

are entitled to represent 200 or 300 electors, my constituency should have a few more representatives. There are other questions on which I should have liked to touch; but I do not wish to take up more time, therefore I shall conclude.

On motion by Mr. F. CONNOR, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at one minute past 10 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 5th August, 1902.

Papers presented—Question: Railways, Spark Arresters
—Question: Land for Selection—Address-in-Reply,
seventh day—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

BY THE MINISTER FOR WORKS AND RAILWAYS: Paper relative to alteration in Classification and Railway Rate Book.

BY THE PREMIER: Regulations under Workers' Compensation Act.

BY THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Census Returns, 1901, Parts 1 and 2.

BY THE TREASURER: Charts of Esperance Bay.

Order: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, SPARK ARRESTERS.

MR. J. EWING asked the Minister for Railways: 1, When the locomotives of this State were first fitted with the Standard Deflector (better known as the Rotheram spark arrester). 2, How many locomotives have been thus fitted. 3, What is the back pressure caused by this deflector. 4, Whether it is a fact that

this spark arrester has proved a failure, and is now being removed from the locomotives. 5, What this experiment has cost the State. 6, On what date was the Harwood spark arrester first brought under the notice of the Government. 7, Whether the Harwood spark arrester has been thoroughly tested; if so, with what result. 8, What is the price of the Drummond spark arrester, which is being fitted to some of the new locomotives now being imported.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, About November, 1900. I am not aware that it is known as the Rotheram spark arrester, as it is in general use and is adapted for burning brown coal or lignite. 2, 170. 3, The deflector does not directly cause back pressure. The area of the exhaust nozzle has to be slightly reduced with the standard deflector. The back pressure varies with the shape, area, and position of the exhaust nozzle, also the speed that the engine is running and the quantity of steam used. 4, No. 5, The cost to the 30th June, 1902, has been approximately £5,200, and the work is not regarded as an experiment. 6, October, 1901. 7, It is now being tested. 8, About £75 each.

QUESTION—LAND FOR SELECTION.

MR. JACOBY, for Mr. Thomas, asked the Premier: 1, Whether arrangements are being made for the throwing open of the land at Grass Patch and Salmon Gums for selection, as recommended by Inspector White. 2, When will this land be available.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, In about a month's time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SEVENTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Wednesday, the proposed amendment having been negatived and the general debate continued.

DR. M. O'CONNOR (Moore): I join with the Government in offering my sympathy to Mrs. C. Y. O'Connor and her family in the great loss they have sustained; and I hope we shall have an opportunity of giving them on the Estimates a substantial bonus, for Mr. O'Connor's work in this country should,

undoubtedly, he adequately rewarded. Had he been dishonest, he could have made thousands of pounds; but we find at his death he has practically left his family without an income. I notice the Auditor General in his report calls attention to the advisableness of changing the end of the financial year from the 30th June to the 31st December. It seems to me rather absurd that when Parliament meets we should be asked to consider expenditure which is 12 months old. I think it advisable that the year should be made to end on the 31st December, for I notice that the Auditor General's report to the Governor was presented on the 25th February last; therefore, if the year were to end on the 31st December, he could easily be ready with his report on the 1st June following.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The difficulty would be precisely the same.

DR. O'CONNOR: But the Auditor General presents his report on the 25th February—seven months after the end of the financial year. If the year ended on the 31st December, I do not see why he should not present it on the 30th June following. The Auditor General tells me this could be done. He calls attention also to some difficulties in getting replies to his queries. I think Ministers should see that such replies are given immediately. He mentions also the necessity for bringing down the Estimates as soon as possible during the session of Parliament. I understand this will shortly be done by the Treasurer, and we shall consequently have an earlier opportunity of passing the Appropriation Bill. The Government have appointed a Civil Service Commission. I think it would have been much better had Ministers and Under Secretaries looked into their departments, and themselves tried to reduce expenditure. If the Commission find it necessary to retrench in any department, the Under Secretary or the chief clerk responsible for excessive expenditure resulting from employment of unnecessary officials should be dealt with, and not lower-grade officers drawing salaries ranging from £100 to £300 a year. Several branches of the service might well be severely cut down. The architectural branch, I think, we might annihilate altogether. At present we are spending about £14,000 a year to keep

this branch going; and it appears to me much better work would be done if the Government employed outside architects at the ordinary rate of five per cent. I understand the present cost of buildings constructed by the architectural branch is from seven to ten per cent. [MEMBER: No.] That has been stated publicly, anyhow. Then the astronomical branch costs from £3,000 to £4,000 a year. In Queensland the astronomical branch has already been got rid of; and I do not know that we get any particular value from the present Government Astronomer or from his department. I have nothing to say against Mr. Cooke.

MR. HASTIE: He regulates the weather.

DR. O'CONNOR: He did not regulate it the other day when the Governor was laying the foundation stone of the new Houses of Parliament. I think it would be much more advantageous had we simply a meteorologist to give us some reliable weather forecasts. I notice that an under secretary recently appointed in the Colonial Secretary's Department has been brought from the Premier's Department and put over the heads of older officers. I believe that under the Public Service Act seniority should, other things being equal, give first claim to promotion. In this case we find the chief clerk was passed over in favour of an officer from another department. I do not think that was the intention of the Act, and I hope the Government will not allow promotions of that sort to recur. In the Mines Department, too, I notice that an officer from another country has been appointed mining expert. I do not know what are his qualifications, but it seems very strange that we should have to go outside the State to fill such a position; for in this large mining community there must be someone capable of acting in that capacity. I hope the Public Service Commission will inquire whether it is advisable to retain the present number of Ministers. I think five Ministers should be quite sufficient; and five were sufficient some years ago, in Sir John Forrest's time, when we had, in addition to our present departments, the Customs and the Postal Departments also, with several others now taken over by the Federal Government.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But only one-third of our present revenue.

MR. DIAMOND: And less than half the population.

DR. O'CONNOR: I think we could do very well with five Ministers. For instance, the Colonial Secretary cannot have very much to do, and I am certain the same applies to the Minister for Mines. These departments might well be combined. The Government have promised us better arrangements for the accommodation of lunatics. I have heard it stated the Government have been asked to buy large blocks of land for very large sums. I hope such offers will not be accepted. The Crown has ample tracts of land near Perth, which would be just as suitable for an asylum as any private lands. We have been promised abattoirs, and they are an urgent necessity. We have at present slaughter-houses in all parts of the metropolitan district, and there is absolutely no inspection; consequently it is highly probable that diseased meat has been sold for human consumption in Perth, in Fremantle, and perhaps on the goldfields. The Central Board of Health have at different times seized in Perth diseased meat just on the point of being made into small goods, the inspector happening to turn up in the nick of time. All stock should be slaughtered at one place, and a competent inspector appointed to see that no diseased meat gets into consumption. I congratulate the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) on the stand he took when Treasurer in opposing the application for a farther grant of money made by the chairman and members of the board of trustees for the Perth Museum. I think we have so many necessary demands to meet that we should not spend any more money in providing accommodation for dead rats, cats, mice, butterflies, and similar objects. A useful suggestion is to create larger municipalities. It would be well to have Perth enlarged so as to include the suburbs of Subiaco and Leederville, and the districts as far as Claremont; while Fremantle should take in the others. From a health point of view, and for licensing and other purposes, this arrangement would be much more workable than the present. It would be a good thing if the Government could or would bring in a Bill enlarging the municipalities. There is one other matter to which I desire to

refer. I took notice of the speech made by the member for Hannans in reference to the locomotive branch of the Railway Department. If the remarks made by the hon. member are true—and I think the Minister for Railways should immediately inquire into the subject to prove whether they are true or not—Mr. Rotherham should get notice to quit at once; whilst, on the other hand, if they are not true, the Minister should come in and protect that officer.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I beg, first of all, to congratulate the Premier and those sitting with him on having secured a majority in this House. This Parliament has been through a rather crucial experience in the last 18 months, which is easily accounted for if you look into it; but I am sure it is very gratifying to the country that there is a Ministry at present in possession of a working majority of the House. In speaking last year, I referred to the very unsatisfactory condition in which the Ministry were placed; and I think it is a still greater source of gratification that the Ministry now hold, I believe, a majority irrespective of those members representing labour. I said I considered that it was not conducive to good Government for the representatives of the Labour party to hold the balance of power, and be in such a position that they could turn the Ministry out any day they liked. In expressing this congratulation to members I must, I think, point out that when the present Ministry were in Opposition their views were not quite the same as they are now, because I consider the principal reason why there was not a change of Ministry before was that the then Opposition had two planks in their platform which the country would not accept; one being their opposition to the expenditure of money on public works, and the other their belief in private enterprise in public works. There is a remarkable silence about that now. The Premier, the other night, made a remark which rather astonished me. He said he considered this House of 50 persons was not sufficient to enable party government to be run. When the hon. gentleman first came into this House he was a strong opponent of party government in any form, yet last year, and I think the year before, he worked the party system

pretty hardly; but now, having achieved the ambition of leading a majority in this House, he finds that it is inconvenient.

THE PREMIER: I enunciated my views before I met the House.

MR. HARPER: The expression may be very honest, but it has this appearance—it looks like the complacency of a man who, having got into a position, thinks opposition undesirable, and that the operation of the system of party government is not necessary. I have often said, and many others have done so too, that party government is a most objectionable thing; but there is no getting out of it. All over the world Parliaments framed on British traditions have tried a system of non-party government, and have failed, and for this one substantial reason, that you cannot trust any body of men to carry on affairs independently of party government. If there is no partisan feeling in the House, and you get a party in power with no check upon it, that party goes wrong. I hope the hon. member will not feel aggrieved if we on this (Opposition) side of the House do not accept his view that there is no necessity for party government.

