

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 23rd July, 1903.

Address-in-Reply, debate concluded ... PAGE
... 90

THE ACTING PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the ACTING PRESIDENT: Special Report by Auditor-General on violation of Audit Act.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Regulations under Elementary Education Act. Regulations under Agricultural Bank Act. Amendment of Tick Boundary. By-laws of Katanning Cemetery, Leonora Cemetery, Coolgardie Cemetery. Parks and Reserves By-laws and Regulations. Rules under Licensed Surveyors Act. Regulations under Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. Sixth Progress Report of Royal Commission on Public Service. Regulations under Local Inscribed Stock Act. By-laws of Cossack Common, Rockingham Common, Port Hedland Common. Regulations Restricting Cutting of Timber on State Forests. Regulations for Construction and Working of Timber Tramways. Regulations relating to Residential Leases.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

FOURTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. SOMMERS (North-East): Like previous speakers, I wish to express my satisfaction at the appointment of Sir Frederick Bedford as Governor of this State, and I trust his term of office will be a very pleasurable one. I know it will be pleasant to us, and I trust it will be for the benefit of the State as a whole. I would like also to tender our congratulation to Mr. Kingsmill on his appointment as leader of this House. I know he is a good worker, and if he will only try to get rid of some of those extreme democratic ideas he has expressed lately, he will make a very good Minister. As far as this House is concerned he will have fair-play and assistance regarding every

measure which is for the advancement of the country. As to the proposed legislation, I hope the Government will go slowly in this matter. I am told there are something like 50 Bills to be introduced this Session, and I trust they will be moderate. I can believe that some of them are consolidating measures, and if so, they will be very acceptable to this House. If we can put our statutes into better form than they are in at present, we shall welcome any legislation of this sort. In reference to the proposed legislation concerning hospitals, I do not know what is intended; but if it is intended that the hospitals shall be maintained by private subscriptions, then I am totally opposed to the proposal. I know that in the other States they are to a very great extent supported by private subscriptions; but it will be found there that the donations and subscriptions come almost solely from one class of people. It is a tax upon the generous people, and it is an unfair tax. Any number of mean people who can well afford to give something escape. In my opinion, the care of the sick devolves upon the State, and if provision is made for them by the State everyone has to pay in the ordinary way of taxation, so that no one escapes like that. It takes us all in. The hospitals are conducted by the State, and if the Government have the assistance of good officers and good committees of management, supervised of course by the Government, a better state of affairs than exists at present will, I think, be produced. Small hospitals are an absolute necessity right through the scattered portions of the State, particularly the goldfields. Even though it may seem that the cost is great, yet I think we should bear that cost cheerfully, knowing the great amount of good done. It may appear in certain cases that a hospital costs a good deal relatively to the number of cases it deals with; but nevertheless the absence of such institutions would entail much suffering. In my opinion the hospitals should be furnished with the latest appliances, and the highest medical skill which can possibly be obtained. Then those who are able to pay should have a perfect right to make use of the hospitals, but they should be charged, according to their means, a

reasonable sum for treatment. I observe that it is proposed to introduce a Factories Bill. I sincerely hope the Government will not carry out that intention. The number of factories this State has at present is but small, and every encouragement ought to be afforded for the establishment of more factories. The mere mention of a Factories Bill will tend to prevent intending investors from entering into manufacturing here. It will be time enough to introduce factory legislation when factories have been established. In view of the scarcity of factory employment in Perth, I think we had better leave matters as they are. The labour unions will see that no great injustice is done to the employees; and therefore I hold that the country will manage well enough without a Factories Bill, at any rate for this Session. I welcome the proposal to establish a sewerage system for Perth and Fremantle; the latter town, in particular, is in a bad state from a health point of view. The outbreaks of plague there may perhaps be due to visiting vessels, but I believe they are also due in a large measure to the evil state into which Fremantle has been allowed to drift. I believe the plague is now bred there, and I do not think it is still introduced from elsewhere. For the good name of the port it is absolutely necessary that all chances of a recrudescence of the disease should be guarded against. The Government would be justified in spending a large sum of money for the purpose of putting the sewerage system of the metropolitan district on a sound footing, and I trust legislation to that end will be introduced at once, so that the work may be put in hand without delay. I am glad to observe that the Government are contemplating the adoption of the septic tank system, which, I believe, does all that is expected of it. As we know, Melbourne spent a very considerable sum of money, something like a million or two sterling, on a sewerage system which has not proved the success expected. I believe that had Melbourne thoroughly experimented with sewerage, that system would not have been adopted. We can take warning by the faults committed elsewhere to get the latest and most efficient system at the lowest cost. The question of water supply for the metro-

politan area has been frequently before the House. A select committee was appointed to inquire into it last year, but somehow we do not seem to have got any farther. All I need say of the present supply is that it is dear in price, bad in quality, and quite inadequate in quantity. The rainfall of Perth being something like 30 to 40 inches, and the city having the Darling Range of hills within a few miles of its boundaries, it ought to have a plentiful and cheap supply. However, such a supply does not obtain; and no steps seem to have been taken to supply the want. In a climate like this, a community need not expect to be healthy in the absence of a plentiful supply of wholesome water. Fremantle, in this respect, is even worse off than Perth. Any scheme of water supply ought to include Perth, Fremantle, Midland Junction, and the surrounding districts. As regards the railway proposals of the Government, I may observe that the Collie-Narrogin line will open up a vast area of country, and will assist the coal mines and the gold mines as well. Therefore I am pleased at the prospect of its construction. I am glad, also, that the Laverton line is to be pushed along, because in that district the State has a fine belt of mineral country, and also a tract of very fair pastoral country. The Port Hedland-Pilbarra line touches altogether new country, which is said to be rich in minerals. I hope it may prove so, but we have not at present sufficient data to judge of that. I believe that recent returns show only 50ozs. as having been produced by the district in a month, but it is to be remembered that the industry there suffers under a good many disadvantages. I am not in favour of private railways as a rule, but in a case such as this I think the Government might well allow private enterprise to supply means of communication. If private enterprise is willing to construct the line on fair terms, I think Parliament might give its permission to that course. All that is necessary for the safeguarding of the public interest is to hedge in the concession in some fashion, so that after a certain lapse of time the line may be repurchased at reasonable cost. I prefer the option of repurchase even to getting the line at the end of a long lease without payment.

I regret that the Speech makes no mention of the Esperance Railway. Perhaps we shall hear a little more of that subject before the Session closes. A good many people believe that the construction of the Transcontinental Railway will do wonders for Western Australia. I personally do not share that view, although, of course, I should be glad to see the line built. At all events, I think we may wait yet awhile. So far as this State is concerned, I believe that the immediate results will be disappointing. It is improbable that the line will pay axle grease for many years to come, and although it will bring us in closer touch with our Eastern neighbours, yet I think we should look carefully into the matter before committing ourselves. As regards amendment of the Constitution, I intend to oppose any measure designed to curtail the number of members in either House. I believe, however, that the country needs redistribution of seats; and if that be provided, the necessities of the case will be met.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You mean a redistribution for the other House.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Yes; and readjustment of boundaries for ours. I do not think this course would imply that this House must necessarily dissolve. I remember that on the passage of the measure increasing the membership of this House from 24 to 30 by the creation of new provinces, the House did not dissolve; and I think it possible that the boundaries of our provinces may be rearranged without creating a necessity for demanding that the whole of our members shall go before the country. I wish to point out one feature of the proposal to reduce our numbers to 24. Under the present Standing Orders, a House of 24 would mean a quorum of eight; and on occasions only eight members might be present out of 24. Of these eight, five would constitute a majority. I do not think anyone will contend that the carrying of a measure perhaps by five members would necessarily be for the good of the country. I am sure the country would not share that opinion. In such a small House, measures might easily be carried through without that discussion which is desirable. In the number of members there is safety. On the other hand, even assuming for

argument that 30 members are too many—I do not admit it, of course—we must remember that the State is increasing in importance and in population, and that we are not situated as other States are. We are practically isolated from the rest of the continent; we have an enormous territory to develop; and though the numbers of our population may be small, yet we need a large number of members, proportionately, to represent the various interests. Therefore, if the Constitution Act Amendment Bill comes before us in the same form as it did last session, I shall again oppose it. As for the proposed dock at Fremantle, we see every day the necessity for a work of that sort. I trust that Parliament will see its way to authorise the construction of a really up-to-date dock capable of accommodating almost any ship which may put into Fremantle distressed. Such a dock would be a splendid advertisement for the State. We know that at present ships pass by here to go to the Eastern States or elsewhere for docking. If we can possibly stretch a point to enable that dock to be constructed we ought to do so. As for the Midland Railway Company and subsidising of the "Julia Percy" steamer, I desire to say a few words, which I shall preface by the remark that it would be a good thing for the State if the Midland Railway and its concession could be secured. I shall be glad to know whether every effort has been made to secure the railway and the lands at a reasonable price. Has the property been offered at a fair price? Has the company made a fair offer?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What do you think would be a fair price?

HON. C. SOMMERS: I am not prepared to say offhand. However, past Governments invited the Midland Railway Company to come here and spend its money on the line, and then the mistake was made, by past Administrations and also by the present Administration, of not seeing that the conditions of the contract were adhered to. No doubt, there has been great laxity in the past. We blame the company; but I think we ought rather to blame ourselves, in a great measure, for not seeing to it that we got a fair deal. However, having invited the Midland people to come here and spend their money,

the Government now say that these people ask far too much for their property, and that therefore an attempt must be made to ruin the railway by opposition. The case reminds me of how in the old coaching days, Cobb & Co. would have a line of coaches running, whereupon other people would start an opposition line and reduce fares to a very low point. Indeed, I remember that on one line passengers were carried by Cobb and Co. for nothing, whereupon the opposition threw in a loaf of bread with the free ride. If the Government desire to ruin the Midland Railway Company, let them do it thoroughly; let them put on two or three steamers to carry goods and passengers absolutely free of charge; then we should eventually get the Midland Railway line at a very cheap price. The question however arises, is that a fair deal? We may perhaps admire such tactics in two commercial firms trying to run each other out of a market, but we can hardly admire them in the case of Governments. I should scarcely call the proceeding fair, and I do not think we shall derive much eventual benefit from the move, once news of it gets abroad. I believe that the Government, according to their lights, have done what is good; I believe that they obtained the best steamer available at the lowest price; I believe that the lowest tender was accepted, and indeed that the offer of the "Julia Percy" was lower by half than the next offer; I believe that the Government acted in a way which they genuinely believed to be right. I do not think, however, that the step they took is right absolutely. If they decided on such a course of action, they should not have stopped at half measures. They should have subsidised a line of steamships, carried passengers, and fed them free of charge, and on arrival at Geraldton supplied them with free beds. Had such measures been taken, unquestionably the price of the Midland Railway and lands would have dropped very low. Everyone is entitled to his opinion, and that is my opinion of the "Julia Percy" business. All the same, I repeat, the Government have not acted quite fairly—they have been playing it pretty low down. Were I in the place of the Ministry, I should endeavour to force the company by every legitimate means to carry out

the whole of the conditions of its contract, or as near to that as possible. If it will not do that, then perhaps the Government may take a step like this. I do not desire to occupy the time of the House farther. I approve generally of the other subjects mentioned in the Speech, and I hope we shall not have too much legislation introduced this session.

