, with the air of a great authority on political economy,

that we could not be prosperous unless we were selling land. As a matter of fact, I am indifferent on the question of having a large area of land selected. I would be quite content to have one quarter of the area selected, if, at the same time, I could be assured that the area brought under cultivation was increased fourfold. The prosperity of this State rests, not on the ease and rapidity with which land is selected, but on the earnestness, and the legitimate purpose with which the land is developed and utilised for productive purposes. The hon. gentleman says that I am not selling the Avondale estate. As a matter of fact I have reserved portion of it, because it may be possible that the University, when established, will desire to have a suitable area of land for an agricultural college, and while they may not decide that this is a suitable place, I have reserved it, and am awaiting their decision on the matter, because, if it is not utilised for that purpose, the Agricultural Department can utilise it to great advantage as a farm for the growth of pure seed wheat with which to supply farmers. In regard to the value of the land outside that particular park reserve, I have had an offer for it, but the request was for a big area. I understand that the area was resumed for closer settlement purposes, and it is certainly contrary to the principles of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, and contrary to the interests of the estate, if, after resuming it, we allow it to go out into large areas again, and permit the same old order to continue.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is cut up into small farms, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member for Northam said he is opposed to speculation in lands, and was quite unaware that it was going on. As a matter of fact, it would only have been necessary for him to investigate the reasons why so many caveats were inter-
 leaved in the files dealing with selections, and particularly selections under non-residential conditions, for him to have obtained a conception of the enormous extent to which trafficking in these areas to the exclusion of legitimate develop-

ment, and to the detriment of genuine settlers, was proceeding. In this connection I would explain my position in regard to what is known as selection under Section 56. There is a very vital difference between the position of the selector under Section 56, when the selection has been taken on as a new proposition, and when it has been held for a period of two years. I have no objection, and I never have objected, to providing facilities for people to acquire land, even if they are not in a position to go on the land immediately, so long as they are prepared to develop it legitimately. The trouble in connection with Section 56 has been that the position under the Act is, or has been up to the present time, that the selector can take up the land and can hold it for one year and nine months, or one year and eleven months, if he can put on sufficient labour at the end of that term, without the Lands Department or the Minister being able to question him on the score that no improvements had been effected. People can hold this land for a term of two years before we can proceed to inquire whether the conditions are fulfilled, or whether we can forfeit it if the conditions are not; and this has been a ready means by which speculation has been encouraged under this section. But after the two years are up, and the selector can be called upon to show the cause why the improvements have not been effected, the situation is entirely different. When I was faced with the position of discouraging the holding of land which was unused, in order that those desirous of settling might secure blocks, I decided that the selector under residential conditions should have first consideration, because he has to show his bona-fides by taking up his residence within a period of six months. If he takes up his residence, it is fairly good evidence that he intends to improve the block to comply with the conditions, and so add to the productive area of agricultural land in the State. This is the position in regard to Section 56, and I found it was under this particular section that the trafficking was going on. I join issue with the hon. mem-

ber for Northam in saying that the trafficking going on in unimproved areas was detrimental to the interests of the State. It was detrimental because the man looking for land to settle upon had practically to pay a premium amounting in instances that I know of to £1,000. That is £1,000 to go on an unimproved block in order to have the opportunity to build up a farm. That money which a man has to pay to the one who is the illegitimate holder of a block—it is illegitimate in the moral sense—should be available to use in fencing and buying stock and enabling the holder to reach a period of successful development before he otherwise could. I was determined, as far as my administration was concerned, to see that justice was done to the man who was anxious to go on the land and work it, and to prevent him from being fleeced by people who crowd round the Lands Department with the sole object of taking up land out of which they can make £100 or £200 or £300 in the week after.

Mr. Mitchell: That money should develop the land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. When it comes to the administration of these sections, I have undertaken a great amount of work, my one object being to increase the area of land brought under cultivation year by year. In dealing with these various applications, I can say with truthfulness that the Act has been administered without favour to anyone. As the hon. member for Northam said, if his son came along and could show good cause why he should secure the same consideration which was extended to other settlers, he would have secured it without question. I have practically based my administration with regard to the improvement conditions on selections on these lines. Where a homestead farm was held, if the settler could show substantial improvements and could assure me that at the end of a certain term he intended to take up his residence, no objection was offered to his securing exemption from residence for that period. If, on the other hand, he held a homestead farm and had carried out substantial improvements, but there was no intention on his part to take

up his residence, then the instruction was that he had to convert to non-residential conditions—that is under Section 56—and if substantial improvements were effected, in the way of clearing and bringing land under cultivation, then that settler was allowed to convert. That concession was extended to the Minister for Works as it was to other settlers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But he did not effect improvements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He has.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not when it was transferred.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It has only been transferred since his return from the North-West.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He never went on his farm to work it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He had 50 acres under crop, and 100 cleared, and a two-roomed house. He had substantial improvements, better than the usual run of improvements, and having evinced his bona fides by carrying out these improvements, I offered no objection in this as in other cases to having the land converted. He is doing what I desire to see settlers do, namely cultivating the land and adding to the productive area, and thus providing freight for the railways and assisting in the development and adding to the prosperity of this State. In regard to my own case, the hon. the leader of the Opposition is absolutely inaccurate in some of the statements he has made. I can assure the hon. member that, when the transfer was effected, I had improvements to the amount stipulated in the Land Act.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the 15 months that elapsed when there were no improvements and no residence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the Department permitted me to hold the land that is a question of the administration at that time. I can say that when that land was transferred the improvements were effected, and since I have acquired it these improvements have gone steadily on until it can bear comparison with, and I can call witnesses to say, that it is as well improved as any farm in that district. It has been carried on legitimately as a farm

