

experience in employing German labour, and I must say those people make very good settlers. As members are aware, in Denmark and Sweden in particular there is more butter made in proportion to the inhabitants than in any other part of the world. I would also point out that Danish butter is fetching the highest price in the English market. I think the only remedy for this state of things would be, if it were possible, to settle such families on the soil; to give them every facility for acquiring a fair amount of land, so that they can grow food for their cows; and to establish creameries and butter factories, to which they could supply their produce in large or small quantities. A reference was made by the member for Sussex (Mr. H. J. Yelverton) to the proposed purchase of the Stirling Estate. Needless to say it has been reported that the Minister for Lands has decided not to purchase this estate, although it has been offered to the Government at a fair price, on the ground that the Government already possess plenty of land of their own. That is correct; but the land owned by the Government is of such an inferior quality that to a great extent it is not worth fencing, and certainly not worth cultivating; and at the present time that is about the only piece of land available for settlement in that district. I regret very much that it has been decided not to buy the estate. I believe the Commissioner himself examined the land. In conclusion I may say there appears to me to be a disposition on the other side of the House to dictate to those on this side where they should sit. I do not think that is proper. I, for my part, shall not accept dictation as to where I shall sit. I intend to carry out all the pledges I have given during my electioneering campaign, and I intend to sit here and to do my duty to the best of my ability for the whole State, and also for my own district.

On motion by MR. WALLAOE, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the PREMIER, the House adjourned at 10:31 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th July, 1901.

Papers presented—Question, Camels Importation—Question, Apples Importation and Restriction—Question, Census Returns—Papers: School of Mines, to establish—Papers: Liquor Sold to Natives, Conviction at Bridgetown—Papers: Mail Services, Esperance—Motion: Royal Vint, Railway Fares, debate resumed—Address-in-reply, fourth day, adopted—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers): 1, Report of the Department of Land Titles; 2, Report on Gaols and Prisoners; 3, Reserves under the Permanent Reserves Act, 63 Vict., No. 24; 4, Regulations under "The Stock Diseases Act, 1895"; 5, Regulations under "The Land Act, 1898"; 6, By-laws under "The Roads Act, 1888," "The Cemeteries Act, 1897," and "The Land Act, 1898"; 7, Documents re Kurrawang Wood Syndicate.

#### QUESTION—CAMELS IMPORTATION.

HON. R. S. HAYNES asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many applications have been made to the Government from the 1st January, 1900, up to the present time, for leave to import camels. 2, The name or names of the applicant or applicants. 3, The date or respective dates. 4, What was the reason for prohibiting the importation of camels into the State. 5, Does the reason still exist.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) replied:—1, Four; 2 and 3, Faiz Mahomet, 3rd October, 1900, A.U.S.N. Co., 14th January, 1901, Abbeullah and Rassaul, 19th February, 1901, S. D. L. George, 25th February, 1901; 4, Camels were prohibited from coming to Western Australia from Asiatic ports on account of glanders, foot and mouth, and other diseases; 5, Yes.

#### QUESTION—APPLES IMPORTATION AND RESTRICTION.

HON. G. RANDELL asked the Minister for Lands: If the experts of his department have reported on the question of

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removing the restrictions on the importation of apples.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) replied:—Yes, and it is proposed to lay the papers on the table of the House on Tuesday next.

#### QUESTION—CENSUS RETURNS.

HON. J. W. HACKETT (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: Can the Minister tell us when any of the returns of the late census will be laid before Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) replied:—I will read a memorandum I have received from the Statistical Office:

Upon the receipt of the schedules from the East Coolgardie district which have not yet arrived at the Census office, a preliminary statement showing the population of each census district will be at once prepared to be laid before Parliament. A telegram was received yesterday from the census enumerator at Kalgoorlie to the following effect: "Am forwarding by post to-morrow 32 parcels of schedules representing 32 districts; the balance of 19 being too large for post are being forwarded by rail." I may mention that all information received up to the present has been handed to the Press and has also been published in each monthly abstract issued by the Statistical Office since the month of April last. As regards the report, it is the intention of the department that only one divisional heading be taken in hand at a time and on the completion of the tabulation of that particular part it will be at once printed and issued.

#### PAPERS—SCHOOL OF MINES, TO ESTABLISH.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM (South) moved:

That all papers in connection with the establishment of a School of Mines on the eastern goldfields be laid on the table of the House.

Some three years ago the Forrest Ministry promised to establish this school, and last year £2,000 was placed on the Estimates. The late Premier (Mr. G. Throssell) promised to carry out his predecessor's pledges. A deputation had since waited on the present Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory), who acknowledged that the school should be established, but said the £2,000 had lapsed because it was unexpended. The Minister had sent up Mr. Purdy, an expert, to report on the suitability of the Coolgardie Exhibition building, which had

been designed with a view to such use. The report being satisfactory, the papers should be produced with a view of having these various pledges carried out. Put and passed.

#### PAPERS—LIQUOR SOLD TO NATIVES, CONVICTION AT BRIDGETOWN.

HON. J. M. SPEED moved:

That all papers and correspondence in connection with the conviction of one James Gleeson, who was convicted at Bridgetown on the 9th May last, be laid upon the Table of this House.

Happening to be in Bridgetown on the 9th May, he was present when Gleeson was convicted, firstly, of supplying liquor to a native, and was fined £20. Gleeson was also charged with absconding from arrest, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. He was a selector living not far from Bridgetown, coming in every few months and having a few drinks, like most of his class. He (Mr. Speed) believed there was no evidence to support the charge of supplying liquor; and the charge of absconding from arrest was trivial, because the man returned and gave himself up. Such convictions showed the necessity of having justice administered by men with professional training.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Did the man appeal?

HON. J. M. SPEED: He had no means to appeal. His (Mr. Speed's) services would have been given to Gleeson had the result of the trial been apparent. It was now too late to do anything. He had left at Bridgetown the draft of a petition; but in a small district a man who got up a petition might be put in the black books of the authorities. This Government should take a lesson from the past; for if it were necessary that a pleader in a Court should have a professional training, surely such training was equally necessary for the occupant of the Bench.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN seconded.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West): This serious motion should not be carried, at all events without some discussion. This was unlike the case of a man convicted at Quarter Sessions or in the Supreme Court, where there was no right of appeal. Here an appeal was allowed, which was a complete re-hearing. If, as stated, the man had been wrongly convicted, there was power

to petition the Executive for remission of the whole or part of the sentence. If that had not been done, why should Parliament interfere? This case was totally different from that recently discussed, where there had been an abnormal sentence; for an appeal could be had on entering into recognisances, with or without sureties.