THE PREMIER: Not if you support my policy. That is all I want.

MR. HARPER: I have a few words to say with regard to the government of the railways. I consider, and have long thought, that the railways and their management were the most important matter before this country. The Government have found that difficulty themselves, evidently; and seeking a short cut if possible, they decided to appoint Mr. George as Commissioner of Railways. I have no objection whatever to make to the personality of Mr. George. It is, I grant, an experiment, but it is an experiment that I feel will fail unless certain lines are taken. I should like to know what are the powers given to Mr. George in dealing with the railways. We ask that our railways shall be run on commercial lines, subject to whatever policy the Government and Parliament may adopt; but if you are going to run the railways on commercial lines, the best way is to give the manager of them some of the authority or most of the authority which is found necessary in private undertakings. I want to know from the Ministry what power they are

granting Mr. George to deal with these undertakings, because that is the crucial point of the whole thing. You may call him what you like, but if he has no power to control those under him, his success must be impossible. I understand that by the statutory authority given to the Commissioner of Railways he has the power to dismiss any person, from a station-master downwards, upon the consent of the Governor. That, I presume, is the Governor-in-Council. A position arises in this way. Supposing Mr. George finds it necessary to require the dismissal of a servant, he will have to seek the authority of the Governor to sanction it—and that I presume has to go through the Minister for Railways—and in this case the Minister for Railways happens to hold his seat very largely, and it will be so still more in the future, under the influence of a railway vote. Supposing Mr. George finds it necessary to recommend the dismissal of one of the leading lights of the railway service in the electorate of the Minister for Railways, what is his position? I do not think it is a very good one; I do not think it is a fair one, really. If he supports his own officer, he creates turmoil in his own electorate. It is an unfortunate circumstance that it is so, and I think trouble is bound to come. It is very evident to me that unless Mr. George has ample power to deal with the staff, he cannot succeed in what he has undertaken. Many members of the House have spoken highly of the success of Mr. Eddy, Railway Commissioner in New South Wales, and even some of the members occupying seats on the Labour bench have spoken of him in that respect. They have spoken about Mr. Eddy as the one successful railway administrator in Australia; but he was a man who would not carry out the work without greater power than had been given to others, and he went so far, soon after he had taken office, as to refuse to recognise the Railway Association as interfering with the management of the railways. If Mr. Eddy found it necessary to do that, and he knew what he was doing, if we are going to attempt to run the railways of this country through Mr. George, who is under the weight of the association of railway men, then we are only playing with the difficulty. An

instance came under my notice, and also under the notice of some members of the Ministry and members of Parliament a few months ago, when we took a trip up the Canning railway to the Canning Mills. I forget how many were there, but I should say between 40 and 50 people were present. When we got back in the evening to Midland Junction, we were stuck and could not get on, and from inquiry it was ascertained that the driver, who was told off to drive the engine, refused to do so, and I think we were kept there about 40 minutes. I do not know exactly what was the cause of the trouble, but I did inquire as to the final result, and I understand that an inquiry was made into the case and the man was fined. If he did wrong, I do not think a fine of £1 sufficient punishment for keeping 40 or 50 people waiting. I give this incident to show that anyone responsible for the railways must have power to carry out what is required to be done. A great deal has been said about the raising of the rates on goods on the railways, but very little has been said about the lowering of the fares. The Government have said they want more revenue, and yet they have lowered the fares. It may be argued that by lowering the fares sometimes the revenue is increased thereby; but when one considers that a very large proportion of the people who use the suburban railways have season tickets, and the public who travel on the suburban railways on holidays get excursion tickets, it is a little difficult for me to see how the decreased rate is going to benefit. The point I have to make against the Government on this occasion is this—I am speaking from an agricultural district point of view—the Government raise the rates on practically everything the farmer uses, on his goods as well as on his exports, but the Government do not lower the fares when the farmer comes to town, yet the man who goes about for pleasure is allowed to travel at a lower rate. The Premier in one of his speeches said he thought the people who used the railways should be made to pay for them. In this case his position is not a very logical one, because the Government have lowered the rates to the suburban population and have not attempted to show where the increased revenue will be obtained from.

THE PREMIER: The low passenger fare does not affect the season ticket-holder.

MR. HARPER: It does not; then whom does it affect?

THE PREMIER: The casual traveller.

MR. HARPER: I do not know why the casual traveller should not pay as much as anyone else.

MR. DIAMOND: The casual passenger travels 50 times as often as the season ticket holder.

MR. HARPER: The casual traveller generally uses excursion tickets; therefore I cannot see the justice of the Government laying the burden on the country districts and taking it off those who live in the town. On reflecting on this matter of the railways and the management, there is one thing that has struck me past any conviction. If Australia wants railway men to manage the railways, we must train them, as we cannot import them. Good railway men are not going to leave lucrative employment in other countries to come here to manage our railways and suffer the indignities which have been heaped on them in Australia in the past. If we want men to manage our railways, we must train them.

MR. JOHNSON: To suffer indignities?

MR. HARPER: There is no reason why Australia should not train good railway men, as is done in other parts of the world. A good deal has been said about the reduction of members in this Assembly, and looking at it from the point of view of economy, I would consent to it; but there are one or two things which we have particularly to bear in mind, that for a few years we want the strongest possible Parliament in Western Australia that we can get. We yet have to fight the possible encroachments of the Federal Parliament; and as far as we can see, there is a tendency in that direction, to say the least of it. And it is very important that this State, at any rate, which has much to lose, shall not have any of its power taken from it until the agreement between the States and the Federal Parliament is finally decided upon. I think the little amendment which was carried the other day with regard to the electoral law indicates what we may expect from those sitting in the Federal Parliament. The amend-

ment was that no member of a State Parliament should nominate for election to the Federal Parliament unless he resigns his seat in the State Parliament before nomination day. Whether that is within the legal capacity of the Federal Parliament, I am not prepared to say. If it is so, then a parallel case would be that we as a State should provide that a member of a municipal council should not stand for Parliament until he has resigned his seat as a councillor.

MR. MORAN: No Federalist either.

MR. DIAMOND: No member of the Federal Parliament should be allowed to put up for a State Parliament.

MR. MORAN: Give him life.

MR. HARPER: This kind of thing does not make us believe we have that high tone in the Federal Parliament which was preached to us *ad nauseam* some months ago. We have heard a great deal about the necessity for an early dissolution and redistribution of seats. I think the member for Claremont the other night informed us that the country had quite lost faith in this Parliament and wanted another. My experience of Parliaments is this, and I have seen a good many, that in the first year a Parliament does not do much, especially if there are new members in it. It is only natural that members come in very often with a burning desire to aid the country and with a high appreciation of their own abilities to do so, but they generally find that there are other men in the world besides themselves, and it takes a year for them to find their feet, as it were, and it is in the second and third sessions of a Parliament when the best work is done. From the present healthy condition of the Government, I think they are in a position to carry on the work of the session, and a good deal better than the next one would do for the first year. Then I think it is waste of time and money to bring about a dissolution at an early date. I know there are a good many who have preached a lot about this subject, but if members examine into it, they will find that many of those who are preaching about a dissolution want a seat in Parliament, or want an opportunity of getting into Parliament; but this clamour does not represent the general feeling of

the country. If the country sees that Parliament is doing its duty, the country will not bother about removing it. There is one matter of considerable importance to this country which has not been drawn attention to lately, if at all this session. I refer to the timber industry. Those who know anything about the timber industry are aware that our timber forests are being slaughtered at a rapid rate, and there is an enormous amount of waste. I do not think members are aware, but I believe it is a fact, that most of the timber companies are owned in England, the bulk of them at any rate. The timber companies have now agreed to a combination to trade under some rules of their own, and I am told by local people that one of the rules which has been adopted is to raise the price locally. The timber companies cannot raise the price outside, because they have to meet the world's competition, but they can put up the price on us; therefore, a working man who desires to build a cottage has to pay a toll to the shareholders residing in London, and who decide what he shall pay. I do not think that is quite what the State expects; and, in my opinion, something should be done to protect the people of this country, or inquiries should be made to see whether they cannot be protected, against combinations outside the State.

MR. DIAMOND: The State can cancel some of the timber leases.

MR. HARPER: One means at the disposal of the State for protecting its citizens to some extent, which has often occurred to my mind, is that the Government might take possession, as it were, of the waste timber which the mills now burn. If the State took possession of the waste and conveyed it to the cities and sold it there, we should find, I think, that the price of local timber would not rise above a certain point. For under such circumstances it would pay the small sawmiller to cut up the waste into scantlings of less sizes than are now produced. I do not pretend to know anything about the working of sawmills, but I do know that the combination I refer to has raised the price to the local consumer, and that I cannot regard as desirable. I do not know whether it is possible to prevent the raising of rates, but I must say that I do not see why the people of Western

Australia should pay a toll to companies owned and controlled in London.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: The people here have had timber under cost price for the last six years.

MR. HARPER: The people here have had the timber under cost price?

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: Yes.

MR. HARPER: Then I say, why should the people outside the State have the timber under cost price whilst we here are called on to pay more than cost price? The hon. member interjecting reminds me of the circumstance that when the existing timber companies were put on the market a few years ago, nothing whatever was said about timber being sold under cost price. So far as I remember, the rates then ruling for timber were represented as fairly high. I do not think intending shareholders were informed—

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: Would you penalise the companies?