and I intend to retain it as a farm and improve it. And I have no intention of speculating in it or attempting to defeat any of the regulations under which the land is held. Now we are told, and I think it is a scandalous statement coming from a responsible member of Parliament, that the banks are refusing to lend money to the farmers because of my administration of the Lands Department. I say that is absolutely untrue, and, while it may be good enough for the purblind critic in the street, it is unpatriotic and absolutely wrong for hon. members to make that statement when they know it is incorrect. As a matter of fact at the opening of the Tammin agricultural hall the hon. member for Northam, who was there, deplored the fact that the banks would not open their purse-strings to the farmers in that area. I know that in August last, two months before the Labour Government came into power, the banks were refusing to make further advances in the area thus affected by the dry conditions. July and August were dry months and they had then issued instructions that further advances were not to be made in the areas affected. As a matter of fact my instructions could not have endangered the position or damaged their interests because the object I had in view, and it has been accomplished since, was to enable the settler, instead of having to pay the premium I have referred to to the holders of land who had taken it up for speculative purposes, to use his available capital, whatever it might be, in effecting improvements and so avoid the necessity of going so soon to the bank for help. The best proof of the erroneous character of this statement, if I may use so mild a term, is that this policy has been pursued by the chartered banks of Australia, and the loan and mortgage companies since Australia has been a pastoral and agricultural country. In every period of drought the banks have closed down and shut out hundreds of people. In my recent trip through the agricultural areas, I met a number of men who had been squeezed out by the banks in other parts of Australia, and who had come here to make a fresh start. They had taken up small selections in the early days of the Selection Acts in the Eastern States, and

re-sold them to moneyed men, who built up the large areas in the Riverina and in the Western wheat lands, and which are now being re-purchased by the Governments for closer settlement at big prices. Of course the banks may tell you that they are purely commercial institutions, that they are not concerned with the intentions of the holder as to whether he regards his farm as the home of a lifetime. All that the banks are concerned about is whether the security on which their money is loaned will, if sold, return to them the amount of their advance and all necessary expenses. The Government, and I can also say the Agricultural Bank, not only now, but in all its history, regard the selector's holding from an entirely different point of view. We try to encourage the class of selector who regards his holding as his home for the remainder of his life, and when he erects a fence, clears the land, improves the pastures, cultivates and carries on farming operations, he proves that each one of those is a step to the realisation of his ideal. In short, we regard the selector's holding as a productive concern going on from year to year, and it is from that point of view that each application for assistance from the bank is considered. The banks, as I say, are not concerned as to how long a farmer intends to reside on his land. All they are concerned about is that the security is sufficient to return them what they have advanced upon it, and not only here but elsewhere when the seasons are good, when the wool clip is good, when prices are good, and when there is an abundant harvest and money is plentiful, they will go round and canvass the farmer and find out if he wants money, because they have plenty to supply, and I can say with certitude that on many occasions they have induced farmers to borrow money from them when it has not been advisable for these people to borrow. I am speaking from experience, and I have had the opportunity of overlooking some hundreds of instances where I have seen farmers borrow an amount equal to £5 and £6 per productive acre of their land. I say they have undertaken too big a burden, a burden bigger than they can tackle.

Mr. Broun: The banks would not lend that much.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are cases where they have done so, and I think that in many instances where they have gone canvassing for business, farmers have been induced to load themselves up with too big a liability. And history is repeating itself. As they have done in the Eastern States, they have squeezed men at the time when the men have been least able to pay up the money borrowed in better times, and here, at a time when the harvest was a failure over a large area, when the farmer found it difficult to meet his obligations, that was just the time when the banks decided to bring pressure to bear, and although I do not know—and therefore I am not going to repeat it as an actual statement—that any of the responsible officials of the banking institutions have declared that they have done this because of the Labour party or because of my administration of the Lands Department, I say if they have done so, it is playing it very low down indeed, because they have done precisely the same in times when the most conservative Governments Australia has known were in possession of the administrative offices in the Eastern States.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: But they are only applying pressure to leaseholds.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Northam went on to say that there was not so much money available, and any hon. gentleman who knows anything of the results of last season will have no difficulty in according his acquiescence to that statement. As a matter of fact the harvest for the season that is past, basing it on the average return of a number of years, was two million bushels short, that is to say if we had had an average return we should have had two million bushels more of wheat.

Mr. Broun: But there was 120,000 more acres cut for hay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hay return was also reduced in comparison with the average return.

Mr. Broun: Not the acreage cut.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am taking the area that was actually put

under crop for wheat, and was reaped for wheat. I am taking that and taking the average returns we have had. The harvest was short to the extent of over two million bushels. Hon. members can understand what an enormous difference that makes to the position in Western Australia. Take a moderate estimate of 3s. per bushel, and that makes over £300,000 less to circulate in Western Australia than would have been the case had the season been a normal one, but the position did not end there. There was a reduced yield in regard to hay. There was a reduced earning power of the railways owing to the fact that much less wheat was carried, and there was the reduced revenue derived by the Harbour Trust in connection with the export of wheat, and in many directions there was the inevitable tightening effect resulting from a big diminution in our main production so far as agriculture is concerned, that is the production of wheat, and naturally that had a stringent effect. Added to that there was the uncertainty up to within the last fortnight as to how the present season was going to turn out, and I am glad to say that the prospects have been materially brightened, hearts have been lightened, not only in the agricultural districts but also in the city, and I am quite satisfied that, with normal results this year, that stringency will be practically eliminated. But leaving that aside, I want to show that with all these adverse circumstances, the point upon which I desire my administration of the Lands Department to be judged, is as to the area brought under cultivation year by year, and although it is too soon for the statistics to be published to show the area under crop during the present season, I believe that I am safe in predicting that this year will not only be a record but will also show a record increase in comparison with previous years, and that, too, in spite of the fact that settlers have been disheartened by the poor results obtained from a very large area during the past season. Then we are told that nothing has been done. The hon. member for Northam said he failed to know what had been done for the farmers. I can as-