HON. J. W. HACKETT (South-West): Being familiar with the facts of the case, he thought it inadvisable to bring before Parliament a grievance for which there was provided a legal remedy, which remedy had not been sought. Before Parliament, the last Court of Appeal, was invoked, the usual provisions for securing justice should be exhausted. Let the hon. member withdraw his motion, communicate with the Attorney General, and perhaps get information which would induce him to move the House later on, or make him content with what had been done. This magistrate was a man of great ability and impartiality, not likely to lean against a person because of his poverty. He was a man of great experience. Six or seven years ago he was at the Murchison goldfields; he had also been at Donnybrook and Greenbushes, as well as at Bridgetown, and had given great satisfaction. Probably his experience equalled that of many legal practitioners. If real injustice had been done, surely the member for the district or one of the members for the province, would have heard of it.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central): The motion was simply for papers, and there could be no harm in producing correspondence. How was it known the man was in a position to appeal?

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): In its present state, this case should not be brought before the House. The party should himself have the right of petition. If a miscarriage of justice or a misconception of evidence had occurred, there was a remedy. Unless there was reason to believe an injustice had been done these matters should not be brought before the House. It was undesirable that cases of this sort should be brought under the notice of the Legislature until the petition had been tried, and any wrong which might exist redressed. Mr. Walter, who was the Resident Magistrate at Bridgetown, stood in the estimation of everyone for

his ability and impartiality. He hoped the member would not press the motion.

HON. A. JAMESON (Minister): If the motion were withdrawn, the matter would be fully gone into by the Attorney General at an early date. He thought he could promise that. It seemed rather unusual that papers should be produced until a petition had been dealt with. If the matters were not satisfactorily settled then, the papers could be produced.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The man must appeal within seven days and deposit the costs.

HON. A. JAMESON asked the member to withdraw the motion.

HON. J. M. SPEED: Perhaps the Hon. A. Jameson did not know that he (Mr. Speed) had already been in communication with the Attorney General, whose knowledge of the case seemed very scanty.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: If a member thought a miscarriage of justice had occurred, or that a person had been wrongly punished, then it was his right to have the papers in the case produced. The laying of the papers on the table would not reflect on the impartiality or integrity of the magistrate, and if the magistrate had acted as he should act, it would redound to his credit. With an extensive knowledge of justice in the inferior Courts, he might say there were cases deserving inquiry, and in the case under notice, the man's right of appeal was not to the Supreme Court, but to the magistrate at Bunbury, which was very much like an appeal from Cæsar to Cæsar. He could assure Ministers that miscarriages of justice did take place, and they should be brought to the light of day. The Attorney General, no doubt, would do right in every case, but we could not shut our eyes to the fact that the Attorney General was now the Premier, and his hands were full of departmental work. If no harm would be done, the Government might assent to the motion. He did not know any of the facts of the case, but he knew that injustices had been done. Some of the wardens on the goldfields were in the habit of acting very imperiously at times.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) said he was quite willing the papers should be laid on the table.

Question put and passed.

## PAPERS—MAIL SERVICES, ESPERANCE.

HON. A. G. JENKINS, for Hon. J. D. Connolly, moved :

That all papers in connection with the late contracts entered into between the Government and the Adelaide Steamship Company, for mail service from Albany to Esperance, and from Perth to the North-West ports of this State, be laid on the table of the House.

Put and passed.

## MOTION—ROYAL VISIT, RAILWAY FARES.

Debate resumed from previous day, on motion by HON. C. A. PIESSE :

That the railway fares (as announced) in connection with the approaching Royal visit are not sufficiently low to meet the requirements of the distant centres.

HON. R. S. HAYNES (Central) : The adjournment of the debate was moved to afford the Minister for Lands an opportunity of giving the House information as to what reduction of fares was to be made. The railway authorities were the best judges of what they could carry people for; if people could be carried more cheaply, they should be.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) : The attention of the Department would be drawn to the matter, and possibly something would be done. He would take the opportunity of obtaining further information as to the carrying capabilities of the department in regard to the Royal visit, and he trusted to have that information on the table on Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

## FOURTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the Address-in-reply.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) : I have much pleasure in congratulating Mr. Sommers on his appointment to the position of senior representative of the Government in this House. I have to pay a similar tribute to the Hon. A. Jameson for his inclusion in the Leake Ministry. There has been a disposition to carp at the action of the Government in appointing two Ministers to this Chamber, but I think it is a great compliment that the Government should see fit to adorn this Chamber with the presence of no less than two Ministers

of the Crown. I am sure with the energy, industry, and applicability of Mr. Sommers, combined with the courteous conduct and intellectual capacity of the Hon. A. Jameson, the work of the House will be carried on from the Government standpoint in a satisfactory manner. I am sure the Government will have in this Chamber spokesmen who will be worthy successors to the gentleman who hitherto led the House with so much credit to himself and the country, I refer to Mr. Randell. I am glad to see from His Excellency's Speech that the administration of the financial affairs of the country is to be the first care of the new Government. It must be admitted by every careful student of financial affairs that strict economy is essential at the present stage of Western Australian history. Our liabilities are already sufficiently high; there should be a breathing space in the matter of public expenditure, and I trust that nothing will be done to seriously augment the public debt of the State. It is most satisfactory that we should husband all our financial strength in order to meet the serious strain on our resources which must be the assured result of federation. It would be unwise to harass the Ministry and bring pressure to bear on them to build new railways, or undertake great public works in the present circumstances. I learn from the Speech :

The expenditure of money beyond the votes authorised by Parliament must be discouraged as an encroachment upon the great constitutional privilege which recognises Parliament, and Parliament alone, as the body to grant supplies for public purposes.