HON. R. LAURIE (West): It was not my intention to speak on the Address-in-Reply, but I think it is right I should say something, and in doing so I wish to indorse all that has been said by the other speakers in regard to the feeling of loyalty to His Majesty King Edward, and also our congratulations to Mr. Kingsmill as leader of this House. I would like, in touching on the question of sewerage, to take exception to what has fallen from a previous speaker with reference to the plague in Fremantle. I do so owing to the fact that I know plague was introduced into Fremantle, and it may be looked for in all large ports such as Fremantle, where we invite steamers from all parts of the world. I trust that as the months and years roll by vessels will come in greater numbers than they have done even during the last three or four years. I may point out for the satisfaction of Mr. Sommers that the rats in the steamer by which I personally believe the plague was introduced were found to be sick in the vessel's hold, and one of the cases of plague in Fremantle was traced directly to the steamer. In fact the rats were so sick that the men working in the hold were able to turn them over with their feet. I think that is fair evidence that the disease did not originate in Fremantle. We all know, or we ought to know at all events, that we can only get plague from fleas or by direct contact with something that has it. It was shown very clearly that one of the men living in the house in which plague occurred had been working as a lumper in the hold of that steamer. I may also point out that about three or four weeks ago the steamer had to be tied up and the cargo taken on shore, and the rats on the boat were in a diseased condition. I take it the hon. member will not say those rats were there on the previous trip. Goodness knows what difficulties there are in connection with drainage in Fremantle, Fremantle being a small town,

and it is bad enough for the people outside to say it is dirty, without our beginning to cry "stinking fish." In connection with railway matters, I am pleased to see the Government intend to go farther with the South-Western line. It has been promised that the line shall be run as far as Jandakot, and I trust that it will not stop there, but go on and tap the South-Western line. To my mind, there is no question that in a few years the South-West will be shipping apples and other fruits to England, though probably not in as great quantities as Tasmania. I think that the absence of the Colonial Secretary from Perth during the time the Governor's Speech was prepared has something to do with the absence of mention in it of the railway to Port Hedland. I have no doubt that had he been here he would have brought his influence to bear to see that something was done for that part of the country. Someone interjects that there were only 50ozs. of gold from there last month; but if members will endeavour to find out the quantity of merchandise sent up to Port Hedland week after week, they will come to the conclusion that the settlers in that part of the State should not be permitted any longer to pay the high rates of cartage which they have to pay now. When we have such a State as Western Australia we are too apt to forget those who are far distant from the chief centres of population, and who have to bear the heat and burden of the day. I trust that the omission will soon be remedied. Coming nearer home, to the question of the dock at Fremantle, I trust that the mention of the dock in the Speech is not simply a case of padding. We know that a sum of money was voted for this dock three or four years ago, the amount being, I think, £25,000. [THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: £10,000.] It has taken something like five years to find out a suitable site, and now, I think, they are only at the boring of the site. This work is an actual necessity in connection with such a port as Fremantle. We have invited the mail steamers to come here, and they are coming now. It would astonish members to see the actual tonnage that comes to Fremantle at the present time. The large over-sea direct steamers are falling off, but our tonnage is increased by reason of

steam tonnage coming instead of sailing tonnage; and although our port has been open for five years, we have enjoyed absolute immunity from casualty, for there has not been one casualty in the port during those five years, which fact speaks volumes for the port from the safety point of view. It was predicted that the mail steamers would not be able to use it; but we all know that the port has been used freely both night and day. We have enjoyed that freedom from accident for five years; but if an accident happened, and a valuable ship were delayed for a considerable time, it would do more to injure the name of the port of Fremantle than anything else that one could possibly think of. Having invited these vessels here, and seeing that we are on the highway of the Indian Ocean, vessels passing to and fro between Fremantle and Singapore, or Fremantle and the Eastern States, the Government should see that the paragraph to which I refer is something more than padding, and that the dock shall be provided in a very short time. During the last three months we had in Fremantle as many as five vessels which would have used the dock had it been there. Some of those ships have had to undergo a simple bottom examination and have gone to Sydney, while others have had to be temporarily repaired elsewhere. Having touched on Fremantle, I would like, as one of those members who visited Bunbury some time ago, to say a word for that port. To my mind it is not right that we should invite shipping to ports and not provide proper and safe accommodation. I am glad to see that the Government recognise that something should be done.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not altogether the Government inviting shipping at present.

HON. R. LAURIE: It may not be the Government inviting shipping, but the fact is that the shipping is there, and that being so, it is the duty of the Government to see as far as lies in their power that such a calamity shall not come about as would damage the port and probably raise the rates of insurance to Western Australia to a considerable degree. Should a casualty take place on the coast of South Australia or on the voyage to Western Australia, and I say particularly with regard to the voyage to

Western Australia the rates of insurance would go up. The business to Western Australia is treated as Western Australian business, and if one, two, or three losses occurred during the year, we should have a corresponding rise in the rates.

HON. G. RANDELL: It is most unjust.

HON. R. LAURIE: It may be unjust, but I was absolutely assured that such is the case, and I am also assured by the underwriters that is the only way in which they can do business. There is a vessel now overdue, and the rate of insurance on that vessel for this country when loading in London was 52s. The rates of insurance to Adelaide or Melbourne would be about 25s. With reference to Bunbury, it may be said that the Government are not inviting vessels there. There is no doubt that in starting the breakwater at Bunbury a mistake was made. The breakwater should never have been made. It cost nearly £200,000.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The breakwater alone?

HON. R. LAURIE: The breakwater and other advantages. At the present time it is proposed to spend another £120,000. I know that Mr. C. Y. O'Connor's scheme was to cut through the bank, open up the Preston River, and have a safe harbour inside. That would have cost us £350,000.

HON. G. RANDELL: More than that.

HON. R. LAURIE: I am perhaps wrongly informed.

HON. G. RANDELL: It was over half a million, if my memory is correct.

HON. R. LAURIE: It would have been half a million well spent, because I venture to say that after the £120,000 is expended on the breakwater, dredging will have to be gone on with. As to the present breakwater, one has only to go in a boat to the end of it to find the silting that has taken place. I do not wish it to be thought that I do not desire this £120,000 to be spent, because I think the work should be proceeded with at once, and not only so, but sufficient proper screw moorings ought to be put down to accommodate vessels when they lie off from the wharf.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Instructions to that effect have been issued.

HON. R. LAURIE: I am very glad to hear it, because I think when vessels

enter any port of the State we ought to make provision for them. If we had a north-west gale, there would be such a calamity in the harbour at Bunbury that for many years shippers would not think the port a safe one for vessels. I trust the Government will deal with the matter at the very earliest opportunity, and that they will have the assistance of members of both Houses in their proposal that this £120,000 shall be spent on Bunbury. I have no wish to detain the House any farther, and I desire to thank members for the way they have listened to me.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I wish to make a few remarks with reference to His Excellency's Speech, and possibly it may be necessary for me to travel over some of the ground that has already been traversed by members. I think no apology is due to the House for doing that, because in my opinion it is an advantage to the Government to know the views of members on matters they have embodied in the Speech, and certainly it is an advantage to the country to know what position members take up. I desire to congratulate the hon. member who represents the Government, and to add that I feel assured that the expressions which have fallen from members on this point will be met on the hon. gentleman's part by every endeavour to suit the wishes of the House. The Governor's Speech, although I do not agree with every paragraph of it, to my mind discloses a desire to provide for the necessities of the people. Certainly, the Speech is markedly similar, especially in public-works paragraphs, to Speeches delivered in this House by previous Governors on the advice of previous Governments. It is only natural that the question of closer fiscal relations with the mother country should have cropped up. In this matter, the decision arrived at by the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce seems to me the wisest—to speak neither for nor against the scheme at present, but to await with a receptive mind whatever arguments may be used for or against. That, I think, is the wisest attitude for us also. The matter is of the greatest importance: indeed, I think the country has hardly yet realised its full bearing. The effect of any such scheme must be far-reaching in the extreme. The next point I have to

touch on is the Coolgardie Water Scheme, and I will say at once that I was indeed surprised to hear Mr. Connolly's remarks on this subject. Undoubtedly, this great scheme has conferred an immense boon on the goldfields people.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: You ought to know; you have lived such a long time on the fields!

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I was on the fields before the hon. member. I had the pleasure of taking 14 waggons loaded with flour through from the Great Southern Railway to the goldfields during the first year of their existence. I prospected on the fields for some considerable time. Farther, I claim to be one of those who have helped the goldfields on every occasion. I consider that the residents of those fields have reason to thank their lucky stars that they find themselves in Western Australia and not in any other State. Unquestionably, Western Australia rose to the occasion and afforded the mining industry every facility which a small community possibly could furnish. It therefore comes to me as a surprise to hear goldfields representatives speak as Mr. Connolly did recently. Residents on the Great Southern Railway might just as well turn round on the Government and say, "We refuse to pay freight on our goods."

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: Do you pay interest and sinking fund on the Great Southern Railway?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Indirectly we do.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: No; you do not. Besides, we carry your railways too.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: As regards water supply, the matter is entirely different. I believe Mr. Brimage stated that prior to the completion of the water scheme the price of fresh water on the fields was 5s. or 7s. 6d. per 100 gallons. [MEMBER: Five shillings.] One thousand gallons of water represents a weight of four and a half tons. This weight has to be carried from Mundaring Weir and landed at Kalgoorlie. It may surprise goldfields members to learn that farmers cannot obtain water on their holdings for the same money, or cannot get it for less. [MEMBER: Try a windmill.] It cannot be done at that price even by means of a windmill, if a reasonable allowance be made for interest and depreciation. Goldfields members grumble at paying

7s. 6d. for four and a half tons of water delivered at Kalgoorlie, after the country has provided the means of carrying that water over a distance of hundreds of miles. I hope that for the good fame of the fields we shall hear no more complaints on the subject. I trust goldfields residents will pay up like men, and justify the confidence which the country as a whole has reposed in them. The coastal people were the strongest advocates of the scheme. I remember all about the sore feeling on the fields in the past. Unfortunately, the feeling was only too common in the early days. I never felt so disgusted in my life before as when a crowd of some 10,000 people booted the first man in the country to propose that the fields should have a railway—I refer to Sir John Forrest. I am sorry that the feeling existed, and that it has not yet entirely disappeared. I am certain that Mr. Connolly, even in spite of what he said recently, knows in his heart that he is on very poor ground. At all events, let it not be forgotten that goldfields residents get their water as cheaply as, or even more cheaply than, farmers can obtain it on their land. In saying this, I do not refer to the obtaining of water by means of a bucket: I refer to a supply obtained by means of wells and windmills.

[Several interjections.]

THE ACTING PRESIDENT: The hon. member should be heard without interruption.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I do not mind, sir. Now, I turn to the Royal Commission on the Public Service, and I urge the Government, who have the feeling of the country with them, that if they desire the feeling of the country to remain with them they should call in this Commission at once. The Commissioners are stalling about the land, doing what? Creating discontent, and making recommendations which are utterly impracticable. They are taking, not like Shylock a pound of flesh nearest the heart, but a pound of flesh out of the heart itself. It is time these men were called in. They are unpractical, and their suggestions are impossible of adoption. The country would not put up with any Government which followed the Commission's recommendations. I advise the Government to stop the expense of the Commission, and

devote the money to some advantageous purpose. I am pleased to observe that steps are being taken to protect the timber resources of the State. Having travelled through New Zealand some time ago, I returned more than satisfied as to the value of our timber assets. I found that in New Zealand fence-posts of Australian wood were being used. Australian trees grow rapidly in New Zealand, and are being planted all over the islands; notwithstanding, however, the absence of timber is most marked. When one compares a country like New Zealand with such a country as this, one sees reason for self-gratulation. Undoubtedly, great waste has occurred in connection with the saw-milling industry, and there is much to be said in favour of a policy of re-forestation. A good deal in the same direction might be done by thinning out the hundreds and indeed thousands of useless trees which hinder the growth of profitable timber. I do not think the cost of this would exceed 4s. per acre; it might be done for as little as 2s.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: You should offer that suggestion to the Royal Commission on Forestry.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I observe that the members of the Commission are inquiring into the supplies of sandalwood, with the evident desire to protect that wood in some way and to encourage its growth. That is an absolute waste of time. It has been conclusively proved that a sandalwood tree takes 20 years to mature. Again, 170 to 180 logs go to the ton, and the price of a ton is £7. Therefore, it is easily seen that after twenty years of protection a log is worth 1s. to 1s. 6d., or 2s. at the outside. Besides, there are the chances that a bush fire may sweep the sandalwood away at any time. My advice to the Government is to waste no effort in preserving sandalwood, but to devote the energies of the State to better and more reproductive work. My 20 years' experience of the sandalwood trade enables me to state that one frequently has to wait five years for a market in China. Again, there is the consideration that as soon as the Chinese become Christianised and see the folly of burning sandalwood for incense, the market will die.