sure that hon. gentleman that a great deal has been done—done because the members of the present Government regarded it as their duty to assist those who have settled on our lands to tide over what was a difficult situation. For instance, to give hon. members a conception of what it means, if we have a normal return, that is, an average return for this current season on the holdings whose owners we have assisted with seed wheat, fertilizers, and in some instances fodder, we will secure a return of 1,350,000 bushels of wheat, and I can confidently assert that the bulk of that production will be due to the timely assistance we gave at a critical time. Then, again, there are splendid results which have accrued from the vigorous policy which we have pursued in connection with the search for water supplies, and by water supplies I mean permanent supplies. It is all very well to say to people during the winter time, when the rains are abundant, and when there are water supplies in what is known as the agricultural area, "Go on the land, young man (or old man, as the case may be) and you are bound to prosper," but I think that they have sufficiently great pioneering difficulties to overcome without the Government adding to these by sending them to areas where the water supply in summer months is not assured.

Mr. Brown: I am glad you recognise it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the reason why I have withheld subdivisions from selection. I have stipulated to officers of the department that I want an assurance under several headings. I have supplied to the Works Department a list of subdivisions withheld and asked them to give particulars of the work they have carried out, the results which have accrued, and the work which they intend to carry out in the near future. I have also required an assurance that the Agricultural Bank will render assistance to the settlers in their pioneering work, because it is useless to send men out with little or practically no capital to contend with those pioneering difficulties unless assured that the Agricultural Bank will render assistance,

whilst, on the other hand, the Agricultural Bank, as a sound business institution, has to have assurance as to the likelihood of successful agriculture in these particular areas. Then, I have also asked for assurances that railway facilities are conveniently situated now, or that railway proposals which have been approved will provide these facilities within a reasonable time. I think these are reasonable safeguards for a Minister to require before he induces men to go on these areas, because I say it is an inducement when we advertise these areas. When we post plans outside the office, and say that these lands are open for selection, we, as a Government, are guaranteeing those areas and we practically offer an inducement for settlers to go upon them. It seems to me that I would have a very unhappy time in the future if through any carelessness, or if through any lack of foresight or callous indifference to the interests of these people, I found in after years that these men had gone to those areas, perhaps beforehand having disposed of their furniture and their possessions in order to take up land, and had made an inevitable failure as a result of going on land in uncertain areas; and I would prefer to see the area of land selected reduced, rather than encourage people to go on areas where there is not a fair prospect of their meeting with success within a reasonable period of their settling on the land. Now, I had very much that was interesting to say in regard to the proposals of the Agricultural Department in connection with the future welfare of those who are engaged in the agricultural industry. I can assure hon. members, and I think they will know from the information which is supplied from time to time, that we have a well-defined and well-ordered policy for the development of the agricultural industry and for the assistance of individual selectors. As a matter of fact, I was really amused to hear the hon. member for Moore the other evening trot out those well-worn platitudes about the socialistic desires of hon. members on this side to reduce all to a monotonous even state of equality, and, as it were, to in-

roduce the exploded idea of dividing up equally on Saturday. In truth, there is no socialistic undertaking upon which we have embarked which has not in view the well defined object which underlies all true socialism, and that is to encourage the individuality of the settler, or of the person whom we are seeking to benefit. For instance, when we embarked on a proposal for relieving those settlers on the overgrown areas to the west of the Great Southern railway, we did it with the desire to relieve them of the laborious and almost hopeless task of carving out a home from that wilderness. We seek by expediting that work, by clearing an area thirty times as great as they could handle with the labour of their own hands, to give them a chance years before they could otherwise do it, to develop their land, cultivate their own individuality, and become prosperous settlers on those areas. When we undertook the task of pulling down the timber in the heavy forest areas of the South-West, it was not that we desired to reduce the settlers all to a dead level of uniformity, but rather to help them to clear away the timber and place the land under cultivation years before they could otherwise attain that stage, and to do it all at a reduced cost. When in our socialistic desires we assisted the farmers in the eastern districts to tide over the hard times, we did it not with the object of bringing them to a dead level, but rather to tide them over their difficulties so that when normal years return, as they are bound to do, they will have an opportunity of building up homes for themselves and becoming successful and prosperous farmers. And so with what is now something more than a proposal—it is an accomplished fact—the purchase of steamers for the development of the north-western areas of this State. It is done with the same desire of helping them to develop their individuality and to cope with the difficulties which in ordinary circumstances they will have to encounter; and if, later on, as I hope we will do, we provide them with stud stock for the purpose of improving their herds, it will be done with the object of helping those settlers to tame the wilderness and to

turn what is practically a large, unpeopled area into one of those portions of the State which will largely contribute to our prosperity. I believe that the proposals we have under consideration in connection with the Agricultural Department, although they may appear socialistic and although they may excite the wrath and ill-considered criticism of gentlemen like the hon. member for Moore, all have in view the assistance and development of the individuality of the members of our community. We propose, in connection with our State farms, not to worry about them being commercial propositions but to make them an effective aid to the agricultural industry. I not only want to see the area under cultivation increased year by year and each year to constitute a record, but I want to see the yield per acre increased; and we can only do it by the co-operation of the Agricultural Department with the settlers themselves. We want to conduct experiments, and we can afford to conduct experiments many of which will result in failure, because we can do it much better collectively than the farmer can do it individually. Suppose a farmer makes a test over 70 or 100 acres of land with some new fodder plant, or some new wheat, or some other plant, and the test results in failure; it means to him a loss which will cripple him perhaps for years to come; but if the tests are borne collectively the loss is only a trifle, and it means that the successes as well as the failures will be of material benefit to the settlers in the agricultural areas of this State. We propose to try to develop new varieties of grain suitable to particular districts of the State. We propose also to produce a pure seed-wheat which we will supply to the farmers in small quantities, so that by careful cultivation they can be sure of an adequate supply of pure seed for their own purposes. We propose also to embark on experiments for the cultivation of suitable fodder plants for these various areas. We propose to ask for the co-operation of the farmers in establishing experimental plots where those varieties which we develop on the farms under experimental conditions will be tested under ordinary working con-