I heartily approve of that policy; it is a sound one; it introduces into the life of legislation in this State lines quite different to those which have been followed in the past. Hitherto Parliament has to a certain extent been merely a machine for indorsing the acts of expenditure committed by the Ministry during recess. It is monstrous, in my opinion, that the funds of the State should be scattered right and left during recess, and the representatives of the people, in both Houses, have no voice at all in the expenditure of these moneys. I notice from the Speech that an amendment of the Public Service Act is contemplated. In this connection I have a suggestion to

make which I hope will receive careful consideration at the hands of the Government. Under Section 29 of the Act, public servants are entitled to long service leave "for six years' continuous service, except during annual leave of absence, three months on full pay and three months on half pay." This reads very nicely, but it is extremely doubtful whether civil servants in country districts could avail themselves of this section of the Act. Section 32 of the same Act says :

The duties of any absent public servant shall be performed without additional pay by the other public servants of the department, or, should this be impracticable, then in such manner as the Minister may direct.

In country districts, in many cases the departments are undermanned, and certainly I do not think there are many departments which could spare one officer. There may be some departments in which there would be three officers, and if it came to pass that one of those officers required to go on leave of absence, it would be very hard on the two remaining officers to compel them to perform the work which the three officers usually performed. I cannot see that anything else can be done under the Act than to compel the two officers to do the three officers' work. I propose as a remedy that a relieving officer be appointed, and that he be sent to the country districts in order to relieve officers who shall be granted leave of absence. I very much regret to notice that no indication is given in His Excellency's Speech as to what the Government propose to do in regard to the Midland Railway. I would certainly oppose the purchase of this railway at any extravagant price, but what the people of the State are anxious to know at the present time is whether or not the contract between the Midland Railway Company and the Government of Western Australia is being carried out. During the last session, I framed a motion asking for the production of all contracts made between Midland Railway Company and the Government of Western Australia—a motion somewhat similar to that which Mr. O'Brien attempted to table to-day. I was informed those agreements were amongst the Votes and Proceedings of Parliament ; and the then

Colonial Secretary (Hon. G. Randell) promised that, if I would withdraw my motion, he would do his utmost to provide me with copies. I know that he did so, and that the Clerk of the Legislative Council made every effort to discover these papers ; but from that day to this, I have never been able to obtain them. Now, it is most necessary that the people of Western Australia, and of my district in particular, should know the position of the State in regard to the Midland Railway Company. If we may judge from rumour, the Midland line is unsafe for traffic ; the rolling-stock is in a sad state of disrepair, and the company is starving the line in order to gain profits. A week or so ago, we were assured in Geraldton by a Minister of the Crown that the profits of the company were, at the present time, some £45,000 a year.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : Is that revenue ?

HON. J. M. DREW : I do not know the present state of the line, but I know what was its condition last year. Hot boxes were of frequent occurrence ; and on one occasion, a hot box attached to a truck in which there were some six tons of explosives, careered along the line for at least 100 miles ; and the box was smoking the whole way.

HON. J. M. SPEED : Was it a smoking carriage ?

HON. J. M. DREW : It was ; for about 100 miles. I am told that has occurred more than once ; but I am in a position to prove it occurred once at least. Now, it is most necessary that the public should know what is the nature of the agreements between the company and the Government ; and I am sure the present Ministry will do all in their power to lay these agreements before the House. In the past, my district has had much to complain of regarding the neglect and indifference of the Government. What with our mining industry, our agricultural industry, and our pastoral industry, ours should be one of the most prosperous parts of the State ; but it must be admitted we are suffering severely from the effects of depression. What is the reason ? This : No attempt has been made by the Governments of the past to assist our permanent industries. One of the chief aims of a wise Administration should be to increase the sources of natural wealth. That object, so far as

regards the Central Province, has never been kept in view by previous Governments. The true gauge of a district's prosperity is the measure of its increase or decrease in population in a given space of time. It is a grim commentary on the wisdom of our past rulers that, outside of Geraldton, the population of the Victoria District has decreased to the extent of 481 souls during the last 10 years. Leaving Geraldton out of account, the population of the Victoria District is to-day 481 less than it was in 1891. This is certainly not a state of affairs which reflects credit on the past Administration, or which the people of the district can be expected to continue to endure with patience and equanimity. There is an increase of 1,300 in the population of Geraldton, and outside of Geraldton there is a decrease. In the opinion of Government experts, we have in the Victoria District excellent land for agricultural settlement; but it is only during recent years that any attempt has been made to facilitate such settlement. For 40 years past the whole of the land has been locked up. I hope that, under the administration of our energetic Minister for Lands, these areas will be speedily thrown open to settlement, and the prosperity of the Victoria District thereby largely assisted. And then, what about our mines? We have lead and copper mines which, in their time, have produced half-a-million pounds worth of lead and copper ore. Yet, though we have been constantly agitating for it, we have never yet had a diamond drill sent to the district, though in various other parts of the State bores have, from time to time, been put down. I think that matter will be attended to by the new Administration. From the Speech, I notice it is the intention of the Government to introduce electors' rights. No doubt the Electoral Act is sadly in need of amendment, in at least one direction. Our present Act provides very reasonable facilities for every person who wishes to get on the roll to do so; but it has one serious defect which the old Act did not possess. Under the latter statute, all proxies in connection with an election had to go to the returning officer, and the returning officer alone. No one else had power to receive them. But under the new Act, a different and a dangerous

procedure is adopted. In Legislative Council elections, of which I am alone speaking, besides the returning officer, there are deputy returning officers; and each of these deputies is entitled to receive proxies. Herein lies the danger of abuses, which, under this Act, are rendered very easy of perpetration. For example, Thomas Smith may be on the roll for the Geraldton division, for the Greenough division, and for the Murchison division. He may reside in Perth; and there is nothing to prevent his recording his vote at each of those three places, while there is little probability of this illegal practice being discovered.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is almost certain to be discovered. The papers are checked, and there is a penalty.

HON. J. M. DREW: Of course he would run the risk of six months' imprisonment or a fine of, I think, £100. But how would he be found out? Even if the returning officer went carefully through the rolls, and found out that a Thomas Smith had voted at Geraldton and at Northampton, how would he find out that those names belonged to the same person? It would take him days to go through the rolls; but I do not think they are gone through at all. How could he be able to ascertain the fact?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Communicate with the central returning officer in Perth, and he will take steps. A similar thing was discovered.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Is there a case suspected?