MEMBER: The Chinese burn only the refuse for incense.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I understand the Chinese use the wood for cremation and other purposes. At any rate, China is the only market for it. I know that experiments were made with the growth of sandalwood on a plot of land lent to the Government for that purpose. Later on, some hundreds of pines were planted on the same piece of land. The result was one of the most gratifying crops of cock-spurs ever seen. There was not a sandalwood or pine tree to show as the result of all the labour and expense. I feel assured that the time of the Royal Commission on Forestry is being wasted in inquiring into sandalwood. The sooner that wood is rooted out, the better it will be for Western Australia. I purpose going on to the clause dealing with Constitution and electoral reforms. I pledged myself to vote for a redistribution of seats, and not for a reduction; and I should like to say here that if a measure is brought forward, and it contains a clause for a reduction of the number of members, I shall certainly oppose it. Now I come to the question of the proposed railways, and I like to encourage railway extension throughout the State. As to the line to Laverton I have never spoken against a mining railway, and from what I can gather there will be no cause to regret having the line now proposed. I am only sorry that we cannot open up more mining places. It is evident there are others, particularly in the North, that are worthy of consideration in this respect, and in my opinion it would be a new idea if the Government were to invite private enterprise to step in there. There is no doubt it would be a real paying concern. I trust that in connection with it there will be no more locking up of land, and I agree with some hon. member—Sir Edward Wittenoom, I think—that there should be provision for the Government to buy such line back. With regard to the Fremantle and Jandakot Railway, that line to my knowledge was promised to Jandakot settlers many years ago. I believe it is cheaper than road-making in that district: in fact it must be so. Thirty-seven or 38 reasons have been given why this railway should be built. At any rate people have made out a very good case. The line is not a very long one. A line is to be built from Collie to a point on the Great Southern

Railway. It concerns my own district, and I purpose saying very little upon it. It is a railway which is proposed to be taken into my province, but as to the route I do not wish to tie my hands, having no desire to support one part of the district more than another. I am only pledged to my people to support the construction of the railway to a point on the Great Southern line. Regarding the question of route, there are some five different places mentioned, and they cannot all get the line, but they all make out a good case, because the district is a very big one. We are not going to be let off by building one railway or one feeder, but several feeders will be wanted in a very few years. Good agricultural land extends away from the Great Southern Railway for a distance of 40 miles before reaching the jarrah forest, and it stretches along the line a distance of 120 miles, and possibly more. The country is well watered. We cannot expect people occupying farms along that country to develop the land unless we give them facilities. Before I leave this subject I would like to draw attention to Kojonup. The Minister for Lands has expressed considerable surprise at the development which he observed there during his visit. I think he went so far as to say it is the best land he has seen in the country. The people are full of energy, and they have some of the finest agricultural shows in the State. They have proved themselves in every way worthy of consideration at the hands of the Government. It is 24 or 25 miles farther west than the township, and the good land extends about 30 or 35 miles. It is an unusually rich country, but unfortunately some portions of it have been locked up in poison leases for many years. About 164 acres that had been locked up 16 years were forfeited recently, and are now being selected under conditions more favourable to the State. The Colonial Secretary replied yesterday to questions as to this block. It is just about time that the State realised there are very valuable lands there. I am going to suggest to the Minister that when the time comes for an alteration of the Land Act, the term "poison lands" should not be retained. That term is certainly objectionable in many ways. I said to a person, "What about your

water supply; is it all right?" and he said, "I am all right, except one thing." "What is that?" "Poison grows about here." Does it affect the water? I have heard people say that land with poison in it is funny country. The land might be termed fourth or fifth class land. Let us abolish the phrase "poison lands." Members have said that they entertain this question of connecting the Collie with the Great Southern Railway with a view of ultimately taking the line on to the goldfields, and they intend to give the proposal their support. If it never went any farther than the Great Southern Railway, the money would be well spent, and if it goes on to the goldfields so much the better. There is not the slightest doubt that there is sufficient agricultural land to make the line pay. With regard to consolidating the Land Acts and the Mining Acts, I do not know very much about the Mining Acts, but I know about the Land Acts. The Government intend to simplify and liberalise the Land Acts. With reference to young men of 16 taking up land, I did not know it at the time I spoke on the question last session, but I may tell members now that an alteration has been made in New South Wales, and a young fellow in that State can take up land when 16 years of age. In New Zealand, one of the most go-ahead countries of all, a young fellow of 17 can take up land. I trust that if there is a prospect of another place again throwing out the proposal there will be a compromise, and that we may alter the age to that which has been adopted by New Zealand. The present limitation is an injustice, as I said at the time I moved my motion. It is wrong to bar these young fellows from taking up land. I hope that when the consolidation takes place some provision will be made for this. In connection with this matter I desire to congratulate Sir Edward Wittenoom on the very able remarks he made in relation to immigration. There is not the least doubt in the world that we are suffering through want of immigration. Recently in New South Wales I found Canadian agents who took advantage of the drought there, and in every hotel of any importance that I went to there was no end of literature of the "Please take one" kind, giving all

the information available with reference to Canada. If Canada can do this in the other States, why cannot we do so? The interest they display and the desire they express to have information regarding the advantages in the State as far as agriculture is concerned are wonderful. Let us have a system of sending agents to the other States, and induce the people to come to this State. It would not be unneighbourly, if we can offer better terms, as undoubtedly we can, and why should not those people enjoy them? We have millions of acres of land available. I hope the Government will send information broadcast. Persons are entering into our country and holding out inducements to entice our people away. I notice that recently 50 successful farmers have been sent abroad to lecture and show the advantages that exist in Canada, whereas we have not sent one, and yet we wonder that people do not come here. It would be a good thing to send even one successful farmer to England to visit the agricultural districts and tell the people of the advantages which exist in this country. If Canada can afford to send 50, I am sure we can afford to send one, and try in a small way to get some people to come to us. It is said that the labour people are at the bottom of this inaction; that they do not desire to see any fresh people come. I trust such is not the case. We are told there is great doubt whether the labour difficulty existing here has been honestly come by, and whether the labour people themselves are not responsible for it, whether, by the wages they are asking, they are not stopping the farther development of the State. I know that in the agricultural districts there is room for thousands to-day, but men want such outrageous prices that you cannot put them on. The wages demanded are unreasonable, and the present position has not been come by honestly. The Labour people themselves are to blame for the difficulty which exists. I trust they will reconsider their position. If they are influencing the Government—I hope they are not—then I trust they will remove their objections and allow Ministers a free hand. One more point I desire to touch on with reference to Canada. Not only are immigrants put aboard steamers in England, but on arrival in Canada

they are met by a landing agent who assists them; not, as is the case here, by a customs officer who endeavours to bleed them. In connection with new settlers landing in Albany, I have had a deal of correspondence with the Government regarding unfair charges, and charges which plainly ought never to have been made, since refunds have been obtained in many cases. Such things should not occur. The Government ought to have a landing agent at Albany, or Fremantle, or wherever the new settlers may arrive, to help them and to make them feel at home from the very start. On application by an intending settler, a landing officer should attend to give every possible assistance, and particularly to inform the settler what is dutiable and what is not. New arrivals here tell me they are utterly disheartened by the time they reach the land they intend to settle on. They have had to pay charges for inspection of stock, and they have had to pay duty on farming implements which could not be sold at a fair price in the country from which they were brought. Help should be given particularly in this respect. In Canada no trouble of the kind occurs. New arrivals are taken by the hand, and in nine cases out of ten they are put on improved farms. No wonder the stream of immigrants flows to Canada rather than to this State! Settlers from the goldfields, of course, have not the customs officer to face, but even to them a great deal more help might be given. I trust I am not wearying hon. members by these endeavours to put before them my views on this very important subject. In my opinion, everything possible should be done to encourage land settlement. Before passing from this subject, I desire to urge on the Colonial Secretary—and he, I hope, will urge on the Minister for Lands—the need for pushing on with the classification of land. The fact that we are six months behind in this respect is most regrettable. In spite of my motion of last year, no improvement has taken place. People are losing heart; some are returning to the country whence they came in preference to waiting for the long-delayed classification; the effect of the delay has certainly been to check the comparative rush of immigrants. I hold that classification should be settled

within a month after application. We can easily get men of sufficient knowledge and ability to classify lands properly. Even if an error should creep in, no great harm would be done. Numbers of men who can be safely trusted by the State may be found for the work. I repeat, even if an intending settler should get the better of the Government in the matter of classification, he would still have to carry out improvements; and that would be for the advantage of the State. I find no fault with the men who have done this work in the past; indeed, I compliment them on the conscientious manner in which they have discharged their duties. But for the whole of my district, for example, there is only one man to classify lands on behalf of the Government; at least six men, and probably more, are required for the work. The fact that classification is six months in arrear constitutes a downright disgrace to the State. The Fremantle dock I consider a most necessary work. Years ago it was almost promised on one occasion. No doubt, the day will come when Albany also will have a dock; it has the best of harbours for fortification purposes, and there is every reason to believe that the naval and military authorities will take the matter up in the near future. Fremantle certainly requires a dock for commercial purposes, but by reason of its openness it is not the best base in case of war. All the protection which could be afforded; there is as nothing compared with that to be obtained at Albany. Years ago the southern port was promised a dock, and there is no wonder that its residents feel sore at having to stand aside for the benefit of a more favoured locality. While I have not a word to say against the construction of a dock at Fremantle, I do trust that Albany will not be neglected. The port is well adapted for fortification, and the harbour is one of the finest in Australia. I shall support the contemplated improvements at Bunbury harbour, which are undoubtedly necessary, and should be taken in hand without delay. Captain Laurie has pointed out that the work has not been started in the right way; but still it would be a great mistake to abandon all the money which has been spent. Better go on with the projected improvements. I am pleased to observe that the Govern-

ment see their way clear to promise reduction in the rate of carriage on foodstuffs for the goldfields. In this connection, I hope they will see their way to reduce passenger fares, so that young boys and girls may travel at a cheaper rate. The railways carry children up to 12 years of age at half fare, but beyond that age full fare is demanded. Lads and girls beyond the age of 13 are not granted the privileges of adults, and I ask, why should they bear the responsibilities of adults? The chances of travelling and observation are being curtailed in every way, whereas they ought to be promoted by the granting of cheap fares. Information gained in travelling may influence a whole life for good. I know that in the agricultural districts there are numbers of young men who would make better miners than farmers, but who cannot obtain the employment best suited to them for want of opportunity to get to the mining districts. The young are tied down to their immediate neighbourhood. The cheap fares which obtain during Albany week, for example, are worthless in this connection, because at such times it is very hard to obtain the extra accommodation. Now, if one could send a young lad to the city at any time, he would probably learn more in a week there than during 10 years in his own district. It is really a shame that these heavy fares should apply to children; the thing is a relic of the old methods. In the early days no one thought it necessary that knowledge should be acquired by travel. The full fare is charged in the case of young children on the same principle as wheat is put up in bags weighing 240lbs., whilst 120lbs. represents the weight which can be carried with ease. A wrong is done young people by these heavy railway fares, and that wrong should be remedied at once. I hope this matter will be borne in mind in connection with the proposed reduction in the cost of carriage of foodstuffs to the goldfields. Farther, there is the consideration that while the poor children of the goldfields are brought to the coast free of charge, there are parents who do not feel that they should take advantage of this concession, but who still cannot afford to pay full fares. I trust the Colonial Secretary will make a note of this matter. The proposal to establish a

system of water supply and sewerage in the metropolitan area has my hearty support. As for the educational system, I shall say little beyond that my experience of the present system is that it does good work all along the Great Southern Railway. I do not like to be parochial, but yet I like to speak of things that I know. The teachers in the Great Southern districts deserve great credit for their work, from which the children derive great advantage. The young are not only being made into good scholars, but they are being taught manners and athletics as well. It is a pleasure to see the children at the schools along the Great Southern line. Of course, in making this statement, I do not mean to say that the conditions in every district are not just as good; on the contrary, I believe they are. It seems to be the feeling of everyone that the State should provide a higher class of schools. Education is well looked after in New Zealand, and from what I saw there I am disposed to consider that we are not behind that colony in any respect, whilst in some ways we are ahead of it. I do trust the Government will reconsider their decision in regard to country hospitals. It is absolutely impossible for new settlements along the Great Southern Railway, for example, to make provision for medical men. The position is somewhat the same as it was on the goldfields in the early days; and we know what was done then: the State gave all possible aid; the goldfields people were not asked to provide doctors; doctors were appointed, and hospitals were established, and only in rare cases was anyone forced to pay for treatment received. The same conditions should apply to new settlements along the Great Southern Railway, and elsewhere, until such time as the people are able to help themselves. On sawmill settlements, where a number of people are gathered together and can therefore club their funds, the position is different. I trust that a little consideration will be given to people in this respect, particularly along the Great Southern Railway. I have no hesitation in saying that those lands did not cost the State more than 2s. an acre. People are certainly entitled to consideration on other grounds, outside the reasons I have given. Another matter is referred to in the Speech, and

years ago I took action in this direction—the simplification of our laws. At that time I spoke against the inclusion of what is practically a dead language, and I urged that every word should be such that he who runs may read. I decidedly object to the insertion of words that are practically a dead language. I hope that simplification will be carried out in its true sense, and that we shall have the courage—because it needs a certain amount of courage—to say that we do not want those words. Let us have some other language, and if it takes a line or two extra it will be more easily understood. Let us have a simplification in the true sense of the word, so that men who read the laws will be able to know what is meant by the sections in the various Acts. I would like to refer to the question of the Midland Railway, and I congratulate Mr. McLarty on having brought the matter up. It seems to me that the Government are going the wrong way to work to get rid of this company. We are not told what lands are available yet in connection with the construction of that railway. We were told that something like 240,000 acres were sold to one man. I think the total quantity is something like 3,000,000 acres; and I cannot but think there is a great quantity of that land still available. I have still that old feeling which I formerly had against the company, but I think we ought to treat them fairly. It surely is a matter of easy calculation. We know what lands are worth to-day. If there is a sufficient quantity of land available along the Midland Railway, and if the railway is worth anything like what they represent it to be worth—and we could have our own valuers—the bounden duty of the State is to try and purchase it. Even if the amount is large, the Government should buy it, and not take action by utilising the “Julia Percy” or a boat of some such name. I never heard about it till I came here. This took place, I suppose, when I was away in the other States. Members will remember that some years ago the very men who are members of the Government to-day were the strongest to denounce anything that would make English capitalists have a “down” on us, anything that they thought would make people look another way. They

used to say, "Don't do that; they will only pay us out in some other form." Often and often that was said. Again and again that was represented as a reason why we should not do certain things—that we might offend the English capitalists. If there is anything which will offend English capitalists, it is the Government's action with regard to this matter.