MR. HARPER: That the product of the mills was being sold under cost price. I contend that the residents of this State have a right to get their timber irrespective of any board sitting in London. On one point raised by the leader of the Opposition I am not prepared to give my adhesion to, at any rate at the present time; and that is the abolition of the Upper House. On looking at the reason for the existence of Upper Houses one must acknowledge that in process of time, having regard to the system of evolution under which parliamentary government has been brought to its present stage, an Upper House must eventually become unnecessary. Originally there was no Lower House; but by degrees as the franchise broadened and as the people realised their responsibilities, so has the Lower House been given power. A time will probably come when the residue of the people who are not to be trusted will have become so small as to be quite incapable of affecting the majority; and then the Lower House might be safely left to take the full responsibility of legislation. When that time will arrive, of course we cannot say; but such is the absolute trend of parliamentary government. As the people become better educated and as they realise their responsibilities to a greater degree, so the necessity for a check

becomes weaker and weaker. I think, therefore, that the day may come—we cannot say how near or how far it may be—in the process of time when a check will no longer be required, and the Upper House will have become unnecessary. Another point which has been raised is that the Governor of the State should be selected from the persons within the State. I must say I cannot agree to such a proposal. A Governor of the nature contemplated would, in nine cases out of ten, be the nominee of one party only of the State. The selection would produce endless ill-feeling, and he would be subject to every kind of attack from the opposing party. Therefore, I think the adoption of such a proposal would be most undesirable politically, and farthermore—

MR. NANSON: The Governor could be elected, as is done in America.

MR. HARPER: I think it most desirable that we should, at any rate for a considerable time to come, and certainly as long as we desire that imperial unity for which so many are clamouring at present, have periodically a man of high culture and attainments sent from the mother country to our State to propagate here those mother-country ideas which cannot but be of advantage to a State such as ours. The effect is bound to be good. In this connection I think it may be claimed that our present Governor and his wife have done much in the direction in which I maintain a Governor can do good. There is but one other matter I wish to mention, and that has reference to a circular I received a short time ago, and which I presume other members also received. I believe the circular originated from Kalgoorlie, and I am not quite clear as to whether it referred to the removal of a mining inspector. I think the officer concerned was a mining inspector; but what he was, or what he is, or what he may be, is really beside the question. I want to point out that in my view the very worst thing a community can do is to try to interfere with the administration of any State department through members of Parliament. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] In my opinion, if a man is good for one place he ought to be good for another, and the Minister should be absolutely unhampered in regard to what he does with the officers under his control.

I strongly urge not only the individuals responsible for the circular in question, but the people of the State generally—for I am sorry to say there is a growing tendency to send to members of Parliament circulars asking them to do something which a small knot of people wish to see done—to consider that their action tends to produce only a feeling of resentment. For my part, it does produce a feeling of resentment; and I think the sentiments of most members on the subject are the same as mine: such communications are put into the waste-paper basket as soon as their nature is perceived. I mention the matter because I think it but fair that people given to this kind of thing should be warned that their action does not benefit those whom they purpose benefiting.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner): When I last spoke in this House I did so in compliance with the request of members on both sides that I should as far as possible elucidate the stores question. On that occasion I did not, consequently, avail myself, as I intend to do to-night, of the opportunity of joining in the general expression of deep regret and sorrow at the early decease of my chief, my leader, and I may say my most intimate friend, the Hon. George Leake. Possibly no one in this House enjoyed during the last three or four years to a greater extent the confidence and friendship of Mr. Leake. As I look around the Chamber to-night I can scarcely realise that the old chief has gone. I am sure that many members of this House share the feeling I express in saying that I would make a fairly heavy sacrifice just for the touch of a vanished hand,

For the sound of a voice that is still.

I can only trust that the universal expression of sympathy from this House and from all ranks of the community will be as a gentle balm to the hearts of those that are bereaved, and that it will act as an incentive to us all to fulfil the manliest of ambitions—to endeavour to do as George Leake did, leave the world the better, the richer, and the happier for having lived in it. We all have in our hearts a little sacred corner for the recollection of the kindnesses of our friends; and we keep, too, in the same place some recollection of their forms and features; and I think I but re-echo what every

man in this House has said in expressing the belief that in the inmost corner of the hearts of all of us there is one niche consecrated to the memory of George Leake. There is yet another loss which we are about to sustain almost immediately, and that is involved in the departure from our midst of Sir Arthur Lawley. I am sure Western Australia feels unreservedly proud of the fact that her Governor has been chosen to fill one of the highest positions which can possibly be given to any man under the British Crown. I think, also, that we West Australians feel a certain reflected glory, for it is a great thing to say that the "Cinderella of Australia" has been able to supply a gentleman so well qualified as Sir Arthur Lawley for the Lieutenant-Governorship of the Transvaal. I believe there are a great many men who will envy Sir Arthur Lawley, the choice which has been made. I know of no people better qualified than His Excellency and Lady Lawley to apply the healing ointment of brotherliness and kindness to the wounds of a conquered though worthy foe. I am sure Sir Arthur Lawley takes to his new task the best sympathies of Western Australians, and our heartiest wish that he may prove as worthy of the position as we know he himself desires to be. Turning from the past and the immediate present to the future, I have to point out that the present Government have been subjected by some members of the Opposition to criticism. I think it but right that we should now submit the criticism of the Opposition to our criticism. I agree, and I think the House will agree, that sound, wholesome criticism, such as we are meeting with in this session, is the best incentive towards good government. The man who resents criticism, because many times it comes to him in the form of wholesome advice, has, I take it, got past the age of usefulness. [MR. MORAN: Hear, hear.] The House, I think, is to be congratulated on the tone of the debate. There has been so far in this discussion an undercurrent of a nature clearly showing that hon. members, outside their political differences, are willing to give to this House absolutely the best of their attainments; and I feel thoroughly assured that such a spirit cannot but conduce to the welfare of the

State. There are, of course, some little matters which we are bound to take exception to: no man can be absolutely correct in what he says, or absolutely accurate in the impression he manages to convey. At this point I must—I think it is only fair to do so before proceeding—say just one word in defence of a man who could not say it for himself. I refer to my colleague, the Minister for Works and Railways (Hon. C. H. Rason). The leader of the Opposition inferred, in the course of his speech, that had the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) joined the Ministry, there would have been another Jonah thrown overboard; and that Jonah, it was inferred, would have been the member for Guildford (Hon. C. H. Rason). Now, I claim in conjunction with my leader and another member of the Ministry to have done my level best to induce the member for East Fremantle to take the Works and Railways portfolios; and I venture to say—I know what I am stating to be absolutely correct—that had we succeeded in our efforts, the Ministry would have been exactly the same as it is now, except for its tail. The tail would have been out. That tail, of course, is myself. My reason for making this explanation is that I took strong exception to the inclusion of the member for Guildford in the second Leake Ministry. I am not, and I hope I never shall be, ashamed to say in this House what I honestly and fairly think. Before Mr. Leake's death, the members for West Perth and East Fremantle and myself had agreed that the member for Guildford was one of the best administrators that we had in power, and this is how I look at it. I agree with what was said the other night by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan). I had made up my mind that wherever I saw a good administrator—not caring on which side of the House he had sat—I should be only too willing to demand that he be included in the Ministry. If there be one State of the whole group which requires administrators, it is Western Australia. We do not want talkers; we want workers. If we wanted talkers I am afraid the silver-tongued orators from West Perth (Mr. Moran) and the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) would be prominent members on this (Treasury) bench. I

feel it only just and fair to say I was much struck with the financial policy, or the wreckage of a financial policy, propounded by the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition said, "Run the railways at a loss, and charge it up to revenue." The member for West Perth said, "Do away with the sliding-scale, and charge it up to revenue."

MR. MORAN: Pay it out of revenue.

THE TREASURER: Pay it out of revenue—I beg pardon.

MR. MORAN: I never advocated the abolition of the sliding-scale. I said, "the food duties."

THE TREASURER: The same thing.

MR. MORAN: No. The food duties represent less than half of the sliding-scale.

THE TREASURER: The hon. member is perfectly right. To abolish the sliding-scale means to lose £200,000. And now to-night we have the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) asking that we should make provision for old-age pensions. Really I cannot help saying, where does the Treasurer come in? I can understand it is not wise for a country to show a very large surplus, because I am inclined to believe that tends rather to reckless extravagance than to effectiveness of government; but on the other hand I do not see how a deficit is to increase the financial credit of the country, on account of which the minds of some members are so agitated when we go to the London market for a loan. Then the leader of the Opposition said: "The railways are the best asset the country has." And apparently his reasoning was: make a big loss on them, and they become a better asset. Then he says: "Your rolling-stock took several years to get into disrepair, take the same number of years to repair it." Now, assuming the hon. member were Minister for Railways, and he had a big smash on the line, which involved the wreckage of much rolling-stock, that would take only five minutes. If we carry his argument to a logical conclusion, he should repair it in five minutes; because that is practically the position he is taking up. But when a deputation waits on the Minister for Railways and complains, as deputations have been complaining, of shortage of trucks, it would be poor satisfaction to the complainants to say:

"Look: it took ten years to get our rolling-stock into this condition; you will have to wait for ten years until we can get it perfected again." While there did not seem to be in the Opposition ranks a unanimity of opinion on a large number of questions which come before the House, there is not the slightest doubt there was a certain unanimity as to what course and what policy should be pursued; and it struck me it was a policy of "spread it over." We had the leader of the Opposition advocating that, and we heard it advocated with greater force by the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse). Well, while this may be a policy which appeals to some people, I venture to say that as soon as you begin to spread a responsibility which should be definitely fixed, that responsibility grows in the spreading. Each successive year creates its own responsibility, which is added to that already created; and while the policy of the present Government may be somewhat drastic, I venture to say that instead of pursuing a "spread it over" policy, we ought to go in for a policy of "get it over." Get it over and be done with it. The leader of the Opposition said no attempt should be made to make persons outside the State, who are interested in our securities, fancy that our railways are going backward, that their earning power is diminishing, and that Western Australia is on the down grade. I must disagree with him. I contend nothing is more likely to strengthen our financial position than to show that we intend to grapple with the difficulty of the rolling-stock; to make it clear that our railways are not only constructed but properly equipped.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: They are already equipped. This is simply the old, old story. The truck difficulty has gone.