HON. J. M. DREW: There is no case; but I am pointing out what may occur. There is room for illegal practices, and the law should be altered so that all proxies should go, not to deputy returning officers, but to the returning officer at the central polling place. Reference is made in the Speech to the consolidation of Acts relating to justices of the peace. If there be one portion of the West Australian statute book which requires amendment, it is this. The system at present in force in this State is a direct incentive to political corruption. Nominally, the selection of justices is in the hands of the Governor, but it is virtually made by the Government of the day. What may be the result of this system? What is its result? It is that men are frequently

chosen as justices, not because of any moral or intellectual fitness, but because they or their friends are of some political service. That is the suspicion. I do not say it is a fact, but there is a suspicion that men are appointed simply because they can be of some political service to the Government. A Parliamentary candidate who is a Government supporter may have in his constituency men on whose assistance at elections he can rely. A J.P.-ship will cost him nothing; he may recommend them to the Government of the day, and in the next *Government Gazette* we see that Messrs. So-and-so are appointed Justices of the Peace for the State. I think it is a fortunate thing for the country that not 50 per cent. of the men appointed to the Commission of the Peace in recent years take their seats on the Bench, but, even as it is, the world never hears half of what occurs in the back blocks of the country in connection with the appointment of justices. I heard of a case the other day which occurred in the back blocks, and I am given to understand that at least one third of the testimony admitted was hearsay evidence. Policeman "A" could not attend the court, he was away, so he told policeman "B" what evidence he could give, and policeman "B" attended the court and gave the evidence which had been told to him by policeman "A." That evidence was taken down, and the man was fined two pounds on the strength of it. I was in court once, not many years ago, when a "spieler" was charged with attempting to rob a person on a racecourse. He was caught by a policeman in the act, with his hands in another man's pocket. The "spieler" was brought before the court, the policeman gave evidence, and people, who were on the racecourse, also gave evidence that they saw the accused with his hand in the man's pocket. After the evidence was concluded the magistrates retired, they were justices of the peace, and when they came back in fifteen minutes one of them said that although there was abundant evidence that the accused had his hand in the man's pocket, and that there was money in the pocket, it had not been proved what the intention of the "spieler" was, therefore there was nothing to do but to dismiss the case. I came out of court with the lawyer who had acted as counsel for the accused, and

he said "in my opinion the intention was to see whether the pound notes had been properly fumigated." At this time, I may tell hon. members, there was a small-pox scare in the State. One of the tests of the efficiency of a justice of the peace should be a perfect knowledge of the elementary rules of evidence. Without such knowledge, law in the hands of many magistrates is like a razor in the hands of a child. These appointments should be removed altogether from political control. They should be made by the Governor without reference to the Ministry of the day.

HON. J. M. SPEED: Where would he get his advice from?

HON. J. M. DREW: From the resident magistrates of the districts. I am glad to see it is the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill for the abolition of plural voting. I see no cogent reason for the continuance of the system which gives to the wealthy power which belongs to manhood alone, and which gives to the wealthy man the means of having a vote in each constituency in the State. We can only justify the principle of plural voting by establishing the idea that property is a gauge of its possessor's wisdom. If that be so a millionaire would probably have a thousand votes in token of his means of amassing wealth. If a man has one block of land, and in consequence has a vote, why should not a man who has 400 hundred blocks of land have 400 votes? In strict justice, no man in Western Australia, no matter what his stake in the country be, is entitled to more political power than any other man in it. Equal duties in a State should mean equal rights. One man is not required to do more for his country than any other man. Why should one man have more political power in the making of the laws than the man who is not so blessed with this world's goods? I cannot admit that property is entitled to a vote. If legislation was for the sole purpose of protecting property, then there would be something in the suggestion. I maintain that manhood has the right to vote, and manhood alone. It is the general opinion that the proposed Redistribution of Seats Bill will involve the reduction of members in this House. Strong arguments will have to be em-

ployed to convince me that such a step is wise or necessary. It is certainly not two years since this matter was considered in this Chamber, and then it was decided that an increase of members was necessary in the best interests of the State. I have yet to learn what has occurred in the meantime to justify a reduction of members. It has been said that with federation there is no necessity for an increase in membership, but I maintain that with federation there is more necessity for an increase of members, for unless we have a fair number of members the interests of the country will suffer through the advent of federation. I hope the measures introduced to the House will prove of acceptance to members, and beneficial to the best interests of the State.

HON. A. JAMESON (Minister) : I do not propose to reply fully to the very able criticisms which we have heard from the members of the House, except in so far as they affect myself as a member of the Government. It falls to my friend, the Minister for Lands, to reply more fully to all questions of detail which have come before us during this debate. As this is the first occasion in the annals of this House that an honorary Minister has addressed you, I think it is well for me in a sense to assert my position at once and say that I am a responsible Minister of the Crown. I take upon myself the same responsibilities as every other Minister, and I say that I am responsible not only to the people but to the members of the House.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You are responsible for the whole Cabinet.

HON. A. JAMESON : I am responsible for the whole Cabinet truly. It has been pointed out by some, and it has been suggested by others, that, being without a portfolio, I should not take the same position in the Ministry as other Ministers do. This is entirely a mistake; as a Minister without a portfolio, I am in the same position as other Ministers. That should be clearly understood at once. I say it at the present time because no other honorary Minister has ever addressed the House previously; they may do so subsequently. We have a precedent for honorary Ministers in the Eastern States, and I presume in the future this House will not meet without

a honorary Minister in it. With regard to the different sentiments expressed with regard to our policy, I cannot go into all the questions, there are so many, but, generally speaking, the members who have dissented from our policy have done so on two grounds: firstly, that our policy is not sufficiently progressive—that it is a non-progressive policy—that we are not sufficiently careful about the pests, the codlin moth and honorary Ministers without portfolios. These are the pests we are bringing into existence, and some of the members here think we are a little over-progressive in these measures, but not with regard to our public policy. I think you have only to look at the *personnel* of the Ministry to see how unreasonable that suggestion is. We will suppose for a moment that it is not a progressive policy. Let me point out that all the members of the Ministry are young men in the prime and vigour of life; they have looked for, and worked hard, with ambition, to gain the positions they now hold, and it would be a simple thing for them to bring forward a great policy which would mark them for all time, and stand out as the first Ministry to carry out a great policy. And, being young men and anxious, and naturally ambitious, it is to be expected that they would look forward to carry out some great national work, but they find this absolutely impossible under the conditions in which the State is to-day. It would be unwise to do so, and these counsels prevailed to get over that natural feeling. There is no Government which would not like to carry out new works; and though not a financier, I have looked very carefully into the financial position, comparing it with that of the Eastern States, and I have no hesitation in saying that our position is better than that of any other State in Australia. At the same time, as Mr. Lukin, I think, pointed out, we have “an ugly business” to deal with. We have fallen upon evil times, not owing to any fault of the previous Ministry, but simply to the present condition of the money market, resulting from the South African war, and from other difficulties which have arisen. So we have to look back a long way before we come to a time when money was so dear as it is to-day. A very large sum has to be raised to carry out the en-