ditions in those particular areas; and I want, above all, to put the coping stone to these proposals by interesting the farmers themselves in those undertakings by getting them to co-operate, and by doing it systematically through some educational institution designed for this particular work, so that we may carry out the desire expressed by Dean Swift that we should try to make two blades of grass grow where but one grew before. If we can by this policy show how the yield per acre can be increased; if we can produce better varieties of wheat, oats, and other products, even if it results in a loss, so far as the State is concerned, the benefit to the agricultural industry will be impossible to calculate. These are some of the projects we have in view, and I think they are a convincing answer to the statement of the hon. member for Northam that there is nothing in our policy which should commend it to the farmers or which is designed for their benefit. They, as well as other sections of the community, will command our regard and consideration, and if we are given a chance to carry out those proposals and to carry them to fruition, they will not only redound to the benefit of the individual, but will also contribute to the prosperity and general development of the State.

[The SPEAKER put the question.]

Mr. GEORGE: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is leaving it rather late in rising until the question is put.

Mr. Foley: I was on my feet.

Mr. SPEAKER: It does not matter. I had put the question.

Mr. George: When I moved the adjournment of the debate I do not think you had quite put the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: The ayes had already voiced their opinion.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora): . There were many of the component parts of the Governor's Speech delivered at the beginning of this session that would commend themselves to the State generally. Then there

was an amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition which was practically a vote of want of confidence in the Administration. It has always been usual in the short while that I have been connected with any public or semi-public bodies that if an amendment is proposed the body discussing the amendment will also have the right to discuss the subject matter; but we find that although the Labour party who are in power in this State are solidly in favour of that much and ill-abused institution, the caucus, our friends on the Opposition side, before this session's business was taken into consideration, also copied the Labour party, inasmuch as they held a caucus meeting as to what their actions should be during the session, or at least during the discussion on the Address-in-reply. But with all these hon. gentlemen's knowledge of procedure and with all their knowledge of constitution and with all their knowledge of tact and political tactics, we find that the Government, who have been twitted with having no knowledge of any big business concerns and with having scarcely any business knowledge whatever, have proved the master minds when it came to the consideration of what constitutes procedure and practice in politics.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

Mr. FOLEY: This would have been a very critical time for the present Government had the numbers been at all equal between our side and the side opposite. It would have meant that the leader of the Opposition could have put his case and covered the whole of the subject matter contained in the Governor's Speech and debated it, and the newspapers in the State would have been able to publish it, yet the Premier, the gentleman holding the highest responsible position in the State, would have had only the opportunity to deal with the amendment. So had the numbers been at all equal the country would have judged the present Administration by the Premier's reply on the matter contained in the amendment, while the whole subject matter could have been covered by the gentleman who proposed the no-confidence motion, and this side of

the House would not have had a fair chance if the country had to decide between the Administration of this side and the administration that would eventuate if members opposite were returned in larger numbers than those now occupying the Government benches. There was just one weakness in the Premier's speech. When replying to the leader of the Opposition he said, "The hon. member forgets he was once Treasurer of this State." In my humble opinion the hon. member has not forgotten he was Treasurer of the State; he is not likely to forget it; I think he has an idea that he will again occupy the position. Well, I trust, if he does, he will occupy it and use the position to the same advantage to the State as the present gentleman occupying the position has undoubtedly done during his short term of office. There were several matters in the Governor's Speech; but when a want of confidence motion was proposed by an hon. member of the House I think at least in fairness to the Chamber and in fairness to the State generally he should have prepared his case. If he had thought that the State had no confidence in the Administration he should at least have had matter to put before the House, instead of asking from the Government of the State the powder and shot with which to fight. I compliment the Premier and the Ministry on not replying to the questions that were asked by the leader of the Opposition. It shows again that Ministers' tact was superior to that of the leader of the Opposition, it shows that their judgment on this question meant that the valuable time of the House was not to be wasted. Had the members of the Opposition had their way we would not now be discussing the adoption of the Address-in-reply, but would be discussing the matter contained in the amendment. Therefore, I say that the present Administration, from the point of tactics, showed at least hon. members of the Opposition that, if we have not that business acumen we have been twitted with not having, if we have not run the large business concerns they say we have not run, from a commonsense point of view we at least can hold our own with them. The leader of the Opposition also

said that they had a great argument on their side with regard to the ships. We have the ships. That is all the State has to care about; and I think, after listening to the Premier, he at least has shown the House that the constitutional points raised by the leader of the Opposition, weak as they were, are still further weakened. I have no hesitation in believing that if the Administration were called upon to face their makers at the present time we at least would come back with a sufficient majority to still keep hon. members on the opposite side, in the place they say they are so willing to occupy. There are several matters the Government have taken up during the recess. They have told us in the Governor's Speech what it is their intention to try to accomplish during next session. First and foremost they have raised the wages of several of their employees. They have also given what members on the Opposition side absolutely refused to give, that the State servants should have an equal opportunity of saying what the conditions of the sale of their labour should be, when their labour is for sale. Under the old system we all know that a State civil servant was under the ban of one gentleman—we will leave that gentleman's name out of the question altogether—and if they were not satisfied with his opinion, or his award, they had the right to appeal, but they had the right of appeal to that gentleman. The present Administration are to be thanked for giving to the civil servants the right to appeal to an impartial board; and, in passing, I may say the present Premier gave into the civil servants' own hands the right to say who should constitute that board from their point of view. That is what no other Administration in the State have done.

Mr. George: What; the whole of the members of the board?

Mr. FOLEY: He has recognised the union.