THE TREASURER: The difficulty has gone, says the member for the Williams, and I am sure we are all delighted to hear it.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Who solved the difficulty? Those who ordered stock at the proper time.

THE TREASURER: Considering our railways as security for borrowed money—regarding the financial aspect of this asset—I venture to say that if we show people who are lending us money on our best asset that we are putting our lines in

a good position to deal with the traffic, and that we shall keep them in the same position, then the lenders will have infinitely more satisfaction, and will know they have a better asset than they previously held as security.

MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. MORAN: You must consider the public as well as the lenders.

THE TREASURER: The leader of the Opposition, the member for the Williams, and the member for West Perth, all complain bitterly of the increased freights; and as I shall show later on, with some little justice. But I wish to show how their theories disagree with the actual result produced. For instance, we are told that the increase has stopped settlement on the land. From this morning's paper we learn that in March there were 226 applicants for land; consequently one of the hon. member's reasons practically falls to the ground.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Whereabout are those applicants?

THE TREASURER: All over the country. There are a lot at Katanning, in your own district. Then let us take the timber industry. The other night the member for Wellington (Mr. Teesdale Smith) put its case very clearly. He said he went out practically with a view of burying the late Minister for Railways (Hon. W. Kingsmill), and to find out how much more our local timber-millers were charged for the carriage of timber than were similar merchants in other countries. But, he said, when he got the information, he would not be a fair man if he did not admit that for timber freights this was practically the cheapest country of the Australian group. Now for purposes of comparison, whom are we likely to take as authorities on this matter—the members of the Opposition, who wish to make capital out of the position, or the member for Wellington, who is willing to put his hard-earned capital into this timber trade? I think we shall take the opinion of that hon. member, who says, "I am quite satisfied those rates are all right, and I shall put my money into the business."

MR. DOHERTY: He has changed his mind since last session.

THE TREASURER: I say unhesitatingly that unless it had been thought necessary to cover up bad management

of the railways, nothing at all would have been said against the raising of rates. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] That is the position. The leader of the Opposition next comes to the question of Railway Commissioners. He does not want Commissioners. Then he cites Victoria as being under one Commissioner, and has to go back six years to get the opinion of the *Age* to back up his views of Commissioners. But all the time he never lost an opportunity of showing that the New South Wales railways, which are under three Commissioners, are absolutely the best in Australia.

MR. DOHERTY: They are practically under one Commissioner.

THE TREASURER: We come to another question—the criticism of Mr. George's capabilities by the leader of the Opposition. Now I am sure the hon. member, who is a fairly chivalrous man, will say, on reading his speech: "I did not do the justice I ought to have done to a man who was not here to speak for himself when I was describing his qualifications." I may be permitted to say there are two kinds of egotism—the egotism of Mr. George, who is sure of his own capabilities, and the egotism of the leader of the Opposition, who is very loyal indeed to his ideal and his standard of criticism. Before a judgment is framed, I think it fair that we should say, "What authority, what experience is there behind this judgment?" And when that becomes the question, I prefer to take the opinion of men who have been brought into business relationships with Mr. George. The members for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) and Wellington (Mr. Teesdale Smith) have had a good deal to do with Mr. George, and I believe speak of him as a very competent business man; and there can be no better evidence of his business capacity than the fact that he has made his own business pay, and that he is largely independent of the salary paid him by the Government.

MR. NANSON: I never questioned that.

MR. MORAN: His own business has for a long time been for sale.

THE TREASURER: Never mind; he made a good deal of money out of it. It is fair that every man should say why he supports this appointment. I have sup-

ported it from the beginning, because I recognised that the great difficulty in the management of our railways practically arose in respect of the rolling-stock; and I thought, and still think, that Mr. George's practical experience in this particular would be of great benefit to the country.

MR. TAYLOR: Where is his experience?

MR. MORAN: He has no practical experience.

THE TREASURER: He may not have any practical experience of running a railway.

MR. TAYLOR: You say he has.

THE TREASURER: He has had practical experience of rolling-stock. I think every man will admit that if he saw a wagon in need of repair, he would be competent to repair it. [MR. MORAN: Only the ironwork.] Well, we will judge him by results. But I wish to have associated with Mr. George two other Commissioners, experienced in railway management and in the duties of railway management; and if this be accomplished, I venture to say we shall have three really good Commissioners, and that the country will benefit by the change. What is the good of our entering on this question of railway management if we are guided by the side of the House on which we happen to sit? Every man knows that the Railway Department has proved the Waterloo of the reputation for political administration of every man who has touched it. That is undeniable. If we go back, we shall find that first the Government had Mr. Venn as Commissioner; and he not only lost his political reputation, but, according to his own account, lost his clothing also.

MR. CONNOR: What about the member for Pilbarra (Hon. W. Kingsmill)?

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. CONNOR: The Treasurer said "every man."

THE TREASURER: I shall come in due course to my colleague. Next we have Mr. Piesse. Personally, I think Mr. Piesse responsible for a great deal of the trouble experienced by subsequent Commissioners. I shall not say anything unkind of the hon. member.

MR. GORDON: Let him down lightly.

THE TREASURER: He put his whole heart and soul into that department, and did his very best to make it a success;

but if it were suggested that he should go back there as Commissioner of Railways, would the people consent to it? The hon. member knows that I am not saying this from any unkindness, but I am asking what would the people say? In addition, there was another thing the hon. member for the Williams did. He did it with infinite credit to his heart, but very little credit to his judgment. When we had the responsibility sheeted home to a certain official the hon. member, out of the kindness of his heart, and I respect him all the more as a man for it, went in and took the whole of the responsibility on his shoulders. Then we come to Mr. Wood, who was probably not long enough in the position to make or mar a political reputation for administration. Then we come to Mr. Holmes. Mr. Holmes went into that position striving to get that railway problem down to a business solution; but there was no man in the House who, night after night, had to resist attacks more strongly than the member for East Fremantle.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: He was most persistent in his attacks on other people.

MR. CONNOR: His efforts brought forth the strike.

THE TREASURER: Mr. Holmes tried, and the member for the Williams tried, to do their duty from their standpoint. Mr. Holmes was not only assailed in the House every night in some way or another, directly or indirectly, but he was assailed by a large proportion of the Press of this State at that time. No man had fought harder for his political existence and to justify his management of the railways than Mr. Holmes; but he eventually had to succumb. Then we come to the member for Pilbarra (Hon. W. Kingsmill), and there is no one who will not admit in this House that his political reputation has suffered on account of his administration of the railways. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.] The hon. member does not mind my saying this. I want to show the reason of the whole thing. The fault does not lie either with the member for the Williams, the member for East Fremantle, or the member for Pilbarra. It lies in the incompetency, disloyalty, and questionable practices of some of the railway officers. It is a serious position, and it should not be made a political bone of contention. If

the House is honest in the desire to see these railways properly administered, when men come into power and are prepared to grapple with it and do what they think right, the members should, instead of making it a party question to oust the Government from power, say, "You are striving to do what is right, and therefore we will support you." I was as dissatisfied with the management of these railways as any man in the House. I saw the expenditure for last June, and I said, "Something has to be done, and something very drastic." I found that the member for Pilbarra, who was guided to a great extent by his officers, received on the 16th June a letter from one of his officers saying that a certain vote would not be exceeded except by a very nominal sum, yet on the 30th June that vote had been exceeded by £60,000. Let any business man face that position. If a manager of his put him into such a position he would say, "Look here, you had better go and get some other position: you won't do for me." Then we come to the question of not charging up these rates to the current year. I want the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) just to listen for half a moment. The amount charged up to the Railway Department for the last year as the result of the investigation into the stores account, was only that for the goods that were consumed during the currency of last year.

MR. MORAN: Do not use the word "consumed." Surely they are not gone.

THE TREASURER: A large portion of them has been consumed.

MR. MORAN: In use, you mean?

THE TREASURER: A lot of it was coal—several thousand pounds of the amount.

MR. MORAN: Not one-tenth part. About 4,000 tons.

THE TREASURER: I think there was £2,300 worth in October, £3,000 in November, and several amounts afterwards; but, at any rate, it was a direct charge to last year.

MR. MORAN: That is quite right.

THE TREASURER: If you had a business manager who produced to you a balance-sheet showing you had consumed certain things during the year, and he had not debited you with them, you would say, "That is the position, and no

matter whose fault it is, I will not stand it."

MR. MORAN: Your general manager did not know they had come to an end.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Why should he not know? If you have a general manager, do you not expect him to have his hand on the strings of the whole, at least of the spending possibilities? I say that for years the respective Commissioners have been lumping the incompetency of the railway officials. The time has come when we have to take a very strong stand indeed, and that is why I am supporting the system of Commissioners. No layman can go into that department and afterwards keep a reputation as an administrator.