HON. J. M. DREW: There is no connection with the English capitalists.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Is not the hon. member glad of an opportunity to do the Midland Railway Company injury?

HON. J. M. DREW: Certainly not.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Members have conveyed to me the impression that there is a desire on the part of the Government to do injury to the company, and I hope they will get up and explain that they did not mean this kind of thing; because it is going to do a lot of injury to the State. We surely can buy this railway. It is a matter of a few hundred thousands. It is a simple matter to get a valuation, and it will be easy for the Government to look into the question and see what land is available. I think a fairer way would have been a taxation affecting the big landowners.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was a Bill some two or three years ago, and it met with an unhappy fate in this House.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I think it is a fairer system, so far as it applies to unimproved estates only, and I will go to-morrow for all I am worth in regard to unimproved estates. I do not believe in punishing a man who puts his capital into a piece of land, and letting others go practically free. I trust that some more legitimate means will be taken than that adopted, and I hope to have the assurance of the Colonial Secretary that this steamer was not put on to do the Midland Company an injury.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I give you that assurance.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I am very pleased to have it. I thank members for the kindly consideration they have given me in my endeavours to get through my speech. Anyhow I have done my best, and I am sure members will feel that such is the case.

HON. A. G. JENKINS (North-East): I desire to join with other members in congratulating this State on the accession to office of the gentleman who at present occupies the position of Governor. I am sure his term will be an enjoyable and happy one, and I hope he will have many years of prosperity in this State. I also desire to congratulate Mr. Kingsmill on being leader of this House. I am quite sure he will find the House only too ready to agree to anything that is reasonable, as it has done in the past. This House has been singularly fortunate, I think, in its previous leaders. They have set Mr. Kingsmill a high example to follow, which I have no doubt he will succeed in doing. One of the earliest paragraphs in the Speech has reference to the Federal railway. I do not know whether it is meant to be sarcastic or not when they say that they are making steady progress towards it. My idea of what is steady progress is not the same, I think, as that of the Government. As far as I can see, I do not think this railway was ever more distant than it is at the present time. Previously South Australia was to a certain extent in agreement with us; certainly it was so before the Federal vote was taken. Unquestionably promises were held out to us at that time that the railway would receive the sanction of the South Australian Parliament, but now there is not the slightest doubt that most of the leading men in South Australia are opposed to this line.

HON. W. MALEY: They sent their best men to the Federal Parliament.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I say that all the leading men in South Australia and most of their members in the Federal Parliament are opposed to the line. Personally I can see very little chance of the line being thought of seriously for many years to come, and in my opinion the Government should do all they can by fostering public opinion throughout the State to assist the movement, for if we get at all lukewarm on the subject undoubtedly it will go out of the range of practical politics. If we fail to hold up our end of the stick, the other States will not be slow to take advantage of it. With regard to the proposal to make a broad gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, I think that is equally visionary

I cannot see any object at the present time in introducing a Bill to construct a broad gauge line on account of a line which we know will not be constructed for years. That would be a trans-Australian line, and no doubt the goldfields members will be met with this argument, if we agree to this line: "We cannot give you the Esperance line now, because we have already agreed to an expenditure of some hundreds of thousands of pounds to construct a broad gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie." There would be an absolute bar to getting the Esperance line or having it discussed in Parliament again. No doubt members will be quite ready to give the Government sanction to borrow the money to construct a broad gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie when the trans-Australian line is seriously considered by the Federal Parliament. You cannot possibly have a broad gauge line and a narrow gauge line working side by side. You cannot have two separate sets of rolling-stock. The question now, it appears by the report of the Commissioner of Railways, Mr. George—and he ought surely to be the best judge—is whether they are going to duplicate the present line or construct the Esperance line. That is what it comes to. One of these two things will have to be done, and the Government will have to decide which line will do most good to the State. I certainly join with Mr. Connolly in the remarks he made with regard to the rates for the Coolgardie Water Scheme. Arguments urged on the other side seem to me to be utterly illogical. It is said that this is not a national work; but if ever there were a national work this is one. Surely the people on the goldfields are just as much inhabitants of Western Australia as people in other parts of the State, and why should they be singled out for special taxation in a work of this kind? Take the Bunbury harbour, or the construction of the Great Southern line. We did not ask the people around Bunbury or those engaged in the timber industry, for which the harbour was specially built, to pay special taxation to provide interest and sinking fund.

HON. E. McLARTY: There is no comparison at all.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: To me the positions are analogous. I cannot see

any distinction. If you make a public work in one part of the State, you do not tax the particular people to pay the interest and money borrowed for it, but the money is borrowed for the State as a whole. Here a section of the community is singled out and asked to pay not only interest but sinking fund, in respect of a work which is certainly of great benefit to that section, but indirectly also of great benefit to the State as a whole. To my mind, the position is utterly illogical, and not for a moment tenable.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Your position is not tenable.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: The hon. gentleman can explain his views when he rises. As was previously said, every man is entitled to his opinion; and that is mine. Perhaps some hon. member will maintain that if money is borrowed for the construction of a work intended to benefit one section of the community, that section is called on to provide interest and sinking fund. The next question I intend to touch on is that of Constitution reform. If the Government are honest in this matter, I hope they will not introduce into the House such a Bill as was laid before us last Session. We have been told outside, by the man in the street, that last Session's Bill is to be re-introduced. If that be so, I can only suppose that the Government want an election cry; and I dare say this House will give them one. I do not believe there is the slightest possibility of acceptance by this House of a Bill cast in the same form as that of last year. The Government with one hand give the House a leader, and with the other snatch him away again. The very province represented by Mr. Kingsmill is abolished by last year's Bill. Certainly, this House has no objection to reforming itself; but we do not intend to allow the Legislative Assembly to reform our constitution without reforming its own. If members of another place show a reasonable spirit and are willing to come into line with us, I am sure we shall not have the slightest objection to meeting the Assembly. But we shall not accept a Bill like the last, in which all the reformation seems to have been at our end, and none at the other. The railway policy of the Government deserves the warmest support of the

country. The line from Laverton to Morgans is urgently required by the north-east districts. Undoubtedly the goldfields there look most promising, and cheaper means of transit will turn promising into payable fields, and so provide employment for large numbers of men. Like Mr. Connolly, I regret that the Speech makes no mention of the Esperance Railway. In view of the resolution adopted in this House last year, I think some reference might have been made to that line. However, the matter seems to have been carefully kept out of sight. Even the survey which has been in progress for the last two years is still dragging. When the surveyors are in a hurry, they do as much as a mile in a month; but generally they are not in a hurry. Thus, another 12 months is likely to elapse before the completion of the survey. If the Government had been serious in their professed intention to obtain a proper survey of the route, they could have had the work completed months ago. I trust that the Government, bearing in mind the resolution carried here last year, will push on the survey, so that at all events the requisite data may be laid before the House. Then, if necessary, a still more forcible resolution than last session's may be submitted to the Assembly. I approve of the direct line from Fremantle to the South-Western Railway. That line has only one object, namely to carry the heavy goods traffic from the South-Western district by a more direct route to Fremantle. The railway cannot possibly benefit the few settlers and farmers living within six or seven miles of the town of Fremantle. The chances are that one or two of them may use the line, but who ever heard of farmers subjecting their produce to three or four handlings for the sake of a journey of six or seven miles? I repeat, the only object of the line is to relieve the South-Western Railway of its heavy traffic; and therefore I hope that if the line be constructed it will be built in as direct a route as possible, and that it will not wander all over the country to suit the convenience of a little farmer here and a small selector there, who in all probability would not in the event make use of it. One other matter I desire to mention, although it is not referred to in the

Speech; and that is the proposal of the Government to give away to the Perth Municipal Council a most valuable site in the city. The proposal ought to meet with the strongest opposition in this House. The Government have no more right to give away that site than has any individual member of the House. Ministers are merely the custodians of that land on behalf of the people; it is not the property of Ministers; and they have no right to make a present of it to the Perth City Council or to any other body or person without the prior consent of Parliament. Ministers have, however, offered the land, and it has been accepted, without reference to Parliament. Now, if ever there was a case in which Parliament ought to have been consulted, it is this, which involves a large block of valuable land. There is no doubt the return I have moved for will show that the Government are paying rent all over Perth, while they actually give away a block of land in a central position, worth anything between £20,000 and £30,000. That block will be absolutely essential in the future, if the expressed intention of retaining all offices in one block of buildings is to be carried out. The Government are making the Perth City Council a gift at the expense of the rest of the State. [HON. J. A. THOMSON: A national gift.] That is just what it is not. The City Council already has a valuable site, that on which the Town Hall is built. Farther, the City Council has secured 2,000 acres of the Perth Commonage. I may remark that it is very questionable whether the City Council had any right whatever in that matter. However, the Government, I understand, have granted the fee simple. Those 2,000 acres of commonage ought surely to be sufficient endowment for any municipality; but on top of that the Government have made the City Council a present of one of the most valuable sites in Perth. I hope the grant will be strongly opposed, if opposition is admissible. I do not know whether or not the country is committed by the promise of the Government; but I assert unhesitatingly that the Government, before giving away such a site, ought to have obtained an expression of opinion from Parliament. I am pleased to learn that the rate for the carriage of foodstuffs to

the goldfields is to be reduced. Preferential rates should be entirely abolished. Such a move would create the liveliest satisfaction on the fields. At present, the Eastern Goldfields Railway is, in a certain sense, carrying other lines; which I do not think is quite fair. Goldfields residents should be asked to pay only freights providing a reasonable rate of interest and sinking fund, and other little lines all over the State should be left to pay for themselves as best they can.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: You are rather going back on your former argument with reference to the Coolgardie Water Scheme.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: No. I say that goldfields residents are willing to pay to a reasonable extent, but that the Government wish them to pay for all sorts of tinpot things up in the North-West, for example, where one district is demanding a railway for the conveyance of its monthly output of 50 ounces of gold to the coast. To a certain extent, I am with the educational proposals of the Government; but I consider the present time premature for the establishment of a University. No doubt, such an institution is most desirable, and a proposal of the kind will in the future have the hearty support and co-operation of every thinking member of the community; but just now we are hardly in a position to undertake the work—to incur such heavy expense for what will really be, in effect, only an ornament to the city of Perth. [HON. J. W. HACKETT: Oh, no.] I think the duty of the State ends with giving a good primary education, backed by a good technical education. To ask the State to burden itself with teaching classics and higher mathematics is out of all reason, and that is what the Speech asks us to do.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No, no. The very opposite. You are quite wrong.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: As I read the Speech, that is the effect:—

My Ministers. . . . are of opinion that the final duty of the State towards its children is not discharged until adequate provision is made for higher education.

That sentence bears out my contention, that the proposal is for State education in classics and higher mathematics.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Nothing of the kind. Neither classics nor mathematics are mentioned.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT: The hon. member should not be interrupted.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I may not be able to read English, but the Speech conveys to me the impression that the Government propose to take on themselves practically the teaching of higher mathematics and classics.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: If that be so, I shall vote with you against the proposal.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I am glad to hear it. Meantime, my view is that a good primary education, with a good technical education, is quite sufficient to fit any boy or girl for any walk in life. I shall be glad to see technical education promoted, for that of course is what we really want. Why are the Americans and the Germans so rapidly overtaking the English in the world's markets? Because they have good, sound systems of technical education.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Yes; in their universities.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I am not now talking about universities. I say, in their schools.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: And in their universities.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Technical education should start in the schools, and, properly carried out, it is, as I have said, quite sufficient to fit any girl or boy for any position he or she may desire to occupy. The tendency now-a-days is to pauperise the community, and to over-educate in respect of matters which are entirely useless for the business of after-life. Sound technical education would be far more serviceable to the community as a whole. In regard to the hospital question, I support the remarks of Mr. Connolly. I consider that the existing system, with possibly slight modification, is the best. Wherever the system of voluntary contributions obtains, the hospitals are always in difficulties. An example of this is afforded from year to year by the Melbourne hospital, which is in a certain measure supported by voluntary contributions. The Government will not assist that institution simply because they have got out of the way of doing so. In spite of large annual subscriptions the

Melbourne hospital gets farther and farther into debt year by year. Our present system is much the better. Let the Government support the hospitals, and if necessary the most stringent rules and regulations may be drawn to prevent people who can afford to pay for medical treatment from taking unfair advantage of the hospitals. Admittedly, the danger is that people well able to pay for treatment will go to the hospital to obtain treatment free of charge. If the Government are able to devise more stringent rules to prevent such abuses, no doubt the hospitals will be yet more economically managed and become less of a burden on the State. At all events people should not be asked both to bear the burden of taxation in respect of these institutions and to support them by private contributions. Other charities represent a heavy tax on people who perhaps can ill afford to pay it. I close by expressing the hope that the promised consolidation of the Statutes will be pushed on as quickly as possible. The work is most necessary, and surely there must be in Perth men able and willing to undertake it if adequate remuneration be offered? The expenditure would be amply justified, because, as things are, it is bad enough for a lawyer to have to wade through all the Statutes of the State in order to arrive at the law. If the Statutes could be brought into such form that a layman might discover at a glance anything he wanted to know, lasting benefit would result to the community as well as to the lawyers.