Mr. George: But you do not mean to say he has allowed them to select the whole of the appeal board?

Mr. FOLEY: No; the member to represent them on the board... The Administration have also given, more than a living

rate of wage, a fair rate of wage to their school teachers. We all know that the salaries doled out to the school teachers in the past were a shame and a matter for ridicule right throughout Australia generally; but we find the Government, when they came into power, put the school teachers on a better footing from the point of salary and from the point of contentment, despite what the newspapers during the past week have said in regard to discontent in the school teaching staffs. They also extended the system of secondary schools. It is a good thing extending the secondary schools. I believe that it should be the birthright of every boy or girl born in this State to attain to the highest educational position he or she is capable of attaining to. But we find they did not have the chance. Also in regard to several scholarships for which boys in the State have competed, the schools under the Government system have not had the same right or the same recognition as schools not under Government control generally. There is a certain sum of money given annually to one school in the State. I refer to the High School. At the present time there are other schools of the same calibre, some of them infinitely better than that school.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: No.

Mr. FOLEY: We will say that they are equal to that school. We find that some of the scholars attending that school refused to associate, from a social standpoint, and even in their sport, with the children attending some of the Government schools. I say if a State is good enough to give to the children a school equal to the one I have mentioned, then the Government should enforce the recognition of that Government school by whatever school it is that refuses to recognise it. Incidentally I am against all scholarships, such as the Rhodes scholarship, because I believe it is breaking down the system of Australianism, and taking the best and brightest of our boys away and imbuing them with a spirit which is not Australian; but I believe that when the University is fairly started, the Government will see that a scholarship equal to the Rhodes scholarship is given to those

boys. We have it on the highest authority that when the Rhodes scholarship was being taken into consideration, because one of the candidates, young Dunstan, was attending the Technical School, he was deprived of all opportunity of attaining the scholarship.

Mr. George: Who deprived him of it?

Mr. FOLEY: I am coming to that. During the time those boys were undergoing the preliminary examination for the Rhodes scholarship, young Dunstan went into the room. When he was coming out the boys competing for the scholarship asked him how he had got on, and he said, "I am settled, I cannot be examined for it." One of the boys, a son of Bishop Riley, turned round and said to him that he knew he was settled, as his father had told him that at lunch time. Now I say without hesitation that if such was the case—and my informant is the father of the boy Dunstan—then it is the duty of the State to see that our educational institutions are recognised when they are competing with snob institutions, such as the High School, Perth.

Mr. George: But he was a Scotch College boy.

Mr. FOLEY: He attended the Technical School just the same.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You are misrepresenting the High School.

Mr. FOLEY: The member for Narrogin has equal opportunities with myself of telling the House anything he may know about the High School. The Government intended to nationalise the trams, and they have done it.

Mr. Allen: No, they have not.

Mr. FOLEY: They have got it settled.

Mr. Allen: Have they?

Mr. FOLEY: The member for West Perth has been too long in company with the mayor of Perth for us to take him seriously when the question of the nationalisation of the trams is being discussed. The Government said it was their intention to nationalise the ferries; they have done it. Almost all the members on the Opposition side, as well as those on the Ministerial side, have lauded the Government for nationalising the trams, while

for nationalising the ferries they have stated that Ministers are really good fellows.

Mr. Allen: Copley is shaking hands with himself over it.

Mr. FOLEY: It does not matter. But when it comes to the nationalisation of a steamer service, hitting some of the gentlemen who were applauding most, we find in one column of the newspaper laudations of the Government for the nationalisation of trams and ferries, and, side by side with that, the nationalisation policy in respect to steamers is adversely criticised. The Premier and the Minister for Lands have traversed the Government's policy in regard to the land question, and also in regard to the nationalisation of these public utilities. I wish to speak to-night of the mining industry. During the next few months several leases will revert to the Crown. This Government are in power at a time when all the brains, all the energy, and all the thought they can conjure up will require to be brought into requisition. Those gentlemen are there to see that these qualities are used in the best interests of the State.

Mr. George: Are they going in for mining too?

Mr. FOLEY: The mining industry has made Western Australia. Although we hear land settlement spoken of in glowing terms, I still think gold is paramount at the present time.

Mr. S. Stubbs: I have not seen any lately.

Mr. FOLEY: Well, it has not been for want of looking for it. Our battery system was spoken of by the leader of the Opposition, who asked the Minister for Mines why the batteries were not crushing; why they were producing less gold than in the past. In any gold industry times of depression are inevitable. It is the duty of the Government to find out what is the cause of the present depression. It has been brought about partly by reason of the fact that many people engaged in speculative mining, and having charge of five or six mines, have sold obsolete plant from one of their mines to another for the sake of profit. Then when we find these mines closed down, we have it thrown at us that it has been caused

by industrial trouble. No doubt in a measure industrial trouble has tended to make the depression in mining. Another thing was the mad boom brought about during the Bullfinch period. Despite all that my friends who have had charge of great business institutions will say to the contrary, I contend that the actions of one gentleman, who was primarily responsible for that boom, and the assistance he received from others in booming up the venture and the district, was largely responsible, were almost solely responsible for the present depression in mining.

Mr. George: Who were they?

Mr. FOLEY: They were many. The hon. member is not going to induce me to mention names until I have something tangible to go upon. He has had equal opportunity with myself of reading the newspapers. Just now he pretends to be after information, but if he will wait he will get all the information he requires.

The Premier: His leader made a boom speech or two at Glowrey's hotel.