MR. MORAN: Hear, hear. George is a layman.

THE TREASURER: Hear, hear. I will give you an evidence of Mr. George's capability. I said to him, "I do not want these railway men to beat me like they have been beating their own Commissioner. I do not want them, because we have issued forms to charge up to this year everything that they can charge, to go on then and get a lot of stocks to carry them on to next year, making their working expenses to appear less. I want you to investigate this." He did so, and as soon as a loophole offered so that they could show a better result, they said, "Oh, yes, we have £50,000 worth of stuff down here." Mr. George said, "Let me see it." They said, "Here is £6,000 worth or so." He said, "There is £1,500 or £1,600 worth." When they found he knew what he was talking about, the stock came down from £50,000 to £30,000. I venture to say that any layman who went down there would not know whether the stock was worth £30,000 or £50,000. That is actually the position. The member for West Perth said, "How long are we going to stand the taxation?" Rightly enough he draws attention to the heavy taxation this country bears. We will have to bear this taxation just as long as the country wants everything done by the Government for it, and just as long as one of the qualifications for a seat in this House is how much one can grab from the Treasury for his constituents. As soon as members begin to get past that stage, as soon as the House

begins to recognise, as from the tone of the debate this session members are beginning to recognise, that we are here for the benefit of the State first, and for that of the constituencies afterwards, and as soon as members want to see that every penny spent is expended so that the possibilities of the country can be increased, instead of saying "Let us spend it because you have got it"; as soon as we do this, and get things down to bed-rock both in administration and in works we build, we shall be able to reduce the taxation.

MR. MORAN: You have a big majority there. You introduce that scheme. You started the scheme.

THE TREASURER: That is absolutely so. I started the scheme in my own constituency.

MR. MORAN: When you had got them all they wanted.

THE TREASURER: That is what I did myself, and I am not asking members to do more than I did. We come to another subject—the question of the sliding-scale. Of course there are very strong advocates of that, and in regard to the question I may ask how, when we bring the cost of living down to the minimum, are the wages going to be affected?

MR. MORAN: I thought I heard that argument the other way about, during the Federal campaign.

THE TREASURER: Exactly. Absolutely so. When the cost of living comes down, wages have to come down also. If the cost of living comes down by 10 per cent., wages will come down a good deal more, and whenever we think of taking off the sliding-scale and reducing taxation, a problem for members on the cross-benches to consider is how far it will affect wages. Now we come to the question of commission. I am sure the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) has no desire to mislead the House on that question. I am referring to this simply because he does not want to make a misstatement here about that. Assuming there to be one vendor and one purchaser, his contention is absolutely correct—there is no doubt about that; but in this particular instance they were dealing with about a hundred vendors, and notwithstanding the fact that several purchasers would not pay the commission, and that many others paid

not quite full commission, and that the agent had to divide that with several other agents in Fremantle —

MR. DOHERTY: And Perth.

THE TREASURER: No. Notwithstanding that, there is now to the credit of the Government over £1,000 to be returned as the result of the properties that have been bought; so that although the hon. member said £300 would have been the lump charges, it is clearly shown that £1,000 is actually being returned.

MR. MORAN: That is only a detail. It is the principle we object to.

THE TREASURER: I am coming to the principle. I am sure the hon. member (Mr. Connor) does not wish to mislead the House on this question.

MR. CONNOR: I do not.

THE TREASURER: Then he said the time occupied was only two or three days. I find that the authorisation to make a valuation of two routes was made on the 8th of May; so the agent practically had been employed three months, night and day, Saturdays and Sundays as well, and was not paid on that scale which the hon. member referred to, taking the amount at £120,000. The charge for commission according to that scale would be £600. But it is not the question of amount, it is the question of principle. As to the principle of payment, when all the Ministers were present Mr. Leake said, "If you wink your eye, it is going to cost this country probably several thousand pounds. We are paying you a commission because we trust you." I think there has been every evidence that the man who undertook this duty did fulfil his trust to the fullest extent, and where the Government finds a man does do things honestly and thoroughly, that man has a right to be paid rather a larger amount than the common fee. It is better to pay him than let him pay himself at the cost of the State. The hon. member said that by this purchase the country was committed to a huge railway expenditure. I do not agree with him.

MR. MORAN: An absolutely new expenditure.

THE TREASURER: The Government of the day had before them their engineer's report, in which they were told that there must be a large development

so far as the harbour works at Fremantle were concerned, and that it would be absolutely necessary to have a new route of railways so as to take that over Rocky Bay into East Fremantle.

MR. MORAN: Parliament is the only judge of that.

THE TREASURER: That is exactly what I am coming to. Parliament has to come in and decide that question. The Government were perfectly justified in making the purchase, for this simple reason. Had Parliament decided the question, the land would have cost them very much more to purchase than it did. And this is the position. If Parliament does not agree, and the land is held for a few years, there will be at least a very large profit on the transaction, because it will only be necessary for us to realise now a thousand a year to pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the purchase. If when the necessity does occur and Parliament does agree, I venture to say the large area of land surrounding these stations, one or two at any rate amounting to 250 acres, will go a very long way to paying the total cost of the construction of the line. In addition to that we shall have what the Government have been striving for a considerable time to obtain—a large foreshore reservation.

MR. MORAN: That does not justify it.

THE TREASURER: I agree with the hon. member. This disregard of the Audit Act should be exercised wisely and judiciously; but surely it is not contended that the Fremantle Harbour is for all time to be limited to its present scope. There must be big developments, and when these do come, although the Government have to take a lot of opprobrium and blame now for the purchase, the country will say in years to come that the Government exercised a wise discretion, although they went outside the Audit Act. I now come to the stores account, which I thought I had put very clearly before hon. members. However, I want this to be understood: whatever we charged up rightly belonged to that year. The question of obsolete stores and outstandings, and the question of stock which is no good whatever, have yet to be decided, and I have to treat it in this way: no funds were ever provided to buy stores for consolidated revenue.

[MR. MORAN interjected.] Do give me a chance. In ten minutes you will say I cannot make it plain to hon. members; and when a man is dealing with figures, do give him a chance to make himself understood. No funds were ever provided to purchase stores for consolidated revenue, consequently they had to be provided out of the surplus to a certain extent, and this is the position to-day. Stores account, so far as consolidated revenue is concerned, amounted to £224,152 8s. 1d. The amount charged on account of loan was £381,045 13s. 2d. We are placing £121,184, which practically represents the surplus, to the credit of stores account, and we obtained from the general account £109,067 16s. 11d., squaring the accounts to the end of the financial year.

MR. MORAN: Did you ever have a surplus in the Treasury at all?

THE TREASURER: No; I have no cash surplus. The member for Cue knows exactly the position as well as I do. I had £211 at the end of the financial year. The member for Cue was quite right: we have to take it into consideration in our next balance-sheet. In stating the receipts, we took credit for the £124,000 odd revenue, and whatever we shall write off for depreciation in stores will appear on the other side. The £48,000 referred to for obsolete and useless stock will require to be adjusted in the State balance-sheet. That is the position of the stores account. I am going into the matter now. I have a list here of the outstandings. It is a long statement, and some go back as far as 1900; so hon. members will easily see it is a troublesome matter. Some of the outstandings go back as far as the year 1900. One big sum of something like £6,000 has to be debited to last year. Luckily it has to be charged to the loan account and not to revenue. In these outstandings there is only £9,855 which has to be debited against the consolidated revenue. The balance, amounting to £83,926, has to be debited to loan. That is the position of the outstandings, and I can assure hon. members the same thing that exists in reference to the Railway Department exists in regard to every other department in a lesser or greater degree. We are now getting into the position that anything we obtain from

the stores is debited at once to the account and sent to the Treasurer to be debited. That is the position; and I am sure members will agree with me that the system is a good one. I do not look forward to this work with any great pleasure, but I am here to do what I think is right and try to discharge my duty to the country. I thought possibly the House might like to know how we stand financially to-day; and I will say this in a general way, that we have sufficient money in London to meet all our engagements, including the payment of interest, to the 31st December next; and if our revenue keeps up or averages the same as last year, I think we can meet all our engagements in this State up to the 31st December, if I can get about £120,000. I do not want to go to the London market until we have considered the Loan Bill and know what our requirements are to be. I want to lay before the House a scheme which I think may be the beginning in this country of trying as far as possible to finance ourselves. I have a balance of authorisation, amounting to £855,000 of loan money and I want to convert some of this into local inscribed stock.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have the power now.

THE TREASURER: I know I have it; but I wish to explain how I want to extend the system. I want to post up in every post office savings bank and every other public place where I can the fact that local inscribed stock can be had from £10 upward, at par bearing interest at 3½ per cent. per annum. The difficulty hitherto has been the dread that if a man wants his money in a hurry he cannot get it. There are any number of men—not very rich men—who have balances at the bank lying idle, up to £500, £600, or £700 and these people are willing to put their balances into local inscribed stock if they can be sure that if they want the money hurriedly they can get hold of it. I can, according to the Act, take a great deal more money out of the Savings Bank than I have done. We have got £515,000 to credit in the Savings Bank.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You must not take more.

THE TREASURER: This is what I purpose doing: whenever a man wants

his money in a hurry, the Savings Bank will be prepared to give it to him at a discount of one-half per cent.; he will get £99 10s. for his £100. In addition to that he will receive interest for all the months except the broken month; the consequence being, we shall if possible redeem a fair amount from the funds of the Savings Bank. So that the Bank shall not be overloaded in any possible way, the next applicant for stock will receive the stock that was redeemed by the Savings Bank. In addition to that we shall have to provide sinking fund, and that sinking fund will be used in exactly the same way and for the same purpose. I want hon. members to think out the subject and help me if they can. We all recognise that one of the evils in this country lies in the fact that all our interest is going out of the country. It may be better to pay a higher rate of interest here in order to keep the money in circulation.