terprises of the previous Ministry; and that being so, we have to move very carefully indeed. No doubt it would be pleasant to progress rapidly in the construction of a large number of railways and other public works; but there is such a thing as progressing too fast. A man may jump over a precipice, and he will progress with great velocity till he reach the foot. It is far better to go round, and get to the bottom of the precipice by the ordinary path. If we go plunging ahead, we shall be dealt with pretty much in the same way as the man who jumps over the precipice. But we do not propose to do any such thing. We intend to move carefully and cautiously, and with honour to ourselves; and I think we shall be able to win the day if hon. members will give us their cordial support. In this connection, there is a matter which I should like clearly to place before the House, as several members of our Ministry, myself included, have repeatedly spoken in public—I do not know whether it has come up in this House—in reference to the Coolgardie water scheme. It is well known that most of the members of this Ministry have always opposed that scheme. They have looked on it as a rash scheme, though possibly good in itself: they have looked on it as too large a scheme for a State of this size. Mr. Maley, I think, has suggested that even now it would be well to forego the scheme, and not to carry it out to its issue.

HON. W. MALEY: I said it was a question.

HON. A. JAMESON: I can assure hon. members that so far as I am personally concerned—and I can speak for the other Ministers—I intend to strain every nerve to see that the scheme is carried out as rapidly as possible. It is now absolutely impossible to go back on it. If we did, we should have to bear the burden of an enormous debt, which might be for years a crushing burden; whereas, if we at once push it on as rapidly as possible, we may get at all events a return. The loss will not be so heavy. And I for one will hope that in this matter I have been always in error, and that the scheme will prove successful. Certainly I shall leave no stone unturned to see that it is brought as rapidly as possible to a successful issue. I should

like to thank Mr. McLarty, who, I am sorry to see, is not here, for having brought up the motion in regard to those natives who have for several months been imprisoned. That is a matter which very closely appeals to me. I shall have it thoroughly looked into, and shall do my utmost, after consulting with the Attorney General, to have any wrong that has been done remedied, in so far as may now be possible. The rabbit question I leave entirely to my colleague, Mr. Sommers, for it is a matter of which I know very little. However, with respect to this very important question of apples, my own sympathies have always been with freedom in regard to the importation of food stuffs—with getting in food as cheaply as possible. Naturally, in my professional position, I see the great necessity of keeping up the standard of health by the supply of fresh food; and with the restrictions which will be placed on the admission of apples, and the care which I understand will be taken, I think it will be possible successfully to prevent the introduction of the codlin moth. But where we have a population so large as that on the goldfields, where there is great difficulty in getting fresh food, we require every facility for the cheapest possible supply of fruit and vegetables; in fact, we cannot expect our population to increase unless in this respect we give them every accommodation. Most hon. members will agree with me that in this unfortunate question there is something to be said on both sides; but on the whole, it is well to remove these difficulties and restrictions, and to have apples brought in cheaply. I should like to say just one word regarding this matter of honorary Ministers. Mr. Moss has suggested that their appointment is a dangerous policy, dangerous because it is done simply with the view of gaining for the Government a numerical majority.

HON. M. L. MOSS: No; I did not say that: I said it was open to that objection.

HON. A. JAMESON: Well, I do not think that is a very sound objection; for, after all, no Ministry would think of offering a portfolio to a man in any way opposed to them. Before making the offer, they would be very sure that he was at one with them in sentiment, and that he would be sound and true to their policy.

Here it would be a most dangerous policy to bring over one of the enemy into the camp.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : Has not that been done ?

A MEMBER : Not here.

HON. A. JAMESON : It may have been done, but very rarely. I am informed it has never been done with honorary Ministers; and that I can quite understand, because on such members of the Cabinet the Ministry have absolutely no hold.

HON. J. M. SPEED : Only when the honorary Ministers have been bought.

HON. A. JAMESON : You can have no firm hold upon an honorary Minister; and therefore, if he be not a man you can trust, if he be not really on the same side with you, he will undoubtedly be a most dangerous member of the Cabinet, for he can discover the workings of the Government, and will be the very man who, above all others, will be most likely to upset the Ministry. Therefore it is very improbable that Ministers would try to increase their numerical support in that way, and I doubt whether it has ever been done. Certainly, I am quite sure it has not been done with regard either to another place or to this Chamber. In reference to the appointment of honorary Ministers, there is another consideration. I speak of this because it is an innovation; and this is, of course, a very conservative Chamber, and I can see there is a certain amount of feeling on the subject, and that these innovations are not liked by some of the older members of the House. I may say again that such appointments are particularly advisable in the case of this Ministry; for, as everyone will, I think, admit, the Government of this colony for the last 10 years has been an autocracy. Nobody doubts that the Government has largely been a one-man Government.

HON. R. S. HAYNES : And so was Parliament.

HON. A. JAMESON : Possibly it was. That may have been a very good thing. Certainly, we were very fortunate in the autocrat, a man who knew the colony from end to end, and who had its interests at heart. And, speaking personally, there is no one in the State whom I admire more than our late leader (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) as a man, though

as politicians, perhaps we may differ on several points. However, by his great personality, he practically controlled this State. Now it is very difficult for a new Ministry, consisting of comparatively young men, to go in and take the place of such a Minister; and therefore it was necessary, to render the Government as stable as possible, that we should have a broad basis, and have the interests of the different sections of the community fully represented. Of the members of the Ministry, three represent the goldfields, and three the coastal interests. In this Chamber, we have one representing the gold interest and the other the coastal. Therefore, geographical representation is equally divided, and the Ministry really represent the whole of the State. In that way the interests of every part of the State have been very carefully guarded.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : What about the agricultural interest ?

HON. A. JAMESON : The Minister for Lands (Hon. C. Sommers) is a member of this House.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : He is not an agricultural member.