Mr. FOLEY: Some of our batteries to-day are nothing more nor less than scrap heaps. There has been no system whatever observed, no systematic attempt made to bring about the best results possible from the State batteries. Just before one election a 2-head alleged battery was put up in one part of a district, which was to sway the election. When the next election came around a battery was put up in another part of the same electorate under almost similar conditions. Practically there has been £3,000 wasted on these two alleged batteries in that one district. There is a battery in the Leonora district which has been repaired for so long that the gentleman at the head of the department can scarcely say how much of it belongs to the original battery. This is a state of things which does not tend to bring mining into prominence. I believe myself that when the gentleman who is now in charge of the State Battery Department and the Minister for Mines have conferred on mining subjects generally this State will be able to look forward to the batteries producing all that can be

reasonably expected of them. Cheap water has been provided on some of the low grade shows, and some of these shows have been profitably worked at the value of two weights. I have that on the word of a man who is certainly not a supporter of the Government. He said that by the aid of cheap water they were able to reap a profit from two-weight dirt. I can assure hon. members that at the present time, although the gold production may be somewhat less than it was, there is more land being used from the mining point of view to the benefit of those working on it than there was under the control of the late Minister for Mines. There is also another point. We were speaking of what is going to resuscitate mining. Everyone agrees that the State should assist prospectors. The question is as to the best means of doing this. Most of us came to the State from places where we could go round and with a dish prospect for gold, and by that dish prospect gauge what we were likely to get from the reef. We find that in this State the lodes are altogether different. We find that men, although they understand mining thoroughly, and although they are first class prospectors, walk day after day over reefs and lodes of which they know nothing, possibly reefs and lodes of great value. Yet if a geological survey were made, they would be in a position to take their samples to geologists in the various districts. If the Government had this geological survey carried out, and assisted the prospectors generally, they would be doing a great deal towards making the mining industry again the most prosperous from a labour-employing point of view. If the Government intend, and I believe they do, to give to the leaseholder everything that possibly can be given to him, provided the leaseholder uses his lease in a proper manner, it is the duty of the State to see that the men employed in the industry have at least fair conditions under which to work. There is no doubt that in many of the mines outback at present, Asiatics are employed to a great extent in, on or around the mine, and we find the present Mines Regulation Act is hedged

in with conditions that are not tending to make mining the prosperous industry that we all consider it should be. We find there are Afghans, Hindus and all other Asiatics working about the mines, and in the past there have been Britishers and Australians, men who would be called upon to defend Australia and, incidentally, vested interests in time of war, carrying their swags around the country. When it comes to a question of patriotism, we find members on the Opposition side of the House, as soon as they hear a band playing or the word Empire mentioned, throwing out their chests and indulging in flag waving, but the soldiers of industry are the men who will make this country, and they will be the men who will do the work, while the gentlemen who do scarcely anything shout and wave and soothe them on. The employment of Asiatics on mines is one of the curses of Western Australia. I feel strongly on this question because there are men in this House who have never seen it. I can assure them that the Asiatics also secure the better employment, such as wood cutting. On one of the mines there is a Japanese with a contract and he has sub-let it to an Asiatic, who has white men doing the work. When we ask for legislation to prevent this, we can use the argument that the Asiatic races have provided for us. We find that a notification has been received from Mr. Sutor, Commercial agent for New South Wales in the East, that foreign vessels trading to Japan are no longer to carry passengers and cargo between any ports in Japan. If they are going to restrict Britishers and British ships from carrying cargo between their ports, this State and Australia should prevent them from carrying passengers and cargo similarly, and my only hope is that the Federal Minister will not lose sight of this point when introducing his Navigation Bill. Several mines, though not blessed with so many Asiatic employees, are faced with the fact that there are more foreigners working there than Britishers. Members of the House and particularly of the Opposition, have been talking about the need for immi-

gration, and British immigration. I think we have heard more of it this year than usual, and I think more immigrants have arrived in Western Australia this year than last. I want to see these Britishers placed in a position of equality of employment with the foreign immigrants who are coming to Australia. I want to see the Australian have preference in employment over the foreigner. In 1909 at the Coolgardie Conference of the Federated Miners' Union, I introduced the question of the employment of aliens, and I was ridiculed from one end to the other of that conference, except by those men who had lived the out-back life. I am positive this matter will yet be brought forward and I ask every hon. member to vote for any such legislation which will give Britishers at least equality with foreigners. When I spoke at Coolgardie in 1909 many gentlemen occupying high positions in the State, and some of the present members of this House, absolutely refused to take the words I uttered seriously. At present we find that the Kalgoorlie and Boulder mines are getting their share, and a little more as far as the aliens are concerned, and when the business people of this State find that the same amount of money is not being spent with them on Friday and Saturday night, as the case may be, in consequence of so many aliens being employed, they will begin to think a little. If they had thought a little in 1909, Britishers could have had preference of employment over the foreigners, and in that case men would have been out prospecting backed by those in work, and more shows would have been opened up than we have at the present time. There are three or four points relating to the Mines Regulation Act that I think should be brought prominently under the notice of this House. Regulations are made to ensure the good health of the miners, and those employed in, on or around a mine. This matter is fully in the hands of the Minister, but the regulation itself is not stringent enough, it is not explicit enough, and it is hedged by so many technicalities that the Minister, no matter what his opinion or ideas, has no power to do anything in regard to

this dangerous occupation. There is a need for ambulance on the mines. At present the regulations contain a clause that 30 men have to be employed before an ambulance is provided. I have seen accidents happen on a mine and men have had to be carried a distance of two miles on improvised stretchers. I have known men to lose all chance of ever working again, and at least two of them, if they had received proper attention, and first aid, might have been restored sufficiently to health to be able to do some good for themselves instead of becoming a burden to the State as they are.

Mr. George: An ambulance stretcher does not cost much.