MR. MORAN: You might get the money in big lumps.

THE TREASURER: That is quite possible. I have mentioned it to business men, and they do not want to redeem the money. As long as they can come along and get stock they will do so. There is another departure, and that is to lend money from the Savings Bank on broad acres in country districts. In the past we have only been enabled to lend money on the security of city and suburban properties; yet the security of broad acres is just as good as a suburban building, especially in a bad time. This departure will mean that we will have a far more prosperous time ahead, and if I can assist in any way in getting us into the position they had to start in Melbourne of raising loans by means of small sums amongst our own people, I shall have done some good in my office, and to a certain extent have justified the preference and friendship which it has been said the leader of the House exercised when he asked me to take a position in his Cabinet. I thank the House for listening so attentively and quietly to what I have said.

HON. G. THROSSELL (Northam): I take this opportunity, before speaking on the Address-in-reply, to congratulate the Premier on his appointment to the high office he now occupies. As an old

acquaintance, and one who has known him in his school-boy days, it gives me particular pleasure to offer congratulations to him. I read with particular interest the remarks which fell from the Premier the other night in dealing with the question of party government, and I was altogether in accord with those remarks. But I can remind the hon. gentleman that he has not always practised what he has preached. When he first entered the House we know he made his thrust, and then ran away; and we well remember many times that he has complained of one now far distant from us; but I am glad to find the Premier has entered upon his present duties in a more generous mood. I only say, although I happen to have occupied an opposite seat to the hon. gentleman during his Parliamentary career, I shall be glad to give him from time to time a generous support. I am with him in saying that this is not the time for party politics. It is the duty of members to give a generous support to any Government in power; and if a change took place to-morrow, and the leader of the Opposition were leading the Government, he also could claim it is equally our duty to give him support. Whatever Government is in power, equally inexperienced, equally anxious to do the best, has an equal claim on us. I feel inclined to say—

How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away!

It has happened that my friend the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), with that characteristic eloquence which distinguishes him, has made reference to Mr. Pennefather's removal from the Supreme Court Bench. I do not desire to dwell on the matter. Passions have died down since our last session. Nevertheless, it becomes my duty to make a brief reference to the matter. The hon. member, in the course of his remarks, said that the appointment was one made by Sir John Forrest. In saying that, he was right and he was wrong. Right, because it was the wish of my late chief that Mr. Pennefather should be raised to the Bench; wrong, however, because I would not have it go forth that even at the behest of my friend John Forrest should I have made an appointment against my better judgment. [MR. MORAN: Hear, hear.] My judgment

accompanied that of my Cabinet, and I may say that to make the appointment gave me pleasure. As to Mr. Pennefather's removal, I only wish to observe that whatever cause led up to it, no one will allege that cause was misconduct on the part of Mr. Pennefather. Misconduct certainly did not lead up to his removal. I feel sure that I shall have the indorsement of my friend the Premier for that statement. He may have doubts as to his power or as to the policy of doing right and reinstating Mr. Pennefather at the proper time. I can only say, and I say it with the greatest sincerity, that should the opportunity occur of restoring Mr. Pennefather—and I believe it will occur—the Premier may disabuse his mind of any misconception relative to the feelings of every member of this House, the feelings of the Bench, and the feelings of the country; for I am convinced that no feeling exists in the House, on the Bench, or in the country but this, "Do justice to a man who has never done ill; at the earliest opportunity restore Mr. Pennefather to the Bench." That is all I desire to say on the subject. Mr. Pennefather's removal has caused me pain. Whatever onus attached to the appointment I was willing to take, but I confess that I cannot consider I erred in making the appointment. I can only say that my judgment went with the appointment. I may state also that my loyalty to my late chief contributed to move me to confirm the appointment. If I have erred, I am willing to bear the onus of the mistake. I desire only to say that loyalty in the place of its opposite is not so common nowadays that it should be lightly set aside. Whatever I did in the matter, I can say—and say with all truth—that I maintain my own self-respect; and indeed I believe I have earned the respect of those who know all the circumstances of the case. I pass with pleasure to notice among other things in the Governor's Speech the probable near completion of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. I observe, also, that it is the policy of the Government to reticulate the goldfields towns. There is a strange and a grave omission in this connection: no mention is made of an intention to reticulate the town which I have the honour to represent, Northam.

In all sincerity, I believe the time will come when the Government of the day, whoever may happen to be in power, will find themselves in such a position that they will be glad to have customers for the water. But even whether that be so or not, I am sure a sense of justice will make itself felt here, when I say that one of the chief objects of the Coolgardie Water Scheme should be to render the people of this State comfortable and happy, and to make the conditions of life easier for them, whether they live in Northam, along the Eastern Goldfields line, or on the goldfields themselves. The people of my own progressive town do not come to the Government as beggars, asking to have a water scheme bestowed on them without being prepared to pay for it. All my townsmen ask is that the policy of the Government should be such as to include our town in the reticulation scheme, that we shall be charged interest for the money, and that we shall, in common with other communities, take our risk as to the price of the water. I am sure the case of Northam will, at the right time, commend itself to the Premier and to those associated with him; and I have no doubt but justice will be done. I am looking forward to the Coolgardie Water Scheme doing far more than some of my hon. friends expect of it. I look forward to the settlement, in the near future, of a large area of the land along the pipe line. When the water is made available, the conditions of life will be altogether altered. In the course of this debate reference has been made to the meat supply. One of the greatest helps the Coolgardie Water Scheme will give us is that land will be taken up along the line and ringbarked, and that the settlers on it, although unable to grow corn to advantage, will be in a position to utilise the water for stock kept in depôts, to be afterwards traded on the goldfields in due course. I do not say that system will be carried out to a very large extent, but I do maintain that in the near future there will be a demand of this nature for the water. Reverting to what I said previously as to the probability of the Government looking for customers for their water, I have to point out that the settlement of people on the goldfields has already altered the local climatic con-

ditions, and that water, instead of being exceedingly rare, scarce, and dear on the goldfields, is now becoming more plentiful. We find that the goldfields rainfall for the present year, at any rate, is equal to that of the Avon Valley. The conditions of life are altogether altering. These considerations lead me to the farther conclusion that the daily delivery of five million gallons of water on the goldfields will eventually produce so great an alteration in the climatic conditions obtaining there as to make the Government glad to seek customers for the water. One thought respecting this scheme has been with me from the very start. While I consider it to be a god-like scheme, to use the words of my late chief, to make the waters flow in the wilderness, the thought has been with me since the very inception of the work that it means pump for ever, pump for ever. If we had spent three millions on the deviation of a great river, the instant the water flowed our expenditure would cease; there would be no more expenditure, but there would be a constant stream of water. But let any one come here in 50 years' time, and he will find the pumping still going on. It is a case of pump for ever; and the day we cease to pump, three millions of our money will be wasted. Those thoughts are only by the way: I shall reiterate them at the proper time. At present, I only wish to emphasise that I look to the Premier to do right with this great scheme. Much has already been said on the subject of the railway rates, and a very few words from me will suffice. I wish to say distinctly that I do not hold with the view that a new country should adopt a fixed policy for the securing of interest, working expenses, and sinking fund from its railways. If we fix on such a policy as that, clearly we can have very few railways. It is equally clear—the matter has been put in other words during this debate—that the earnings of a railway system, in a new country especially, must not be measured by the amount of cash which the general manager takes every year. The cash return is not the main object looked to in the construction of such works. I am sure I shall have the Premier with me in saying that a much higher view must be taken of the railway system of a new country. Our railways are designed, first

and foremost, to develop our resources, to attract population, and to make the country habitable. We must use our railways to sell our lands. While, if we have a business manager for our railways, he is bound to say, "I must show a percentage of profit sufficient to cover interest on principal and working expenses," a statesman, I maintain, cannot afford to take that stand. In this connection I am glad to find the Government have altered their views. A statesman having the good of his country at heart must say, "I will make the railways pay if I can; but I must have those railways; for every man, woman, and child they attract means five pounds per annum to the revenue; and, as a statesman, I must take credit for that." The statesman must pay regard to the settlement of the people on the land, and the wealth produced by people so settled. A statesman must take all these matters into consideration. In a new country a hard-and-fast rule to secure interest on principal, also working expenses and sinking fund from the railways would be a huge mistake indeed; and very few railways would be built if such a system prevailed. Take, for instance, the agricultural lines, take the Southern Railways which are already built: had the narrow policy I have referred to been adopted by Sir John Forrest in carrying out his scheme of public works, we should have built few railways indeed. It is clear that the railway policy of a new country must show regard to development and to encouragement of population. It is a very simple thing to relieve us of taxation in connection with our railways. Even under normal conditions of revenue, the introduction of 10,000 people into the State means five pounds revenue per head for every man, woman, and child; and £50,000 per annum is equivalent to about one and a quarter millions of borrowed money. Therefore, hon. members will see I am justified in maintaining that the narrow policy enunciated will not do for a new country. As to the appointment of Mr. George, very few words from me will again suffice. I approached the subject with the same prejudices as exist in the minds of many. I am going to say, in brief, that I am opposed to the appointment of Commissioners. I am opposed especially to the