HON. A. JAMESON : Still, he combines agriculture with his other pursuits; and I think many of the Ministers have agricultural interests. As a matter of principle, it is highly advisable that the Ministry of the day should represent the greatest possible number and variety of constituents. With questions of detail, I, not being in any public department, shall be unable to deal. These will be dealt with by Mr. Sommers. But all broad questions of policy I shall be prepared to take up, and to assist every hon. member in having his desires carried into execution, so long as they are in accord with our principles, and with what we believe to be for the best. In conclusion, I thank hon. members who have given me their sympathy and support in the somewhat novel position I occupy to-night. I hope that as the session goes on, it will be found that a Minister without a portfolio is not a mere appendage, but may be a useful member of the Government. Certainly, it shall be my endeavour in this Chamber to do my very utmost to further the interests of the State.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) : Knowing this House as I

do, it has not surprised me to hear the remarks of various speakers in regard to the opening paragraph of the Governor's Speech. I refer to those sympathetic references to the great loss the nation has sustained by the demise of our beloved and revered Queen Victoria. I, like my colleague, fully recognise the responsibilities I have assumed, which, I assure hon. members, it will be my endeavour as far as possible to remember at all times, so that the business I bring before this House may be conducted in a proper manner. I trust I shall be able to follow the example set by my predecessor, Mr. Randell; and I shall try to earn the good opinion of this House, so that when my time comes to retire, hon. members may be able to say to me, as they said to Mr. Randell, that I have their good wishes, and that my method of conducting business has met with their approval. On the question of honorary Ministers I cannot agree with the remarks of Mr. Moss. Mr. Moss tells us that, so far from increasing the number of Ministers in the Cabinet, we should rather have reduced it, say, to four. I can assure my friend that, had he any knowledge or practical experience of the work of the departments, especially of my own, he would very soon alter that opinion. Instead of decreasing the number, there was an absolute necessity for an increase. It will be remembered that during last session it was a matter of comment that in this present session it would be necessary for the Government of the day to provide two Ministers for this House. It must be borne in mind that this House has recently had an increase of membership from 24 to 30, and that in another place the numbers have been increased from 44 to 50; and I fail to see how, in the face of the increase of members, it would be prudent, or even possible, to reduce the number of Ministers. Notwithstanding the fact that, owing to the provisions of the Commonwealth Act, the State has been deprived of some departments, there are still many matters left to our local Parliament; and I think we shall be able to prove to the House that there was great need for extra assistance in the Cabinet, and that, so far from a decrease being possible, an addition to the original six was absolutely necessary.

It is easy and popular to say that by reducing the number of Ministers a saving to the country would be effected; but any competent man taking over the management of a business knows that, if he be short-handed, it means a loss in the long run; and that a small saving effected in the manner indicated may result in serious disaster. A complaint has been made that many matters of public import have not been dealt with in the Governor's Speech; but if hon. members will turn to the proceedings at the opening of Parliament in previous years, they will find it was a common complaint that the Speeches they had to consider were altogether too long. Bearing that in mind, can they blame us if we endeavour to meet their wishes by condensing the Speech?

HON. J. M. SPEED: It is too short.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be short, but there is a lot in it, in fact, although short, it deals with far more than the Speech from the Throne on the opening of the previous session did.

HON. G. RANDELL: You may be able to give us a record of your achievements next year.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Many matters have been purposely omitted from the Speech, because we felt there would be an utter impossibility in attempting to bring down the legislation during this session. We have no Parliamentary draftsman, and the time at the disposal of Ministers has been so short that it was impossible to properly consider the multitude of measures that may have been proposed in the Speech, and which there was not the slightest possibility of being dealt with this session. I might as well touch on the question of apples straight away. I would say at the outset it was only a question of a very short time, it was merely a matter of two months, and then we should have no option but to remove the restriction, because I am told the Federal Government, on the adoption of a uniform tariff will order the restriction to be removed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You could not have kept it on.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: By taking this step at once we are only anticipating by two months what would have to be done.

HON. M. L. MOSS : You are getting the "kudos" for what you would have to do two months latter.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Put it that way if you like. The quantity of apples grown last year in the State reached 12,000 cases. Accepting that as correct, and taking the present, I may say apple eating population of the State at 150,000 persons, although growing girls and boys would eat quite as many apples as adults, but taking the population at 150,000 persons, one pound of apples a week for each person works out 170,500 cases per annum.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : What is the proportion in Victoria?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : I do not know; they eat so many apples there that they do not keep any record. One pound of apples for each person per week—of course I include cooked apples as well as raw—does not appear to be too great an estimate.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : Give us some comparative figures; this is too airy a way, at this hour.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Take the consumption at 93,750 cases of apples, our present output is only 12,000 cases.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : That is all imagination; give us something more practicable.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : This prohibition dates as far back as March, 1889, and even assuming that at that particular date there was not much encouragement for orchardists to plant, allowing that they commenced to plant when the gold was discovered, and that they did it with energy and ability, because they not only had the trade of the State, but we are told that they planted for export, it is surprising to me at this late date that they are unable to supply more than 12,000 cases of apples per annum. I can only say in regard to the fears entertained that I think they are needless. I have had experience amongst orchards, and I will instance what came within my own knowledge. Fifteen years ago I assisted my father to plant an orchard. At that time we had an orchard of 20 or 30 acres, containing many fine old apple and pear trees. These were affected by the codlin moth; being old and gnarled trees with heavy bark on them they offered a good

home to the codlin moth. But we had plenty of fruit in that orchard. We planted a new orchard some fifteen acres in extent, adjoining the old one, with only a fence between the two. What is the result to-day? The two orchards are still in the family, and any amount of apples are being obtained from the old as well as from the new trees. Certainly the trees have the codlin moth, but the apples are easily sold at a profit for 2s. 6d. a case, and some of the fruit is exported to England. I had some ten days ago a newspaper from the town I was born in, and, in looking at the market reports, I noticed that the best cooking apples are sold at from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 9d. per case, the middle class apples from one shilling to two shillings per case. That report is only ten days old.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : The case costs ninepence.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : No, sir; the custom there is that the fruit cases are not sold. The apple buyer is charged from threepence to fourpence per case, but the case is returned to the grower. The custom where fruit is plentiful is that the cases are returned in dozen lots to the dealer.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You cannot do that where you have to carry the cases a distance.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Oh yes; the railway companies carry the cases almost for nothing. Cases can now be made for fivepence or sixpence each in Victoria, and what is done in that State we, with our magnificent timber here at our very door, ought to be able to do. It does not require much skill in order to make a case. Any man with intelligence can make hundreds of cases. I do not think the orchardists have any ground to be alarmed. The department which I have the honour to administer is taking every precaution to see that no unnecessary risks are run. There are some apples now at Fremantle which have been recently landed, and I have given instructions that a steam boiler shall be obtained so that the cases can be steamed under a proper system, and I am assured that the people are satisfied with the precautions taken.