Mr. FOLEY: No, but, as far as many of the mines of this State are concerned, less is thought of the men. There is another aspect of this question—that the Minister may vary any rule contained in the Mines Regulation Act. I think it is altogether wrong that a Minister should have this power, as I consider it should be the duty of the House to make the regulations so strict that they cannot be varied in any way, and if a regulation is to apply to one man it should apply equally to another. However, the great question which is affecting the mining industry at the present time is that of foreign labour. When the present Minister for Mines took office, he issued a minute to the Engineer-in-chief of the Mines Department instructing him to see that the Mines Regulation Act was strictly enforced. The inspectors received word that that regulation was to be strictly enforced, but what do we find? When the district Inspector of Mines, accompanied by the Secretary of the Miners' Union, went to a particular mine, one of the greatest culprits as regards the employment of foreign labour, the foreigners were kept away from work and the conditions of the Act were thus evaded. To meet cases of this description legislation should be made so severe that the responsibility would rest on the mine owners themselves. I believe the only solution of the difficulty, and I am not alone in this belief, is that the proportion of foreigners to

British employees on any one mine should be not more than one to ten. I believe if this is done it will make mining a better employment than it is at present. It would be better because it has been proved that where only British or Australian labour is employed, fewer accidents occur. We can make a comparison between two mines on the same line of reef, one worked to a great extent by foreign labour, and another worked by British labour, and will find that mining costs are less, the accident list is smaller, and there is a better result from the labour of the Britishers than from that of the foreigners. There is no doubt about it. Any gentleman has the opportunity of looking over the costs of the various mines in the State, and he will find, where mines employing British labour only are concerned, that their costs are far below those employing foreign labour. Now I come to the question of the Workers' Compensation Act. When the Bill was being discussed in the House there was one clause in it, the common employment clause, which made the happening of an accident *prima facie* evidence of neglect. That was deleted from the Workers' Compensation Act, but was not placed in the Mines Regulation Act, though the promise was given by the past Minister for Mines and past Colonial Secretary that such a thing would be done. They said distinctly outback that it was their intention to do it, yet they broke their word to the mining workers in this State, and it has militated against the workers in almost every instance where a man has been injured fatally or otherwise. Those are a few of the matters in connection with the Mines Regulation Act. There is also the question of limiting the area which can be taken up as a mining lease. One of the greatest questions the mining community can deal with is that of the amalgamation of leases. There are many leases which are more like farms than mining leases, yet we find some of the mining townships are just on dead. A big company can have land all round a town; they can hold on and do nothing until the small man has prospected the ground for

them, and then they come in if there is any likelihood of their property being a mine. We all know that the deeper the reefs go down the better it is for the mining company. Now I come to the question my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition dealt with so trenchantly; that is, the question of the tyranny of unions. Last Friday there was a paper issued in this State containing the following sentence:—

It has been stated that, at a meeting of the Liberal League held at Bayswater on Tuesday night last [an hon. member] in the course of an address, after referring to several alleged actions of the Parliamentary Labour party, and of trades unions, in securing the dismissal of certain men from their positions, said—"There is a similar case before the court at present, and I hope that the man who is claiming damages will get them."

Here we come to the question of gentlemen who have had charge of big institutions, and who should at least be an example to the younger members of the House; but a man, no matter how young he is or how little his experience is, would know, and there is no need to be a member of Parliament to be able to gauge what a man's action is worth when he speaks of a case that is *sub judice*. That statement was alleged to have been made when this case was pending. I consider it indecent and unmanly, if I may be allowed to use that word here; and if it is spoken from the view-point of tyranny that exists so far as unions are concerned, I consider it is just as great tyranny as any tyranny a union can practice. We find tyranny of unions exists in other than ordinary workers' unions. Not at the present time, but a little while ago, the British Medical Association were fighting the Australian Medical Institution in New South Wales. They applied to the Government for protection because they considered the Australian Medical Institution were bringing down the price of treatment to the general public, in fact were acting as a blackleg union, and they thought the Government ought to do something for them. It is a

general rule and guiding principle of unionism, from a trades union point of view, not to combine to injure, but to unite to assist. If there is any union, be it a medical union or a lawyers' union, I consider it is first their duty to consider the benefit or otherwise to the State, and if they are banded together and united in any manner to the detriment of the State, then I call it tyranny; but it is not considered tyranny by some people to belong to unions in conditions similar to those of the British Medical Association. There is another form of tyranny that my friend and hon. friends who have had charge of big businesses can think over. The Imperial Conference lately had to take into consideration the question of bringing into existence a system of State cables instead of allowing the cable combine to have the say as to what the cost should be; but when they found that the Imperial Conference had taken the matter in hand, the cable combine in almost every instance reduced their rates. The cable combine can be treated as a union. I say that it is not in the trades unions that this tyranny exists, but that it exists in the combines that are run not only to injure the worker but to get every sixpence they can out of every class in the State.

Mr. George: That is human nature.

Mr. FOLEY: Trades unions have gone a little higher and have, if anything, improved on nature. My friends also consider, from the point of tyranny, that preference to unionists is a frightful thing. I am not much of an historian, but even in the time of Henry VIII. he gave preference to trade guilds, and that was nothing but preference to unions. The preference to unionists that my unionistic friends show is preference to be given to men who have at least considered it their duty as workmen to try to benefit and comfort not only those employed in the industry in which they are employed but also those who are going to be left after them when they are no longer any use to the industry. We find that when the Arbitration Act was before the House the last time it was practically on the pre-

ference to unionists ticket the Bill was opposed by another Chamber; but the present Arbitration Act provides that any number of employees and an employer can join together and from the point of reason argue out not only what should be the minimum rate of wage, but also what the rates should be from the lowest to the highest in the industry. If my friends are in favour of that they should at least be in favour of giving to the Arbitration Court the same right and the same power to arbitrate on exactly the same lines. If they do that, then they are doing more to promote a better feeling between capital and labour than was ever done before.

Mr. George: You must guarantee the price of the product then.