appointment of three Commissioners; and had I been consulted at the time as to who should be appointed, I certainly should not have selected Mr. George. Having said so much, but not desiring to dwell on it, I think it my duty to mention that, so far as I have measured the methods of Mr. George since his appointment, that appointment has been amply justified. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Of course, I know the feeling which exists both inside and outside the House, that we should have gone abroad for an expert. Very possibly that may have been my feeling, too; but it has occurred to me that this country has been the happy hunting-ground of experts. There are those in this House who can tell us even of goldfields experts, and how the country has suffered at the hands of those gentlemen. However, I consider the expert knowledge possessed by the officers of the Railway Department sufficient to afford Mr. George all the technical assistance he needs. What the Railway Department requires, and what every Government department requires—I speak from experience on this point—is the introduction of business habits and business principles into the minds of the rank and file. The rank and file, especially in the Railway Department, need to be made to feel that they are servants of the public conducting great, indeed huge, business concerns, and that civility and attention to their duties are as much a part of the system as the drawing of their salaries. So far as I can ascertain, Mr. George's administration is tending towards these desirable ends. Certain merchants in my own district, with whom I am acquainted, have spoken in glowing terms of the difference in the business methods of the railway system since Mr. George's appointment. When complaints of delay in the supply of trucks and so forth are made, instead of the stereotyped reply being received, "Your letter has been received, and will in due course be attended to," and six weeks after something coming to hand that will make a man, I shall not say swear, but that will not conduce to piety, now the complaints are looked into and rectified in a couple of days, and cases are judged as they deserve to be. Therefore, I say in all sincerity that whatever mistake may have been made in the appointment of

Mr. George, it is justifiable to maintain that he is giving satisfaction to the business men of the State at the present time. The Premier made one great mistake: possibly his loyalty to his late chief led him into it. The hon. gentleman had a unique opportunity of, instead of confirming the appointment, coming down to the House and saying to hon. members, "I must have your approbation before confirming this appointment."

MR. MORAN: That is the principle.

HON. G. THROSSELL: That would have been the proper course for my friend the Premier to take.

MR. DOHERTY: Oh, he has the majority, and can do as he likes.

HON. G. THROSSELL: We must banish from our minds the thought that we are at the end of our railway construction. I urge on the Government the construction in the near future of several new railways—notably a line from Bunbury to Albany, which will tap rich areas of karri and agricultural land.

MR. MORAN: And knock out Esperance.

HON. G. THROSSELL: Another project we have heard a little of is a railway from Collie to Kellerberrin. Yet another railway of great service to the country, one which would tap our great Northern Goldfields, is the Port Hedland line. Still another necessary addition to our railway system is the extension of the Goomalling line. We shall have to face the necessity for extending that railway. It would be premature to enter fully into the project now; but at the proper time I expect to have even the support of the goldfields members for it. We need a short cut to the North for our stock: we cannot continue to send it over the long and tedious journey to Midland Junction and thence along the Midland Railway. The Goomalling line must be extended to link with the Midland. That extension will tap country fit to hold thousands of people. I shall be particularly justified in advocating the project if the State succeed in acquiring the Midland line. For the present, I say merely that one railway shortly to be extended is that much-talked-of, that most prosperous and successful of our agricultural lines, the Goomalling.

At 6-33, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

HON. G. THROSSELL (continuing): I cannot close my remarks on the railway policy enunciated by the Government without saying I consider the House and the country are alike much indebted to the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nanson) for moving his amendment, inasmuch as it afforded the Government opportunity for making a fair and satisfactory defence of their railway policy, and for putting the whole question in a different light before the country. The Minister for Railways (Hon. C. H. Rason) has already announced that the Government are prepared to hand back a certain sum from general revenue to recoup the railways for any loss they sustain in opening up new country or assisting new industries. In that proposal there is nothing original. It was the same principle that was carried out, or intended to be carried out, in the development of the Collie coal-fields. I remember when my friend on the right (Hon. F. H. Piessé) made a stout resistance to the then Premier, Sir John Forrest, and maintained that the railways should not be run at a loss. And if my memory serves me, it was ultimately settled that we should submit to a loss for the development of those coal-fields, to be recouped at the end of the year by a special grant from the Treasury. While I am altogether at one with the Minister in his proposal, I repeat it is not original; but it has my very ardent support, for it is quite clear that if we pin our faith to a cast-iron rule that our railways must pay directly, we shall have very few railways indeed. To my mind, that is a fatal position to take up. It is right enough in a settled country, where there will be no further developments; but for a new Statelike this, with resources to develop, it would be a great mistake. Moreover, no loss will be sustained by the general revenue. If we run a railway through country worthy of that railway, the result will put the Government of the day in a position to recoup the loss; because the railway will attract a new population, will enable land to be sold, will create new developments; and all these will pay for any loss created by the Government policy. So I consider this a wise and

justifiable policy, especially in a new country. With regard to the sliding-scale, I am altogether in accord with the position the Premier has taken up. I consider it would be absolutely suicidal, at this juncture of our affairs, deliberately to forfeit part of our income. I am quite willing to concede the contention of the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), when he says a portion of the revenue derived from this source is not protective revenue. I am quite willing, if we can afford it, to give up the huge butter duty, cheese duty, tinned milk duty, and various other duties that are of no positive help to the farmer. But while I say we are willing—we could do that as producers—I will not have it said we are maintaining the sliding-scale solely in the interests of the producer. We are not doing that; and we must be candid about it. The producers can afford to part with those duties; but, having conceded that much, I take my stand beside the Premier and say the sliding-scale should be maintained. And why? As part of a contract entered into by those who we believe were the wisest men in Australasia. We were told that the drafting of the Commonwealth Bill was the work of the wisest men of Australasia. We were told by one of our greatest actuarial experts that we stood to lose so much by federation. Our anticipations of benefits derivable from federation have not been realised, simply because some of us did not perceive that we should have a dual tariff; but, had we entered on federation at the outset with free-trade pure and simple, I say we should to-day be in a disastrous position; and I would remind members interested in this great question that, though the producers can afford, in the interests of cheap living, to dispense with a portion of those duties, yet history teaches us conclusively that cheap living is accompanied by low wages and scanty work. I feel sure that neither the Government of the day nor the Labour party, who are deeply interested in this question, would assist to bring about such a disastrous state of things as would result in men seeking work and not finding it. If living were cheaper, there would be lower wages and less work. I am very earnest in that contention; and if I desired to weary the House, it would not be difficult to show conclusively that had we not the

sliding-scale in pursuance of our contract, then notwithstanding our great prosperity, instead of a surplus, we should have a deficit of £70,000 or £80,000. I believe I am right in saying that in round numbers we derive £200,000 from the sliding-scale duties. We have now a surplus of about £123,000. But had we not been £200,000 to the good by reason of the sliding-scale, it is clear we should have to face a deficit. What would that mean? What will it mean later on, when the duties are removed? It will mean cutting down public works. While we shall have cheap living, it is deplorable to think that cheap living will lower wages. It is a mere truism to say so. Is it better to have the loaf at 6d. and many sixpences to buy it with, than to have the loaf at 1d. and pennies very scarce indeed? I am altogether at one with the Government in maintaining this contract, in the interests, not of the producers, but of the State. A very few months will elapse ere we have to face a loss of one-fifth of the protection afforded by the sliding-scale; and before we can breathe, so to speak, we shall have to dispense with the sliding-scale altogether. But I wish to say now, in all seriousness, that my views of the sliding-scale and of the object of the contract entered into are held altogether irrespective of the mere financial question. What was the object of securing this five-years' grace? I say it was recognised by myself and by many others working beside me, that immediate competition between the other States and this State would result in Western Australia going to the wall. It was wisely devised that we should have five years' breathing time; firstly to save disorganisation of our finances, and secondly to give us time to develop our resources and establish industries, so that when free-trade became an accomplished fact we should be on a better footing to face the competition of the established industries of older States, instead of facing it at once. And I ask, with all respect, what, in this connection, should be the Government policy? At present we are sending away from the State large sums for various articles of commerce which this country is well able to produce for itself. My advice to the Government would be, in a new and undeveloped country such as this, to take

time by the forelock, and to the very fullest extent act up to the contract we have entered into. We deplore the fact that in the past we sent away so much money for flour, chaff, and wheat. Surely we are gradually overtaking the shortage in production of those articles, and are within measurable distance—very much closer than some members think—of having a surplus of wheat, of fruit, of vegetables, and of many other products. Then I ask, what should be our policy? To act up to that contract to its fullest limit; to secure to this State the privilege of initiating what has been so powerful a factor in promoting the prosperity of the other States—a wise bonus system for the encouragement of our industries. It is not part of my duty now to show how this bonus system may be worked; but at the proper time I will be able to do so. Members know that under Section 95 we are forbidden, now that we have entered into federation, to do anything whatever to encourage private enterprise by the bonus system. The only industry to which this observation does not apply is that under the control of my friend the Minister for Mines. Apart from that we can do nothing. Yet we are allowed under the contract to initiate a system, and I would urge the Government to decide in Cabinet what particular industries it is desirable we should encourage, or what will be forced upon us by development, and arrange with the Federal Government. It is provided clearly in the Act that we must have the assent of the Upper House and of the Lower House of the Federal Parliament before we can introduce any such system. How easy it would be to adopt such a system in regard to flour, but it will be impossible until we have a surplus of wheat. Until we have a surplus of fruit, jam factories and fruit-canning factories are impossible; and so on in other directions. You will find that one of the chief products for the benefit of the gold-fields people consists of vegetables, and vegetables in different forms—dry vegetables and so on. We know that our country needs to do this and can do it, and private enterprise is not coming along as quickly as we could desire. My own opinion is that it is owing to the fact that the bulk of our population is made up of self-made men, men who began at the