At 6:32, the ACTING-PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. J. A. THOMSON (Central): I suppose I shall have to repeat what most hon. members have said before me, that I did not intend to speak. And really that was my intention when I came here this evening, because I think the speeches of members with regard to the Address is merely a formality, unless by their line of reasoning they can make the Government alter the programme by adding something which has been omitted or by taking something from it. I do not expect that any words which may fall from me will have that effect; therefore I am going to glance rapidly over the

different headings of the Speech. The first portion calling for any remarks from me is that which says the recent movement in the mother country towards securing closer trade relations between the various parts of the Empire has been welcomed in this State with feelings of warm sympathy and sincere hopes for its ultimate success. That may be right or it may be wrong. To people who represent the importers or manufacturers who have their factories in Great Britain, it may be all right to have such a policy; but we are not all importers or manufacturers, neither are we all representatives of that class of people. Therefore, I cannot see that this movement for preferential trade which is being carried on in Great Britain at the present time can affect us in any way particularly, except the class of people I speak of, the importers or agents of importers, or the manufacturers or agents of manufacturers, who have their factories in Great Britain, or who import their articles altogether from Great Britain. Of course preferential trade relations would benefit them, but I question whether it would be beneficial to the State at large. One member mentioned that he considers the crying need in this State is for an increase in population. I agree with that. We cannot become a great State, nor can we make our voices heard in the States of the Commonwealth until we have an increased population. But I cannot follow the hon. member's reasoning, in urging that the Labour party was mainly responsible for this blocking of the increase of population. The hon. member must try and place himself in the position of the people who are not over-anxious to have keen competition. The members of the Labour party mostly represent the workers, and the workers in this or any other part of the world have only one commodity for sale, that being their labour. Is it at all unreasonable to suppose they do not want to have over-competition? The trader does not want over-competition if he can avoid it. The farmers, who are the very people for whom we are doing all we can to encourage in this State, and rightly so too, do not wish to have undue competition. I heard several farmers express the opinion lately that they do not want to have any more of those large estates pur-

chased by the Government and thrown open for closer settlement, because if that policy were followed and we got a large number of producers, the farmers would not be able to get £8 or £9 a ton for their chaff. That is perfectly right from their standpoint; and the reasoning of the Labour party is also right from their point of view. Another portion of the Speech says:—"I am pleased to be able to record the steady progress of our efforts to secure the construction of a railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta." I suppose members would be quite right in stating that they also indorse that policy; but we should not unduly force this along. If we show ourselves too anxious to do the whole lot, or to commence doing what we at the present stage have no right to do, the State of Western Australia may be left to bear more than her due share of the cost of the construction of that line. I think if members will assist the Government in any efforts they may make towards keeping this question rightly before the people of the State and also before the Government of the Commonwealth, they will do all that at this stage we should feel called upon to accomplish. There is also an expression of opinion that it must have been beneficial to this State to have a large number of politicians from the other States to witness the opening of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. I suppose that will follow in the ordinary course of events. An exchange of ideas is good for all people, including politicians. The construction of a line from Fremantle to a point on the South-Western Railway has been touched upon, and I am quite in accord with the policy advocated. The construction of such a railway should, in my opinion and in that of other members who have spoken, be made in a direct line to relieve the congestion of the heavier traffic that has to come from a certain portion of the South-Western line to Fremantle, and if some of the settlers along the Jandakot area are advocating that the line should be deviated, so as to go right to their backyard as it were, their voices must not be listened to, but the general benefit of the whole State must be first considered.

HON. C. A. PRESSE: Their interests must be considered.

HON. J. A. THOMSON: I think the interests of settlement at large in this State, or any other, should be the principal consideration. I have had great experience in travelling not only in Western Australia, but in every one of the States of this continent and also in New Zealand, and I feel quite sure that the interests of the settlers and business at large can be studied by making good main roads and not by building small agricultural lines. In fact we have an example at the present time which shows that agricultural lines which have been built have had to be closed. Let us make main roads and see that they are kept in a proper state of repair. That in my opinion is the best way of serving the settlers in the great outlying parts of the State, which the main lines do not go near. I do not think there is anything else which particularly calls for remarks from me, with the exception of that portion of the Speech which states: "My Ministers, however, are of opinion that the final duty of the State towards its children is not discharged until adequate provision is made for higher education." They go on to propose the establishment of secondary schools, and also a University. I do not think there can be any great difficulty with regard to supplying a sound system of education for the children. If the State provides the best teachers that can be obtained for them and gives a sound elementary education, that is all it is called upon to do. If parents desire their children to have a higher education than our State schools can afford them or are prepared to give, and they are in a position to pay for it, it is their duty to do so. I hope I am speaking in the interests of the large masses of the people, and I say that the great majority here or in any other country are not in a position to give their children higher education. Even though a parent may desire that his children shall have higher education than the public schools can afford, he is not in a position to allow them to take advantage of facilities offered by the State, because the children have to go from school to work at an early age, in order that they may do something to assist to support the other members of the family. Therefore, I hold that if the State establishes secondary schools

we shall be taxing the general mass of the people to assist in educating the children of people well able to pay for that education themselves. That is how I feel on the matter. One other question I must refer to is that of the Midland Railway. It is not touched on in the Governor's Speech; but, as I said previously, I may have to refer to various subjects which find no place in that document. I think it altogether wrong to say that the steamer "Julia Percy" has been subsidised by the Government for the purpose of injuring the Midland Company. I feel sure the Government were not considering the Midland Railway people at all when the arrangement with the owners of the "Julia Percy" was entered into. That arrangement was concluded at the earnest request of the members for the Central Province and of the members representing Legislative electorates in the Champion Bay and Murchison districts. The request was based on the fact that the electorates represented by these members had to pay extremely heavy railway freights in comparison with those paid by residents of Perth and Fremantle. With the object of reducing those freights, and with that object alone, the Government have subsidised a steamer. At the same time, the members I have referred to wish to see the Midland Railway and its lands in the hands of the Government. I am sure, however, that no one with any idea of business morality would for a moment desire that the Government should harass the Midland Railway Company, or any other company. If, however, it should appear that the Midland Railway Company is not acting up to its obligations and the terms of its concession, if it is supposed to do certain acts and leaves those acts undone, then the duty of the Government is to see that those obligations are carried out to the letter. I agree with Mr. Piesse that the best way of doing this is to impose a land tax which will fall, not on people who are improving their estates or living on them—it does not matter whether the people live on the estates so long as they improve them—but on people who are doing nothing except hold large areas of land. Such people have a duty to contribute towards the upkeep of the State, and to contribute in a large measure, too. As

things are, they reap all the benefits and give nothing in return. The chances are that when the Midland Railway Company got this large estate the land was not worth, on the average, more than a shilling per acre; and if it be worth 10s. or even 7s. now, what has caused the rise in value? Not any efforts on the part of the Midland Railway Company, but the settlement of the mass of people who have come to Western Australia. What induced those people to come to Western Australia? Of late years, the great mass were induced to come by the gold discoveries. If, however, the State had not afforded Eastern Goldfields and Murchison residents adequate facilities, if the Government had not done something to make life easier for those people, they would not have remained and continued to benefit the State. They have been retained here by the expenditure of large sums of borrowed money and of taxes which have been wrung out of everybody in the State, from the humblest to the richest. The money has been spent in public works, and thereby the value of the Midland Railway Company's lands has been increased. Therefore, I say that the Midland Railway Company and every other owner of large estate owe a duty to contribute towards the upkeep of the State. That is all I have to say with regard to matters not contained in the Governor's Speech. I desire to add only that I am indeed pleased to welcome Mr. Kingsmill as leader of this House. Knowing the hon. gentleman as I do, I feel sure that he will afford members every facility for conducting the business of the House with due despatch but with earnest consideration.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT (Metropolitan): Having been hauled over the coals for the length at which I spoke on the opening of last Session, I have no desire to transgress to-night. I shall not, therefore, retrace the already well-trodden ground of the Governor's Speech. The able deliverances in which the adoption of the Address-in-Reply was proposed and seconded leave little to be said. I cannot refrain, however, from joining in congratulations to the State on the appointment of a practical man like Sir Frederick Bedford to the Governorship. I also congratulate the Colonial Secretary on

his assumption of the leadership of this House, and I desire to express my confident assurance that he will endeavour to place before us the various Bills of the Session in as clear a manner as his predecessor. Mr. Kingsmill's parliamentary experience ought to enable him to explain measures in an up-to-date fashion. A good deal has been said about the proposed duplication of the Eastern Goldfields Railway. One hon. member said that it was impossible to adopt two gauges on that line; but I can tell him from my experience as an engineer that such a thing is possible. In England, when the 4ft. 8½in. gauge was being altered to 5ft. 3in., the use of a third rail permitted the employment of rolling stock of mixed gauges. While that difficulty is thus disposed of, I feel bound to say that I shall oppose farther expenditure on the Eastern Goldfields Railway in the direction of laying a broad-gauge track until we know what is going to be the gauge of the overland railway. Again, I should strongly oppose the handing over of that railway to the Federal Government, because such a move would merely be the insertion of the thin end of the wedge towards the eventual handing over of all our railways, which are our best asset, to the control of the Federal Government. The railways communicating with the fields should, I maintain, be treated as trunk lines; and every engineer will acknowledge that the only means of making trunk lines pay is to lay out feeders from them in all directions. I do not desire that such expensive feeders as have been laid here in the past should be constructed. I would rather follow the example of the old country and of the Continent. There is the mono-rail system, which admits of a speed three or four times as great as that attainable on ordinary railways. Moreover, the mono-rail admits of grades of one in 10, whilst the ordinary railway cannot look at anything under one in 40.

HON. G. RANDELL: We have had grades of one in 23.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: Yes. The line on which that grade occurs was constructed by myself, but we used to have to bump a good deal to get up it. Frequently I had to hold the safety-valve to get over that grade. A great advantage of the mono-rail system is that it takes

up practically no land, since the line is carried on trestles. Some lines of this description have been running for 13 or 14 years without an accident. These railways are much cheaper of construction than are roads. Road construction is all very well; but for the running of motor cars, as suggested recently by the Premier, a really good road is required. No motor at present working will lay a track for itself. Such a motor has been invented, but it is not yet on the market. From experience, I am able to state that motors will not run on sandy country, of which we have a great deal in this State. The motors used in the old country will, as a rule, transport about five tons. Now, if a farmer cannot produce more than five or six tons of marketable stuff at a time, he had better give up farming.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Farmers can take five tons on their wagons.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: Yes. The simplest means of opening up the country and of making the railways pay is to put in cheap feeders. We must encourage the people to settle on the land. Until the goldfields broke out, farming was the main industry of the State, and farming may yet again be its chief industry. Therefore, I shall support every proposal for cheap railway transport. There is no necessity for maintaining a big service all the year round. The conditions can be adapted to the needs of the farmer. I shall be prepared to support the construction of feeders wherever there are farmers who can show that they are growing a reasonable quantity of produce to supply the metropolitan or the goldfields market. I am sorry to observe from the population returns that our increase has been at the expense of the sister States. I agree with other members that it would be well if we encouraged immigration somewhat on the same lines as Canada does. We should introduce people, not from the Australian States, but from the mother country and elsewhere. Undoubtedly, this State offers plenty of openings for additional population. I shall not say much concerning the Royal Commission on the Public Service, because that body has been sufficiently "slated." If the Government do not intend to pay more attention to the Commission's reports than is indicated by a paragraph in the Speech, then the sooner the Commission is

abolished the better ; but I certainly think that if the Government fail to do something in the direction indicated, they will be open to censure. Another Royal Commission is inquiring into the condition of the timber industry. Mr. Piessé referred to the fact that its members are concerning themselves with the preservation of sandalwood. Having read through the reports of evidence taken by the Commission, and having interested myself in what has been done—I have been a timber man, and I erected what was at the time the biggest saw-mill here—I have to call attention to the fact that in not a single instance has the Commission taken evidence concerning trees which have been planted, or the growth of such trees. I understand that a Mr. Roche, of York, volunteered evidence concerning a number of trees planted in the Blackwood or Sussex district in 1873. I believe Mr. Roche gave the Commission to understand that he could produce the man who dug the hole. Thus reliable data as to growth might have been arrived at. However, practical men who have been connected with the timber industry for years and years are not called to give evidence. Why is this ? The members of the Commission are tiddliwinking and playing about with sandalwood, which is almost of no value to the country, as Mr. Piessé has shown ; and yet one of the most valuable timbers of this State is left unnoticed and disregarded. Nineteen years ago I built some railway trucks of tuart, and these trucks are at the present day in good running order, without having had a coat of paint since they were built. They are running to-day. I say that is a timber which should be cultivated. I believe that, Bunbury way, there is a good bit of it, and the land is still open. In my opinion, if it were thoroughly cleaned out and looked after, we should have just as valuable an asset in tuart as we have in jarrah. With regard to constitutional reform I am not going to say much. If the Bill is introduced in the same state as last year it will meet with the same result. At any rate I hope so. I believe that when the Bill came in last year it was not the intention of the Government to have it put through. I, for one, voted against it, and I intend to vote against it again if it comes forward