HON. M. L. MOSS : Will you take a Parliamentary party down there to see them?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS :** I hope we shall.

**HON. J. W. HACKETT :** And steam them?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS :** To meet the wishes of those concerned, farther accommodation will be provided before the next apple season. We shall have a shed erected with appliances for treating the cases. We can do no more than prevent, as far as possible, the introduction of diseases of all kinds. This may eventually become a fruit-producing country; it has great advantages over the other States, and we should see that every encouragement is given to orchardists. The Advisory Board have considered this matter, and it is pleasing to state that with a few exceptions, indeed they have taken no exception to the regulations framed by the Department of Agriculture.

**HON. J. W. HACKETT :** Will there be inspection at both ends?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS :** At the port of export and at this end also every precaution will be taken to protect the interests of the industry. In regard to the rabbits: this is indeed a serious question, it is a question I have had considerable personal experience of, and I am fully alive to the dangers that threaten the State. Still we have greater difficulties to contend with than the other States have. There is our enormous area which is one factor, and there is not only the danger to the agriculturists but to the pastoralists. We may deal with the agriculturist and assist him to fence his land, but in the pastoral areas it is impossible for that to be done. I doubt if the land there, although its carrying capabilities at one time of the year are great, would pay a private individual to fence with rabbit-proof fencing. When once the rabbits get hold of the country, dear as meat is now it must become dearer, and I do not see what is to prevent the rabbits getting hold of the country. Seeing the season we have had and looking at the nature of the grass and herbage, I think they will find a home here as they have in the other States. The report of the Commission is before the House, and it is the intention of the Government to put a suitable sum on the Estimates to cope

with the pest. I desire to get as much light on the subject as possible.

**HON. J. W. HACKETT :** Are you prepared to erect the fence?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS :** I cannot see that any other course can be adopted. I have given the matter very serious consideration. I have the reports of all the other States on the matter, and although I do not think the fence will do all that is claimed for it, yet it appears to me that we shall be compelled to erect it. The first cost of the fence is only a small matter. There is the subsequent cost of the upkeep. A small mesh of an inch and a quarter is proposed, and we may find on days when there is a hot wind blowing, mats of grass will be blown against the fence and sand will accumulate, so that if special care is not taken the rabbits will go over the fence. That will necessitate an enormous expense for boundary riders. Then again this fence will run through a great deal of barren country, and it will be necessary to provide boundary riders with food and water, which means a great cost. The fence will be no good unless it is properly protected, and every endeavour taken to see that it is kept in order. With regard to the policy of the Government, and the satisfaction, or otherwise, with which it has been received, I may say that I am sorry that Mr. Glowrey is not here because I wanted to take exception to his assertion that the policy of the Government had been received by the residents of the eastern goldfields with disfavour. The hon. gentleman represents the Southern Province, which is only a small portion of what was originally the North-East Province, which I have the honour to represent; therefore, I can not only speak for the Southern Province, which Mr. Glowrey represents, but for the North-East Province as well. I feel sure Mr. Glowrey is very much mistaken, and I was astonished to hear his statement. Of the members of the two Houses representing what are known as the eastern goldfields, and who number 16, including the members in this House who stated that they would support our policy, fourteen members are sitting behind the Government. The member for Coolgardie stated that he intends to give the Government a fair trial, yet Mr. Glowrey says that he repre-

sents the opinion of the eastern goldfields, and it is left for him to say that the policy of the Government does not meet with the approval of the people of the eastern goldfields. I think the facts I have mentioned sufficiently prove that the Government have the almost unanimous support, not only of the people of other parts of this great country, but particularly of the eastern goldfields. In regard to revision courts, a valuable suggestion was made by Mr. Connolly. It was pointed out that by holding them in May, as at present, serious inconvenience is caused. That is a matter to which I am glad to have attention drawn, and I can promise him it will receive due consideration. Regarding new lines, considerable exception has been taken to the proposal to provide a sum of money for certain surveys. It has been said, if we do not intend to make those railways, why refer to the necessity for surveys? Well, although we do not propose to construct any new railways or works during this session, it must not be taken for granted that we shall remain idle for the next three or four years. Possibly, these lines will, sooner or later, be made; and I maintain that, in the past, sufficient pains have not been taken, nor sufficient data gathered, to enable the Government and Parliament to see whether projected railways were or were not necessary. In providing money for the survey of these lines, we shall acquire information which, sooner or later, will be useful; there will be plenty of time for Parliament to consider the routes and the whole of the questions connected with railway construction; and it will be for Parliament to say, after having had that information, whether the lines shall be constructed.

HON. M. L. MOSS: That has always been done in the past.

HON. C. SOMMERS: No. Sufficient time has not been devoted to the consideration of projected railways. The lines have frequently been authorised before they were surveyed. Take the Esperance Railway Bill in the late Parliament. The Bill went through the Assembly and was thrown out in this Chamber; yet no survey was ever made.

HON. G. RANDELL: It was known the line would never be authorised.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I do not know that. I cannot conceive that 44 members

in another place would have voted for a line and allowed the Bill to be sent to this House to be thrown out by only one vote, if they had thought there was no chance of the Bill passing. I do not think they could possibly have taken that risk. I may mention another line—that from Coolgardie to Menzies—which was authorised by Parliament before they had any data at all to go on, except a general idea of the population of the district. The line was authorised, and afterwards surveyed. I maintain that is not a business-like way of going about business. As to no new works being proposed during this session, that does not necessarily mean that no new works will be undertaken for years to come. We Ministers have had a very short time at our disposal to get that grasp of affairs which is necessary for the carrying on of public business and the finances of the country; but it must not be taken for granted that no new works will be undertaken; and I may remind hon. members that at least a million of money will have to be spent merely to carry on the works already commenced by the late Government. So we are not standing still; we are carrying on the works to which the country is already pledged. Reference has been made to the Coolgardie water scheme. We are committed to that scheme, as to the success of which many men on the goldfields are not too sanguine. Still, there is nothing left for us but to complete it. I hope, and there are reasonable grounds for believing, that it will be a great boon, and I trust a financial success. But in the past, Sir John Forrest used to complain that the goldfields people had not supported him as they should have done in that great work; in fact, he said, had it not been for the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), the scheme would have been in jeopardy. There are people who will tell you they wish Mr. Morgans had been anywhere else rather than at Sir John's elbow to advocate that scheme. But the goldfields people were having something given to them, and it was not for them to throw back this work in the teeth of the donor; but they all hope the scheme will be the success anticipated, and they recognise the great financial responsibility it has imposed on the State, and their duty to farther it to the utmost of their ability.