Mr. FOLEY: If we can make the conditions better, if we can give our labour under better conditions, the employer is going to reap the better benefit from our labour; and so I say preference to unionists gives the employer the right to produce under better conditions; and if he can do that, he can produce cheaper than he does at the present time. I maintain it is going to alter and better the conditions of production and lessen the cost of production, and if it does that, the State is going to benefit; and my troubles are not whether a few employers are going to benefit; but whether the State is going to benefit, that is all I am going to trouble about. When we leave that phase of the arbitration question we come down to the contract versus day labour system. I can assure my friends that tyranny exists so far as many employers in the State are concerned. In some of the arbitration cases tried on the fields, there has not been one man who has given evidence who four months afterwards was working on the same mine. If that is not tyranny it is something worse. Was there not tyranny used in a certain telegram sent to the Commissioner of Railways whereby two gentlemen now occupying seats on the Government side of the House had to send in their resignations or withdraw their nominations? I say that this was

tyranny as bad as anything one can ever throw up against a union.

Mr. Underwood: That was only a circumstance.

Mr. FOLEY: The only reason that some of my friends will not think it tyranny is that it has existed so long they really do not know what tyranny was. As for another form of tyranny, I shall read a little contract. Life is made up of these little things—

Tenders will be received by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, August 25th, 1911, for driving 200 feet in the 300-foot level. Rock-drills and air will be supplied by the company for two shifts; contractors to find explosives. Further particulars and specifications may be obtained from the mine office. No unionist need apply.

This was signed "W. C. Hill, manager, Murrin Murrin." Now, if that is not tyranny, I do not know what tyranny is. It is an aspect of the question that was not considered by the past Administration, that is, the attempted victimisation of men who were then engaged and the unionists. The registrar of the district was notified of it, but there was no action taken; neither did he submit the gentlemen who applied for those men to undergo any medical examination. There are men now in the back country and some of the cities and it is impossible for them to get a living on a mine. For the two years before I was a member of this House it was impossible for me to get a job in the back country.

Mr. George: What were you doing?

Mr. FOLEY: I took on any work that I could get.

Mr. George: What were you doing that they would not give you work?

Mr. FOLEY: If the hon. member will contain himself—I think that is his own pet phrase—I will inform him. There is such a thing as an Arbitration Court, but before you go to arbitration you must exhaust all reasonable means of settling a dispute. Being unionists and living up to unionistic traditions we were suffering under what we considered an injustice. We were working up to our waists in water and it was impossible

to get into the shaft and be dry five minutes afterwards. The Arbitration Court gave an award that 1s. 8d. more had to be given for wet than for dry work. We drew attention to this, and we asked for the additional payment, but were refused it. We used legal means. We went before a conciliation board and because we kept strictly to the letter of the Act, I was sacked by the manager of that mine, who told me that I would not get any job in that mine or on any mine where he could prevent me from obtaining work. Next day I went on to a mine and I was prevented by the management from earning an honest living. That is some of the tyranny we have to complain of.

Mr. George: Why did they stop Coy from working at the *West Australian*?

Mr. FOLEY: They never stopped Coy.

Mr. George: The jury seemed to think so.

Mr. FOLEY: He is quite satisfied because the evidence of 19 witnesses was all gone over, and in fifteen minutes they decided to give a verdict, and he accepted it. But I would like my friend the member for Murray-Wellington to know that the jury that heard that case was not a jury that it is possible for me or most of my friends on this side of the House at least to obtain under the Juries Act.

Mr. George: That is not quite fair.

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member will have the opportunity of refuting my statement. According to the Special Juries Act, there are only certain men eligible to sit as a special jury; they have to possess a certain property qualification and they have to be gentlemen who follow certain lines of industry. Therefore, it is not within the province of any one member on this side of the House at least to pay the fees which are expected to those men, and these fees have to be guaranteed. It is clear, therefore, that a special jury is not a jury which everyone in the State can have, but only those who are possessed of more than that which the average unionists are possessed of, namely, money sufficient to pay for the jury's services.

Mr. George : Coy did not have much money, did he ?

Mr. FOLEY : I do not know where the money came from, and whether he had it or not the money was put up by Coy. All this, however, is beside the question. What I wish to say in conclusion is that the Minister for Mines is bringing mining questions before the House during the present session and it is his intention also to deal with the matter of pulmonary diseases in miners—a question which is going to be one of the most urgent the State will have to deal with. There is not in any other industry in this State or in any other State such a high death-rate as in the mining industry. There is no other disease which carries off such a great number of men at a useful age as is the case in the mining industry, and we find that something will have to be done, and I believe that the present Minister for Mines and members, before the session closes, will do something to relieve not only those who are affected by working on the mines, but the wives and families of those who have died at an age, which should have been the best period of their lives. When the matter does come forward I trust that members will discuss it, forgetting on which side of the House they are sitting, and will deal with it only from the one view-point—that Western Australia at the present time is losing some of her best and brightest men by a disease which can be prevented if the State will only take the necessary action.

On motion by Mr. Thomas debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th July, 1912.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY : 1, Education Department—(a) Report upon Continuation Schools and the question of compulsory attendance, (b) Report upon educational organisation, (c) Amendments to regulations.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply and on the amendment by the Hon. M. L. Moss—"That all the words after 'Sovereign' be struck out with a view of inserting the following words: 'and to protest against the expenditure incurred by your Excellency's Ministers without an Act of appropriation, such procedure being derogatory to the privileges of Parliament and subversive of the Constitution, while in addition thereto the proposal contained in your Excellency's Speech, implying that a ratification by the Legislative Assembly of such unauthorised expenditure is sufficient in law, ignores the constitutional rights of the Legislative Council.'"

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (North-East) : In company with the members who have already spoken I wish to extend a welcome to the new members of the House. If one is to judge by their first utterances I think we have received some very praiseworthy additions in these new members. While congratulating and extending a welcome to those new members we must not altogether lose sight of the old members who are no longer with us. I refer particularly to Captain Laurie, who was a very useful member of the House for