in the same shape. As to the Collie Railway, I shall support that proposal at any rate. With regard to the dock, the Speech says: "That work is essential, but the question of site is one of so great importance that, until further reports are obtained, no final decision should be arrived at." As an engineer, I do not see the difficulty arising with regard to the site for that dock. I remember that when I was in England four years ago, they might have had a dock in Fremantle, and they should have had it. In my opinion, the State is no State at all if it cannot do its repairs, and these have to be carted away to the other States at great expense. They do not know where the docks are going to end when they get beyond the bridges. They should have a floating dock. Then they could shift it along, and the dock would have no permanent position. I believe, in fact I know, that when Sir Edward Wittenoom was appointed Agent General, an offer was made to him from a Scotch firm, and the work would have been undertaken free of cost to the country, except that they were to be allowed to collect dock dues for eight or ten years, and were to have the use of three acres of land for their shed and works. I saw vessels docked by that means on the Tyne in England. I think a vessel of 1,600 or 1,700 tons was ballasted down on one side on purpose to show the working at those docks. They lifted a vessel in four and a-half minutes, and brought her upright. That is the sort of dock we want here, until we have settled exactly the extent to which our docks are going. I would like to say a few words on the question of a sewerage system, which no doubt is a thing that is badly wanted in Perth. I have been hammering at it for the last four years for Perth and its suburbs, and Fremantle. After the last Session a Commission was appointed by the Government to go into and report on a scheme of sewerage from Midland Junction to Fremantle. I maintain that the Commission was wrongly appointed. It should have consisted of practical men who knew what they were about, men who had had to do with sewerage business, and who take an interest in it, or at any rate in health matters. What did the Government do? They appointed the Engineer-in-Chief as chairman. I

do not say he is not an able man, for I think he is, and a painstaking man, but he has so much to do that he can never get to a meeting. They have had only one meeting since the Commission was appointed. What is it done for? Is it done for a "bluff" to us, or what? It is not the right thing. It is simply throwing out a rag to keep the Perth people quiet, or something of that sort. I have for the last four years or more been advocating this septic principle that I saw was working well in England. A gentleman from the other States came to Perth and stayed three or four days. He took no levels or data. He is going to report, and, mark you, he will advocate the septic tank system. I say that, though I have never seen him or spoken to him. We have men in our midst who have given time to the question, and have studied it. I myself devoted three months to the subject in England, so I know what I am talking about. We had no need to take men from the other States. The Commission should have been allowed to appoint its own chairman, and if he could not attend another man could have been put in his place and the business proceeded with. There has been one meeting in nine months, I think, but I cannot say the exact date. As to the University, I shall oppose the proposal. I do not think it is the duty of the Government or the State to provide for the teaching of classics or anything of the kind. [MEMBER: We do not propose it.] I do not intend to give them a chance. When these schools were first started I always had the idea that the system was for people who could not afford to have their children educated up to a certain standard. What do we find? Nearly all the private schools which have been doing good work are left out in the cold, and the children sent to Government schools, as they can get what is required more cheaply. Government schools were never intended for that class of people. The proposal to establish a University is going a little too far, and I for one shall strongly object. It is very good in a way. If they would guarantee that the institution would be self-supporting and would cause those who use it to pay the expense, it would be all very well; but I am afraid that the expense would be

saddled on the country for the sake of those who can afford to send their children elsewhere. As to technical education, I do not think the Government can go too far ahead in that respect. Then there is the question of a Factories Act. I hope the measure will not come in on the same lines as that of last year, when they made two people a factory. It is making it a bit too fine. [MEMBER: One Chinaman was a factory.] At any rate I hope they will not bring in a Bill on the same lines. If they introduce the measure, let them make it lenient, and encourage the establishment of factories amongst us. [HON. G. RANDELL: It is not wanted.] I think we must have something to try and control these gentlemen. There is one subject I should like to mention, touched upon by Mr. Randell, and if I am wrong he will contradict me. He said quietly, and as nicely as he possibly could, that the Central Board of Health had been somewhat aggressive.

HON. G. RANDELL: I knew you would take that up.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: I think he said aggressive or oppressive.

HON. G. RANDELL: Oppressive, I think.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: It is one and the same in my opinion.

HON. G. RANDELL: I said the board had been reported to be oppressive.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: I am going to show in a few words that it was not so. I think the hon. member got his information from the Dairymen's Union. They had been to the Minister complaining or protesting against the ordinary measures prescribed by the Central Board of Health to protect the public health. From the doctors' reports our milk supply here—[MEMBER: Half water]—it may be half water and sometimes a little more, but, at the same time, it has contributed largely to a good deal of sickness; in fact, 175 infantile deaths out of 1,000 are mainly attributable, according to the reports, to the milk distributed here.

HON. G. RANDELL: You must not expect people to believe that.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: I am only giving you what the record is that came in to the Central Board of Health, so you can hardly blame that board for trying to alter a state of affairs like that.

HON. G. RANDELL: Quite right up to a certain point.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: I do not think those dairy by-laws can be considered so oppressive as the hon. member would have us believe, because dairymen themselves have no objection to have them made applicable to new dairies, but they do not want the old ones touched. I can quite understand that. It was, I think, the structural standard of the dairies that the board asked to have altered under our by-laws. We wanted impervious floors and such like. I think something like a hundred and some odd notices have been served in regard to dairies in different places, but not one of them has been for any structural alterations whatever. They have all been for cleansing purposes—cleansing in every direction—so you will see the action taken has not been oppressive on the dairymen at all. What was required of them was only what they should have done in the natural course. They should keep the dairies clean. We maintain that the milk supply is of great importance to the health of Perth. I would farther call attention to another portion of the duties of the board, which will go to prove that the board is not oppressive or aggressive. During last year over 400 plans of buildings were examined by the board, out of which 163 had to be altered. The doors had to open outwards, ventilators had to be provided, sanitary arrangements put right, and so on. Seventy-three complied with the orders made, and 80 partially so, and a few of that 80 were practically not touched at all. After having tried every fair means to induce these people to comply with the regulations under the Health Act we had to close eight of those buildings.

HON. G. RANDELL: You closed a church, did you not, up the country?

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: Two churches, I think. At any rate the churches are not to be exempt from the operation of the Health Board, any more than a theatre or public-house. What I have said goes to show that we have not been oppressive. On the other hand, according to the reports of the board, Mr. Randell personally congratulated himself on the leniency of the Central Board of Health. On more than one occasion it was reported to us that the hon. member had transgressed the regulations which he as the

Minister controlling the board was responsible for. He was directly responsible for transgressing those regulations which he fathered to all intents and purposes when he was the Minister.

HON. G. RANDELL: As a Minister or as an individual?

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: As a Minister.

HON. G. RANDELL: I should like to know something about it.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: I shall tell the hon. member in a few words.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Is it a personal matter?

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: No; it is not. On consideration, however, I shall convey the information to Mr. Randell myself later: that seems a better way. In order to show that the board has not been oppressive, I may mention that although during last year 75 districts were examined and over 4,000 reports were received with respect to health matters only nine complaints were made concerning orders issued. I do not say all the people who received orders agreed with them, or carried them out—indeed I do not think half the orders were carried out as they should have been—but the fact goes to show that the board has not been oppressive. Only the other day the Premier complained that the board was not enforcing the provisions of the Health Act stringently, and the Royal Commission on the Public Service in its report on the Central Board of Health expressed a similar opinion.

HON. G. RANDELL: Yes. That is the funniest thing I have ever heard read.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: These facts prove that the board is not more oppressive and aggressive than can be helped. With the exception of Fremantle, the board has sat on no local body more heavily than could be helped. Fremantle, however, was in a very dirty state when the plague broke out, and at that time the board had no sinecure. Members of the board were called from their homes sometimes at 10 o'clock on Sunday night, to legalise the action of inspectors in closing various places. It was found necessary to exercise the severest and most stringent powers conferred on the board by the Health Act. I repeat that no local body was treated unjustly or with undue harshness in any respect whatever. I think I have said

enough on this subject. I could continue for a week, but then I should get into the same trouble as on a previous occasion. Without further remark I support the Address-in-Reply.

HON. A. DEMPSTER (East): I rise with pleasure to indorse the many expressions of welcome to His Excellency the Governor and Lady Bedford. I feel sure that Sir Frederick Bedford's residence amongst us will benefit the State. I have pleasure also in welcoming Mr. Kingsmill as leader of the House. In regard to the policy outlined in His Excellency's Speech, I shall say only that, with certain reservations, I believe it will be workable. I am pleased to learn that the Government intend to propose the construction of a railway from Woodmans Point towards Armadale, and that project will have my support. I shall also be prepared to support extensions of the Greenhills and Newcastle railways—works which have been frequently talked over, and of which my brother farmers stand in great need. Very little has been done in that direction recently, and I think I may ask for these two extensions. As regards the question of the Midland Railway, I should be glad if a settlement were arrived at; but not an unfair settlement. One would like to see the Midland Company's property, land and railway, bought by the State. It remains for us to consider whether the company is asking too much. One thing or the other ought to be done. I trust that the votes I shall cast in this House will be in the best interests of the State.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): I must thank hon. members generally for the extremely generous and hearty manner in which they have as a whole supported the propositions set forth in the Governor's Speech: the more so because it makes this, which is practically my first task in this honourable House, the task of replying to hon. members, an easier one. I am glad to find—it is always pleasing to find that people agree with you—that hon. members join in expressions of gratification at the presence amongst us of Sir Frederick Bedford as Governor. I can fully indorse all that has been said, and even more than has been said, with regard to that gentleman's

abilities and geniality. I do not propose to occupy the time of the House very long, but one or two observations which have been made concerning the Transcontinental Railway do not altogether fall in with my way of thinking. I am, of course, one of the last men in the world to blame, or to cease to respect, another man simply because he happens to differ from me. Perhaps, in view of my present position in this House, I am rather too much given to that kind of thing. I understand, however, that in all legislative and deliberative bodies the fault is one which is readily forgiven. Hon. members who have spoken—some of them, at all events—seem to attach rather too little importance to that railway and its influence on the destinies of Western Australia. Again, there is another point: hon. members speak as though the Government were desirous of at once constructing a railway with a gauge of 4ft. 8½in. from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. That broad-gauge railway, I should like to explain—and I think this is the effect of the reference in the Governor's Speech, which in itself ought to be sufficient for hon. members—is contingent on the Transcontinental Railway becoming a surety. Once that line is assured, I think hon. members will agree with me the broad-gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie would become absolutely necessary to the interests of Western Australia. I observe that during the discussion on the proposal of the Address-in-Reply, hon. members representing various parts of the State invariably rise to advocate the claims of their constituencies with no uncertain voice; but perhaps the most astonishing development which I have ever heard of in connection with this habit has occurred during the present debate, when hon. members representing Eastern Goldfields constituencies practically expressed a wish to throw on the State generally the burden—because it is undoubtedly a burden—of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. Those hon. members go so far as to compare the Coolgardie Water Scheme with the Fremantle and Bunbury Harbour Works. In the earlier part of the debate, until they were found to be in the wrong they even went so far as to say that the Eastern Goldfields were being subjected

to special taxation. Now, nothing could be farther from the real state of affairs. It is proposed, as I think is usual in connection with all schemes of this kind, that payment should be on a rating system; but for every penny paid in rates an equivalent in water will be supplied. Eastern Goldfields residents are asked to do nothing more than pay for value received. Can anything be fairer than that? Are we to understand that Eastern Goldfields residents cavil at the price? Some of them say that in former years a promise was made that water would be retailed on the goldfields at 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons. If the promise was given, on which point everybody is not agreed, then I say that an examination of the files connected with the Coolgardie Water Scheme will prove that such a promise ought not to have been given. At one time it was estimated by the late—and may I say the late lamented—Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, that the cost of the water, delivered in the dams then intended to be constructed at Mt. Burges, would be 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons. Hon. members must bear in mind that after being delivered in those dams the water had to be reticulated, the cost of which work remained to be added, as also the cost of selling the water, and of collecting the money for water sold. Moreover, the estimate of 3s. 6d. was contingent on a daily sale of five million gallons.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: Five million gallons a day will never be sold at the present price.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We now find, perhaps unfortunately for the Coolgardie Water Scheme as a financial undertaking, although I am bound to admit fortunately for the Eastern Goldfields, that a quantity of only 500,000 gallons per day is sold. Mr. Connolly says that five million gallons will never be sold at the present price. I do not think the Government have ever contemplated asking such a price for a consumption of five million gallons per day. The more we sell, the lower will be the price. The Government will be well satisfied if within a year or so a sale of two and a-half million gallons a day can be worked up; and I venture to foretell that with such a sale the price will be reduced. But I consider that to cavil at the price now being

charged for so small a quantity of water as I have mentioned is somewhat unreasonable on the part of Eastern Goldfields residents. There exists no reason whatever for grumbling at the manner in which it is proposed to rate the goldfields residents, considering that for every penny paid in rates they will get an equivalent in water. Hon. members representing Eastern Goldfields constituencies, had they taken the trouble to consult their own goldfields newspapers, or even that useful if not amusing organ, the *Government Gazette*, would have found on the 1st July a full description of the scheme with an explicit mention of the circumstance that in return for rates to be paid, water would be supplied. I do not propose to say much more concerning the Coolgardie Water Scheme, or what has been called the national aspect of that work, because the matter will be fully elaborated and dealt with in detail by my colleague, the Minister for Works, in another place. Hon. members to whom my explanation may be unsatisfactory will no doubt avail themselves of the opportunity of looking up the report of Mr. Eason's remarks. I have only one more observation to offer in this connection. Emphasis has been laid on the circumstance that Eastern Goldfields residents are asked to pay not only interest on the money expended but also sinking fund, and reference has again been made, in this connection, to harbour works and railways. Now, I ask hon. members to bear in mind that the Coolgardie Water Scheme, from the very nature of its construction, is much more vulnerable to the attacks of time than is either a railway or a harbour work. For that reason it was thought necessary—I think the action was perfectly wise and discreet—to place by statute on the money borrowed for the work a sinking fund of three per cent. As I have already said, the scheme is one on which time has a great effect; and therefore we wish to insure that the returns from the scheme shall supply at least a substantial amount towards the repayment of the money borrowed for its construction. I now have to deal with a subject which I am sorry to say is most disagreeable to handle, the more so because this is practically the first occasion of my speaking in the House. I may be

somewhat hampered in dealing with the strictures which Mr. Maley has passed on the Lands Department, not altogether by a feeling that I should not transgress—I hope I never shall transgress—the rules of debate, but by a desire to be as gentle as possible in replying even to such a direct attack as that made by Mr. Maley.