HON. M. L. MOSS: As soon as the water gets there, they will want it for next to nothing.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In regard to the Stamp Act, a very valuable suggestion has been thrown out for increasing the revenue; and, of course, at this juncture any suggestions of that nature are received as they should be. The suggestion is that to make it compulsory for documents to be stamped within a given time would protect the revenue from the very illegal practices which now are common. But the Government have already initiated a scheme whereby embossed stamps will be used, and by which the use of stamps will become more common than has hitherto been the case in the collection of fees on all legal documents. That will be a safe way of collecting such fees, and one which in other States has proved highly satisfactory. I cannot, of course, refer to all questions raised during the debate; but reference has been made to the trial of certain natives at Derby. I find on inquiry that the commission was sent up in April of this year. Probably the trial has taken place. If it has still to take place, I regret the fact; but I can assure hon. members—and I think the Premier in his policy speech and otherwise has made it clear that he does not consider the past administration of justice what it should have been—that trials before inexperienced men are to be discouraged; and I know the Premier now has a scheme in hand for remedying that state of affairs, and that the cause of complaint can continue to exist for a short time only. Being a lawyer himself, he fully realises the importance of the subject; he realises that men who are being tried for their lives should be tried by persons skilled in the administration of the law; and I think that is a matter which may safely be left in the hands of this Government. Another matter referred to is the auditing of the railway receipts. In view of the experiences we have had, I think that is a very valuable suggestion. Reference was made to the Perth Ice Company frauds. Knowing all this, and having had an expression of opinion from this House, I think the subject will receive due consideration.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Will the Government deal with it this session?

HON. C. SOMMERS: This session the Government have much to do. As all hon. members know, Ministers have not had time even to overtake the work of their own particular departments. We trust the ensuing recess will give us a little breathing-time, and that we shall be able to effect the legislation we ourselves desire, and for which this and the other Chamber have also intimated their anxiety. But we also desire that, instead of bills being rushed into Parliament, read a first time to-day, and the next day a second time, a very different method should be pursued. In the past, as a private member, I have honestly endeavoured to master the contents of such bills; but the time at our disposal has not been sufficient to do them justice; and it is the desire of the Government that these bills be printed during the recess, so that hon. members may take bills home with them, study them, and be prepared, when the measures come before Parliament, to offer more valuable suggestions than it has hitherto been possible to expect. [A MEMBER: Hear, hear.] During the debate there have been some excellent suggestions—one that we have more suburban trains.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We shall soon have none at all.

HON. C. SOMMERS: That is a matter for the new Minister (Hon. J. J. Holmes), when he gets over this unfortunate strike. We have to-day had a difficulty in getting replies to very pertinent queries put to the Railway Department; and we can of course realise that these are minor matters to which the Minister has not had time to attend. But after the advent of the trams, it is necessary for the Railway Department here, as in other States, to be up and doing, and to see that their traffic be not taken away by the tramway company; and the providing of greater facilities by running trains at more frequent intervals will, I believe, be a financial success. I think some explanation is due from me of my action in refusing to purchase a certain estate under the Lands Purchase Act. Considerable discussion has arisen as to my motives, and I should like to say I believe that Act to be a very valuable measure. It enables the Government to purchase any estate which they believe can, with advantage, be cut up into

smaller holdings upon which people can be settled on long terms of purchase, such as they would not obtain from the original owner. I think I was only two days in office when the papers in respect of the Stirling Estate, somewhere near Bunbury, were put before me; and believing that we had in that neighbourhood a large quantity of valuable land awaiting settlement—land that could be drained at small expense—I did not see the urgent necessity for purchasing this estate, and the remark I made in regard to it was that this matter might well stand over. I think hon. members will admit my attitude was only that of a cautious man of business. Any hon. member would have acted similarly. He would have said: "Is there any particular urgency for the purchase of this estate? It has been lying there, I suppose, since the days of the Flood; and surely it can stay for a month." There was no danger of the offer being withdrawn, and I saw no necessity for hurry. In speaking to an hon. member for that particular district, who took me to task for this, I said: "Will you tell me how much land is available in that estate? Is there one-third of it suitable for close settlement?" He admitted he could not tell me whether one-third of it was or was not good land. I said: "That is a complete exoneration of me; because, though you profess to have known it for 40 years, you cannot even tell me that about it." In the circumstances, I thought the best thing I could do was to promise to go down and have a look at the land myself. In regard to land settlement generally, that is, of course, a policy I am pledged to carry out to the utmost of my ability. I readily believe that though good work has been done by my predecessor, Mr. Throssell—and I cannot speak in too high terms of the manner in which he has conducted the department—still, it is wise at times to have a change, that some fresh ideas may be brought to bear upon what is a chief concern of this State. My desire is to encourage settlement as far as I possibly can. I have what I believe to be some very good schemes for settling people on the soil, and at an early date I hope to make them public, and I trust they will have the desired effect. As there is an understanding that I shall conclude at half-past

six o'clock to-night, I shall not weary you much longer. I have to remind hon. members that it will be my duty to throw open more land for settlement, particularly in districts like Northampton, and farther north than that, which appear to have been neglected in the past.

HON. J. M. SPEED: Whom will you put on the land?

HON. C. SOMMERS: As I have said, time will not at this juncture permit me to unfold the whole of our land policy; but if hon. members will follow my utterances in the near future, I trust that difficulty will be overcome. I have to thank them for the very kind things they have said about my friend Dr. Jameson and myself, and for their promises of loyal support. I am sure I shall endeavour to earn their good wishes, and I repeat that I will follow in the footsteps of my predecessor, Mr. Randell, in carrying on business with the dignity and courtesy which hon. members expect from the leader of the House. I am sure my colleague and myself have to thank you very sincerely for your kindly references and your promises of future support.

#### ADOPTION OF ADDRESS.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6:35 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

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