HON. W. MALEY: Say anything you like.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Of course; I intend to do that. In connection with certain dealings of his with the Lands Department he made certain charges. In deference to the compunction which I have already stated I feel, I do not propose to enlarge upon the question as to whether this Chamber should be used as the vehicle for bringing forward private complaints or not.

HON. W. MALEY: It is a public matter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That I leave to the conscience of the hon. member. In my opinion, this Chamber is not the proper vehicle; and although I might speak at some length on this subject, I will refrain from doing so. Let us go on to the merits of this particular case. From what Mr. Maley told us, it appears that he was a member of a syndicate.

HON. W. MALEY: I was the honorary agent of a syndicate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, the honorary agent of a syndicate. He made certain applications for certain lands in the southern portion of this State.

HON. W. MALEY: Eastern portion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: South-eastern portion. At the time those applications were made, it had been decided to carry on certain boring operations in the country in question.

HON. W. MALEY: You had not made that public.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If I remember rightly it had been made public, but the publication of it has very little to do with the case. Whether it was made public or not did not matter so far as the Government were concerned. We had a report from Mr. Muir upon this country, which stated that with the finding of water a pastoral country would be developed there equal to any in Western Australia. We also

have the probability that by the Transcontinental Railway running through this land—I hope at no very distant date—the value of the land would be enormously increased. When these applications were made, the hon. member said the interests of the State were disregarded by refusing these applications. I say that when such an element of doubt existed as to the value of the land, when every probability pointed to the fact that the land would be very much more valuable in time, the interests of the State were best consulted by refusing these applications. But there is yet another reason, and I will point out the nature of it. I have taken the trouble to obtain and to bring to this House a plan which clearly shows the manner in which these applications were made. [Plan displayed.] We have here, as members will see, a number of squares coloured green. Those represent the applications of the syndicate of which the hon. member was the hon. secretary.

HON. W. MALEY: That is the right of free selection.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We have also, as members will see, a number of unoccupied blocks between these applications.

HON. W. MALEY: In explanation, I would like to say I had nothing whatever to do with the manner of the selection. By the articles of agreement with the syndicate, it was left entirely to the surveyor employed. I myself objected to the way in which those applications were put in, and I think the recommendation of the Under Secretary to try to close them up together should have been taken notice of by the Government. I repudiate any knowledge whatever of the plan. I believe it was done with a view to securing as much country as possible. I merely wish to say that I had nothing to do with the mode of selection, which was, I repeat, left entirely to the surveyor of the syndicate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am pleased to hear the hon. member's explanation, and it makes me free to say that it appears to me this was a deliberate attempt to get the control of an immense area of country at the lowest possible expense.

HON. W. MALEY: That is correct, I believe.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It appears to me a most disgraceful proceeding, and I do not mind saying it now the hon. member says he had nothing to do with that. The hon. member made a very *apropos* remark. He said that the proposals of these people were checkmated. When they used an instrument so very like a chess board, they could have expected no other fate.

HON. W. MALEY: I did not make the remark in connection with that, but I said I was checkmated with regard to certain dealings of the Government in respect to the Brockman country.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I accept the explanation, and I am very sorry the hon. member spoiled my little joke. I think members will be perfectly satisfied that it was not through any personal animus—those were the words I think the hon. member used—

HON. W. MALEY: Why did you not take notice of what the Under Secretary recommended?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think any too great leniency should be extended to people who will make such an attempt to get the control of so huge a quantity of land at so little expenditure to themselves, and in a way which would absolutely block the farther settlement of the rest of that country.

HON. W. MALEY: You cannot say that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I can say it. I have said it. I think I need say no more on that branch of the argument. The hon. member went on to say in his attack on the Lands Department that there was a case in regard to what was known as the Brockman area, in the Kimberley district, wherein certain persons, to wit—I think that is the legal term—R. T. Smith, Roscoe and Parker, H. Gunter, and F. Johnson, were unduly favoured.

HON. W. MALEY: No; I did not say that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman said it or not, but he said that the applications of these gentlemen were specially favoured.

HON. W. MALEY: I said nothing of the kind. I said that four of them put in their applications and four of them got 250,000 acres each, although I under-

stand the applications overlapped other applications, and that they succeeded in getting the land against local applications.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Now we know what the hon. member did say, and I think that what he has said points to a direct inference that those people were unduly favoured. I leave it to the common sense of members whether that is so or not. What do I find? I find that the hon. member is incorrect in his premises. In the first place the applications do not overlap any others. I find that the report of the Lands Department with regard to this is as follows:—

The pastoral leases in the vicinity of Napier Broome Bay were portion of the country explored by Mr. Surveyor Brockman, which was thrown open to application for pastoral lease on the 1st July, 1902. Applications were made as follow:—387/98, R. T. Smith, 250,000 acres; 388/98, Roscoe and Parker, 250,000 acres; 389/98, H. Gunter, 250,000 acres; 390/98, F. Johnson, 250,000 acres. No premium was paid, as these were the only applications for the land and were approved in the ordinary manner.

HON. W. MALEY: That is right. No premiums were paid.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. So that the second charge of special treatment to these gentlemen appears also to fall to the ground. The hon. member appears to lament that these gentlemen afterwards went away and started a company which they called the North-West Pastoral and Frozen Food Company, or something of that sort, and he makes a great point of its having the articles of association signed in Guernsey. Apparently they floated this for £50,000 or something like that. I may be pardoned for saying so, but that part of the hon. member's speech seemed to have a vein of sadness running through it. It reminded me of the saying of a poet:

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: 'It might have been.'

It seemed to me that perhaps the hon. member as hon. agent of the syndicate regretted that they could not get hold of this country for the syndicate and sell it for £50,000. So far as I am concerned, if they had wished to do so, if they had wished to sign articles of association at any particular place, they could have had the loan of Rottnest Island. I have said all I wish to say, and I hope

I have satisfied the hon. member on the two questions which were raised. I will pass away from that to another attack—a little attack this time—an attack which had not any sting in it—I refer to the words which fell from Mr. Drew about the Mount Erin estate. I very much regret the Lands Purchase Board could not see its way clear to recommend the purchase of that estate, and I understand that my colleague the Minister for Lands has visited that place. I do not know whether he promised or not to put a representative of the Victoria District on the board, but I think he expressed himself as being somewhat favourable to such a course. From what I know of the Lands Purchase Board, I am certain that whatever opinion they passed was a good and honest opinion, and I do not think they were influenced by any bias against the district. I should be the last man in the world to believe that. Several very hard things have been said about our friends the Civil Service Commissioners. They have been accused of going on pleasure trips, on jaunts, and stalking round the country with murder in their eyes, or something of that sort. It is alleged that they have not done any work, and various pleasant little remarks of that sort have been made which must be calculated to immensely cheer the monotony of those gentlemen's lives, and which I think are to a certain extent undeserved.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: To a certain extent.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly. I will explain to what extent I think those remarks were uncalled for. If members—and there are some in this Chamber with a fair knowledge of departmental work—will take the trouble to read through the reports which have been issued by that body of men, they will I think find those reports represent an amount of work and convey an amount of information which I venture to say is cheap at the price we have paid for it. Whether the conclusions the Civil Service Commissioners have come to from the information they have gathered are always right or not, taking into view sometimes local conditions of which they have not had sufficient knowledge, and of which they could not perhaps get sufficient knowledge unless they lived in the country

for another two or three years, we have the premises from which to deduce conclusions that may to us seem more correct than those conclusions; and I say that the compilation of that information is manifestly valuable to the State. There is another thing. Possibly anybody would be led to infer that all the recommendations the Commission made were absolutely impracticable. That is not altogether correct. I should like to inform hon. members that many of the Commission's recommendations have already been acted on, in some cases with regard to whole classes of civil servants. Thus it will be seen that the recommendations are not impracticable, because they have been acted on, and in some cases they have worked for two or three months in a perfectly smooth, reasonable, and workmanlike way. I desire to say these words in defence of a body of men who have certainly worked hard ever since their appointment. Hon. members who say that the Commissioners have been taking pleasure trips through the country cannot have carefully read the reports furnished, or, if they have read them, can have no comprehension of the amount of work involved in the preparation of the information which appears in those reports. The next item on my notes I approach rather in fear and trembling. It is the attitude which the House seems, at this early stage, inclined to assume towards the Constitution Act Amendment Bill and the Factories Bill. Really, if there is anything calculated to daunt one, it is the wholesale strictures that have already been passed on these two measures. I quite understand that hon. members have reasons for opposing the measures, but I ask of them that they should not do as they seemed to do last Session—treat the measures with somewhat scant courtesy. It seemed to me that last year it was a case of Edinburgh justice, of hanging first and trying afterwards.

HON. G. RANDELL: You sent the Bills to this Chamber at the end of the Session, and there was no alternative.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: An alternative does not seem to have been greatly sought after. The execution of these two unhappy measures was carried out with the utmost despatch, and without any great manifestation of grief on

the part of hon. members. Now I ask members—I am sure I can appeal to their fairness of mind—at all events to discuss those measures, and to give reasons for rejecting, in order that I may have an opportunity of combatting those reasons, if able to do so. I believe hon. members will at all events show this consideration to measures which have had a sort of resurrection from their last disgraceful death. I notice, too, that hon. members in many instances coupled the Constitution Act Amendment Bill with another measure which I think could work only for good. I refer to the Electoral Act Amendment Bill. I was sorry that this Bill was rejected last Session, because I fancy that, had it been passed, Western Australia would have possessed an electoral law which would be a model to the rest of Australia. I hope hon. members will give that Bill, at all events, earnest study; and that they will be able to agree with the remarks I have just passed on it. Now, there appear in this Speech—which has been likened to preceding Speeches—the usual congratulations, congratulations which have extended now over a period of many years, and, moreover, congratulations which are true in fact, on the prosperity of the State. I think we have every reason to congratulate ourselves on the progress which Western Australia is making. Whatever industry one turns to—mining, agricultural, pastoral, timber, or pearling—everywhere signs of advancement and prosperity are apparent. I can speak feelingly, perhaps, concerning certain industries of the northern part of the State, because just before the meeting of Parliament I had returned from a long—and may I say valuable—trip along the whole northern coast-line of Western Australia. I am glad to be able to say that, although I have been acquainted with that part of the country for some 14 years, I have never seen it in a condition of more solid prosperity than it is in to-day. The subject of the prosperity of the State naturally leads to a consideration of the finances. I note with interest, and I may say with gratification, the words of warning which were uttered by Mr. Randell with regard to borrowing—words of caution which, as applied to the present Government, are somewhat of a novelty, because we find that as a rule

people are rather more anxious to spur us on to the expenditure of money than to check us from the borrowing of more money.

MEMBER: Do not listen to the voice of the siren.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think that any siren, however sweet her song, will succeed in leading from the path of duty the gentleman who at present has charge of the finances of Western Australia. I do not think that hon. gentleman will be easily cajoled into promising to spend money, more especially loan money; and I am happy to be able to give this Chamber his assurance that under the arrangements which he has made we shall need to go on the London market only when we find that market favourable. I am indeed pleased to find that the proposals of the Government—limited proposals, it is true, in respect of which we have been actuated by the spirit of caution which various hon. members have recommended—with regard to railway construction meet with general approval in this House. There is, of course, one line to which a reference in the Governor's Speech would have given me personal pleasure; and that is the line of which kindly mention has been made on several occasions during this debate, the line to connect Port Hedland with Nullagine. Unfortunately, that railway will be a fairly expensive one: it will cost about £600,000. Actuated by the spirit of caution to which I have just alluded, the Government felt that they could not see their way to include amongst the proposals for this year's execution the Port Hedland to Marble Bar Railway. I wish to point out to hon. members that for the past two years there has been in existence what is practically a mandate from another place to the Government to receive and consider proposals from persons willing to build the line by private enterprise. That motion was carried, before the end of the last Parliament, on my own initiative, and carried moreover by a fairly large majority. The Government, still feeling themselves bound by that resolution, would be very willing, should any reasonable proposal come before them, to allow this line, which is so specially fitted for that method, to be carried out by private enterprise. I say

specially fitted to be carried out by private enterprise, because the line will be absolutely isolated. In my humble opinion, the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line can never be connected with the existing railway system of this State. I know the country between here and there fairly well, and I say that to take a trunk line through to Peak Hill and away northward would involve engineering difficulties of no mean order. There is a very nasty range, with a great extent of, I will not say useless country, but next door to it, to be overcome after one gets north of Peak Hill and before reaching the Pilbarra Goldfields. Moreover, the route is intersected by high and rough mountain ranges which produce, so far as has been seen, nothing but spinifex. I think that for the development of the northern portion of this State the system which has been followed in Queensland should be adopted, namely of opening up the ports and giving them branch lines into the interior. The question of opening up the ports brings me to the matter of the subsidy of the steamer "Julia Percy," about which a good deal has been said. Hon. members seem to take an altogether wrong view of the object of the Government in subsidising that steamer; and I therefore desire to explain that during last session the Legislative Assembly carried a resolution affirming the desirability of the Government subsidising a steamer, or a line of steamers, to trade between Fremantle and Geraldton. We all know that Geraldton for years past has languished, largely owing to the loss of the shipping which once distinguished the port. With a spirit of decentralisation in marked contrast to the assertions of certain critics of this Administration, the Government decided that if a reasonable offer were made they would subsidise a steamer to run in that trade. The offer which was accepted, I submit with all deference, is eminently reasonable; and I trust that the running of the steamer will enable the Geraldton people to get their goods cheaper, and will also restore to the port some measure of the prosperity which, I regret to say, has not distinguished it so greatly of late years as was the case in the past. At all events, I feel sure of one thing, that the running of the steamer has already had a good effect in so far as freights to the

consumer are concerned; and I hope that good effect will continue, and that the people who own the steamer will also make money out of the service. I cannot pass from the subject of ports without some little reference to the Fremantle dock. That matter has been of interest to me for a long time. I regret—for my sixth-part share in the Governor's Speech—that Ministers were unable to put before the House any definite proposition relative to the site of the dock. The spending of £250,000 is, however, too important a matter to enter on in the absence of perfectly reliable data. The surveys which have been carried out will, it is hoped, enable us, perhaps even before the end of the Session, to come down with definite proposals for this most necessary work. In my opinion a dock on this South-Western portion of Australia would occupy one of the most commanding positions in the world, and it would be largely used, as shown by the evidence of our friend Captain Laurie, who is so very well versed in shipping matters. Nor can I depart from the subject of Fremantle without congratulating the Harbour Trust, which was formed last year, upon the very excellent work they have done so far in not only extending the facilities of that port, but also in making operative revenues which apparently before were lost to the State. The Fremantle Harbour Trust have, as hon. members have seen in the Press, made a profit for the first half-year of £22,000, and have done so without burdening the shipper or consignee, whilst at the same time they have granted to the ships that come into the harbour far greater despatch than was ever granted before. I think the day is not far distant when we shall have at Fremantle as well-equipped a harbour for the shelter and despatch of vessels as there is south of the equator. The case of Bunbury was mentioned. I am rather inclined to agree with those hon. gentlemen who say that wrong steps were taken at the initiation of the Bunbury harbour works. However, it is no good crying over spilt milk, and in the erection of jetties and of some of the harbour works in this State there has been a good deal of milk spilt around this coast. Take Bunbury as it is. We have made the best of what we find there, and undoubtedly the prospects

—I will not say the prospects but the actual performances—entitle Bunbury to better accommodation than it possesses at present. Not that I altogether believe the present overcrowding of the harbour with ships is entirely due to the true circumstances of the case. I fancy there must be some little fictitious value attached to ships just at present, when we find them in such numbers willing to lie off and wait at Bunbury for such periods at a dangerous season of the year. But be that as it may, I have very much pleasure in informing members that I have within the last day or two approved of moorings being put down, which I hope will be sufficient to cope for some time to come with the influx of vessels at Bunbury that are not moored alongside the jetty. I do not know that it is necessary for me to say very much about the question of water supply and a sewerage system, after the remarks of Mr. Wright. I would like to say it gives the Government a great deal of pleasure to be at last within measurable distance of a scheme which has been for so long a time—if I may say so of such a scheme—in the air. I know there has been at all events for some few years past rather more in the air than has been to the advantage of the inhabitants of Perth and Fremantle, and I hope before very long that will be a thing of the past. I have little doubt from experiments made here, and of which I am glad to say I was myself, I think, the initiator as far as the Government are concerned some 18 months back, that the septic-tank system will be adopted.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: I have had that working for six years.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I qualified my remarks by saying, "as far as the Government are concerned." From the result of these experiments and from the trend of sewerage operations throughout the world, I think the system adopted here will be that septic-tank system. At any rate, as far as I am concerned, I very much hope such will be the case. I feel that I am rather taking up the time of the House—[MEMBERS: No]—but there is one thing about which I would most certainly like to say a few words. That is the education question. The Governor's Speech says that our system of primary schools must be kept

abreast of requirements, and so far as I am concerned I can only say that the provision of proper primary schools throughout the State has become I might almost say fashionable. The time has arrived when that provision is getting more and more difficult; when in places like the scattered agricultural districts in this State we are confronted with the problem of getting the children to the school or the school to the children. I confess I have for some time seriously thought of adopting a system which has been carried out in America, and I believe elsewhere, with considerable success, and that is to collect the children into central schools by subsidising conveyances or any other means. That has its advantages for this reason, that it is very hard to get proper primary education at very small schools. As a rule, the larger the school the better the education imparted to the children, the reason not being far to seek. If you have a large school, you can afford to have masters in the highest grade of their profession, who have made a science of teaching—and there is no doubt whatever that the imparting of information and knowledge to the young is a science—men who have made it their special study and who have succeeded to a greater extent than those who are lower down. At all events, I can assure members that it is a problem I am endeavouring to grapple with as energetically as possible. Complaints are sometimes received from outlying districts that we do not give them all the educational facilities they might get; but I am glad to say these complaints are becoming fewer and fewer, and I believe that the inhabitants of these outlying districts recognise that the Education Department is loyally doing its best to help them in their isolation. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the average cost of children educated in Western Australia is somewhere about £4 9s., whereas in those isolated districts it runs, I think, to £7 or £8; so members will see we have no easy problem to deal with. However, I am glad to say I think last year was almost a record year in regard to the construction of schools all over the country, and I am also pleased to say that a great many of them have been in the agricultural districts, about which we have so much trouble. There is yet

another thing I am pleased to be able to say, and that is that this State may well congratulate itself upon an efficient teaching staff. Members have been talking in Parliament some years past about insufficient salaries paid in the Education Department. I do not think even now these salaries are in any way commensurate with the work which is done for them; but I can tell members that the salaries to-day are very much better than they were last year, and last year they were better than the year before, and they are gradually arriving at a decent liveable limit. I think the average salary paid now to teachers throughout the State is somewhere about £150 per annum; but when we consider the arduous nature of their duties and often the privations they have to put up with, members will agree with me that the salary is well earned, and they will also agree with me that, so far as the Government are concerned, it is money well spent. Now I come to the question of secondary education. The term secondary education seems to me—of course it is only my opinion—to be accepted by very many members in a totally wrong spirit. They differentiate markedly between secondary and technical education. If I may be allowed to express what I consider the beau ideal of secondary education, it is this, that secondary education is first and foremost technical, with the addition, if necessary and if possible, of the flowers and graces of education which are provided by the study of the classics, and more particularly of modern languages. But first of all, the one important thing is technical education. If Western Australia, if Australia, if our Empire is to take her right place in the world, we must fight other nations with the weapons they are using against us; and there is no doubt, as has already been pointed out in this debate, that the most powerful weapon, the most powerful instrument in the progress of a State must be the proper education, and the proper technical education, of the youth of such State. Again, with regard to a University; a University has been alluded to several times during this debate as a place where the higher classics and the higher mathematics are taught; a place where, as it were, a course of "Shakespeare

and the musical glasses" is gone through. That is not my idea of a University. A University, in my opinion, should be not so much for the graces of learning, but for dealing with the higher grades of those matters which are of use and benefit to the race. Members must remember that in very many parts of the world degrees in commerce are granted at universities. Is that useless? Then, again, we have degrees for civil engineers and degrees for metallurgy. Are those things which we can neglect? I ask members to dismiss from their minds the idea that a university exists for the sake of classical education alone. There is nothing more erroneous, and I think that when a university is started here—it is not proposed, as members will see from the Speech, to start it at once, but it is only proposed to make it possible that a university may be started in years to come—the state of public opinion with regard to education will be such that the university will teach chiefly the principles of science and commerce. I venture to say that without the principles of science and commerce in this State, Western Australia will be sadly lacking in those qualifications which she should have. It will be pleasing to members to notice that a great many of the Bills which are being brought in are of a consolidating character, and those members who have noted the Bill relating to prisons will see by a glance at the first schedule that in that one Bill alone, and it is not a very large one, are combined 16 Acts, to collate and compare which would, I estimate, puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer. We shall have a concise statement of laws relating to prisons.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: It is a step in the right direction.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am glad to say it is one step out of a good many which we propose to make during this session. I will not be much longer, but I just wish to say a word or two about hospitals. A good deal of fault has been found with the administration of the hospitals and with the proposal of the Government that to a certain extent—not entirely, as some members seem to think—private contributions shall be sought for the upkeep of hospitals. It has been objected that the cost of these hospitals should be a general tax on the State. Of

course we propose still to make them so by the provision for the payment of a certain amount of money; but the incidence of taxation in that case is not altogether fair, and we feel that, if there are individuals blessed with the goods of this world to so great an extent that they feel themselves able to contribute to the upkeep and proper treatment of their poorer brethren, they should have an opportunity of contributing of their means, and according to their will, to these hospitals.

HON. G. RANDELL: Will not the incubus of contributions be worse than the incubus of taxation?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I scarcely think so. At all events the gentlemen who desire to contribute should be afforded an opportunity of gratifying their wish. There are, I dare say, plenty of other outlets, but I would point out that the contributions, or the greater part of them, are not compulsory. However, I do not wish to weary members now. They will have a full opportunity of discussing this matter when the Hospitals Bill comes before them. There is another matter. Some remarks have been made about immigration. We encourage immigration so long as we can get immigrants of the right sort. Hon. members have drawn a number of comparisons between this country and Canada; but members must know that such comparisons are not altogether fair. In the first place, I am led to believe from what I have read of Canada, that very little capital is required to start farming there, the land being for a start practically clear of timber. Here, on the other hand, we are met with the difficulty that before any profit can be got out of the land it has to be cleared at heavy cost. The Agent General, therefore, is asked to send out men with a little capital who are desirous of entering into farming pursuits; and we assist such men to as great an extent as is considered desirable.

MEMBER: Why not clear the land beforehand by means of prison labour?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is a matter which might be considered, and which to a certain extent has been tried and is being tried at the Hamel settlement; though not to as great an extent as I hope will be done later.

HON. G. RANDELL: That system has been in operation for years, with a view to inducing farmers to come out here.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: From remarks made by some members, one would think the Government had made no effort whatever to encourage immigration; but the facts are all the other way. We only desire to be assured, before bringing them here, that the immigrants are of the right description. Lecturers have been engaged to travel through the country districts of England, and great efforts have been made to induce immigration of the proper kind. Even since this Administration has been in office, lecturers have been engaged to travel about the old country, and money is spent every year in advertising. But, as I said before, we must make sure that the immigrants are of the right sort.

[Several interjections.]

THE ACTING PRESIDENT: There ought not to be so much running comment on a speaker's remarks.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have nothing more to say, except to express my great gratification and lively sense of gratitude for the extremely kind reception I have met with in this House. Some of the references made to myself were so kindly as to be almost embarrassing, and I feel that if they were made in earnest I have had set me a heavy task to live up to the comments which have been passed. However, I can only again personally thank hon. members for the kindly manner in which they have received me, and on behalf of the Government for the hearty and generous reception which they have accorded to the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to read to the House. (General applause.)

Question—that the Address-in-Reply be adopted—put, and passed without dissent.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9-22 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.