lowest rung of the ladder and have worked themselves up to a modest competency. In the other States they are surrounded by capitalists who are willing to put their hands in their pockets and help industries. It is clearly the duty of the Government to devise some means by which private enterprise can be fostered. I know that opponents of the bonus system tell me that the proposal is full of danger, and that other States have made a mistake. We can take advantage of the experience of the other States and go into a system which will secure what we desire, that being the establishment of new industries and the apprenticing of lads to those industries. The promotion of technical education may help forward this object. Let us do this, so that when we have to face free-trade we shall be able to fight it in many directions. Machinery is used in various directions, and if you take the statistics you will be surprised to find the huge amount that arrives. If the system I advocate were adopted we should be building up villages and towns and giving occupation to thousands of people. The industry which I have the honour of representing, however unworthily, that of agriculture, does in itself set in motion those forces which make for the promotion of hamlet, village, and city; affording occupation to the makers of harness, or the most complicated machinery that can be produced. All this is done by agriculture. I feel, and have felt for many years when seeing this development go forward, these broad acres brought under cultivation to supply food to man, that it is just as disastrous to send money away for machinery as to send money away for flour. The adoption of a wise bonus system will help materially. It will not do everything, but it will give every inducement to private enterprise which is so necessary. We know there is plenty of money, there being in the Savings Bank £1,800,000, besides the money in the ordinary banks. Possibly if civil servants and others were paid a bonus on private enterprise and the Government guaranteed five per cent. interest for a good number of years, that would at once cause them to remove their money from the bank and invest it in private enterprise. If we guaranteed the interest on £100,000 at five per cent., it would be

the happiest state of things if we called for the whole amount, because it would show that the system was answering and bringing into existence a number of factories in various directions to give employment to our people. Woe betide the State if when the years of grace have expired we have lived up to the whole of our income, and have not provided for the competition that will be experienced in every line after we have had five years of federation, when we shall have free-trade between the States. I have said enough on that subject. I have given expression to my feelings in the hope—and I believe my friend the Premier is with me—that the Government will initiate the system that I have ventured to introduce into this House on more than one occasion. A Bill was brought in. I had asked Sir John Forrest for some years to sanction this Act which is now in existence, and had not federation come along, the system possibly would have been initiated by to-day. I desire to draw attention to one paragraph of the Speech, in which credit is taken for the increase of population. That increase has been a very pleasant matter for some people, and I know quite well that population means wealth, and that the 30,000 people we gained last year represented, even with the revenue and abnormal conditions, £150,000 saved to the State, and consequently relieved the debt on our shoulders to the extent of three and a half millions. I confess that the present rush of population is filling me with uneasiness, filling me with doubt. I will tell you why. The population now coming to us are all from the Eastern States. They are, so to speak, a drought-driven population; a great many of them are dead-beats. And Western Australia, if not Australia as a whole, does not lend itself to such a sudden influx of population. We have not the broad prairies of Canada; we cannot place hosts of men on the land. We have these men coming to us, often from what I hear, penniless, disorganising our labour market and inflicting upon us many of the dangers of the Eastern States, owing to their depression and their misfortune. It will be a lamentable condition of things for this State, with all our resources flourishing, to have people, so to speak, thrown upon us,

disorganising our labour market, and to have before Christmas, I fear, an outcry of the unemployed. No one will accuse me of being a pessimist. I think if I err at all I err on the other side. Although I have said this, I still urge an earnest endeavour to increase our population, but it must be a population that will become permanent, a population that we can retain; and we know that as a wave of adversity in the Eastern States has sent a population to us, a wave of adversity in our State or a wave of prosperity in the other States will take those people from us as quickly as they have come; and I fear that there is a danger of awakening from a fool's paradise. The question will naturally arise, are we to have any increase of population? I say we want population, and that with the slice of the map we possess there is room here for millions. But as I said just now, this State will not lend itself to the sudden influx of men without money in their pockets. What shall we do then to increase the population? I would not go to the Eastern States: they will always come to us. We want men with a few hundreds of pounds in their pockets who can be induced to come from the old country. If paying the passage of people means the introduction of people who will have to be sustained at the public cost, then I say emphatically, no. But if it means an inducement to men with two or three hundred pounds of capital who are starved out of English farms and seeking better homes, then I say these are the men who should be encouraged to come here free of cost, and in addition to that have a system inaugurated which will take them from Fremantle and place them straight on the land. Members will agree with me that it would be a better policy to pay the passages of men with money in their pockets, although their capital should not be taxed, than to pay the passages of people who will be a trouble to us. I want to touch upon what I consider a grave omission from the Governor's Speech. I am not preaching any new doctrine. I would like to have seen embodied in that Speech an announcement of the intention of the Government to deal in some material fashion with the agricultural land of absentees. No one knows better than myself possibly that this country has

been made to suffer by huge areas of land being locked up, nothing being done with them. We have arrived at that juncture of affairs now when we must have no more tinkering with the public interests. We have had slices of land held by men in London who will get the unearned increment, and our railways have to bear the burden. In speaking about the land of absentees that is suitable for agriculture—and here I desire to emphasise the words “suitable for agriculture”—I have in my mind's eye large areas of land owned by the Midland Railway Company lying dormant now. When the day comes, and I hope it will soon come, when we shall acquire the Midland Railway and the company's land, care should be taken that we do not awaken in a fool's paradise and find that the eyes of the land have been taken out. I would like to see something done in the way of a compulsory improvement clause in regard to the absentee lands. I have often been twitted by my old friend Sir John Forrest in the past that we should take care what we do, because, he said, “It will give me a bad name in London.” Have we not heard that cry too often? If it is said in London, “You are interfering with the people who have taken up your land in good faith,” we are only interfering in the same way as we do with the poor fellow who takes up 100 or 500 acres, and who has taken up the land on conditions of fencing and certain improvements. The time has arrived when we should consider whether all the land, within a certain radius of railways, owned by absentees should not be subject to certain conditions of improvement similar to those connected with our own lands. We have let off the absentees too long. We have let them off for 50 years, and we should say to them, “We are only compelling you to do what our own people have done.” I urge on the Government to do this, and I trust it will come before the House separates, and when it does come I believe my contention will have the support of the Labour leader. With regard to the Midland Railway, I can only say that I am glad there is a passage in the Speech which says that it is intended to make all private companies keep to their contracts and serve the public. I can only say that words fail me to express the

feelings I have in respect to the Midland Railway Company, with all the deceit and dodgery which have accompanied them from their inception. If we have learned no other lesson, we have learned that no other Government will in future consent to allow a railway to be built on the land-grant system, or will allow a railway to be run by private enterprise. There would have to be very liberal conditions indeed which would allow me to support a private railway. Land, railways, water, and light should always be in the hands of the people of the country, either through the municipalities or by the Government direct. What do we see in connection with land-grant railways? It is impossible for them to settle their lands under conditions similar to those provided by the land laws of this State. And we have a rival railway policy. My friend the Premier spoke the other night of the difficulty in connection with party politics. I say there is a time when there should be party politics and a great cleavage on high principles. When it is presumed to inaugurate a system which is not for the benefit of the country, at such a time it will be the duty of the Opposition to join hands and say, "We will oust the Government who will foist such a system upon us." There is another matter which I intend to urge on the Government, and because of their inexperience probably they have missed it. I call attention to the report which is on the table of the Inspector of Fisheries, but I have no intention of dealing with the fishing business generally, only with the fishing industry in the North-West. I have dealt with this question previously. During the last session we sent away £130,000 worth of pearl-shell and pearls, and what do members think is the revenue which we derived from that? Mr. Gale's report shows that we took £200 for boat licenses, and there was sent away the huge amount of £134,000. We know the class of labour employed on the boats: it is inferior labour. I would urge on the Government that they should go back and restore the old order of things, which existed in days gone by when we levied an export duty of £4 per ton on pearl-shell. The idea of £200 being received from an industry which sends away £134,000 per annum! As to the land question I would like to say a little, and I offer my hearty con-

gratulations to the new Minister for Lands for the wise manner in which he is dealing with this great question. He is a man of lofty ideals and sound, practical common sense, which does not often accompany a man possessed of a lofty ideal, and I hope he will do well in his office. I hope he will do all he can to encourage labour to keep out of the towns and go on to the land; and I would like him to give attention to that amendment which I took the trouble of introducing last session, by which every labourer in the State would be entitled to a free farm of 10 acres. When the Government are laying out agricultural areas, as they are doing now, it will only be a wise policy to lay out suitable reserves in the areas for every man in the land who wishes to settle on a free 10-acre block, in close proximity to the large farmer, where the labourer will be able to carry on his work amidst pleasant surroundings. I would induce the men to leave the towns and settle in the country. And let us compare the condition of 100 men settled on their 10-acre blocks, and entitled to go to the Agricultural Bank for a loan to improve their holdings, with a similar number of men settled in congested cities in little tenements. In the one case the men will maintain their independence and respect, whilst the 100 in the slums will be clamouring at the Cabinet door for work. I feel this question very deeply, and if I do err, then I err in good company, for the greatest statesmen of Europe and of the other States urge a similar policy of inducing people to settle on the land. It is not the first time I have stood here and said that the Lands Department has been starved for the want of money and for the want of surveyors. Money can be spent in no better way than by surveying areas and making them ready for selection. At the close of last session I asked a question that a surveyor be sent during the winter to survey land near Goomalling, country which was ready to be thrown open for selection, and also to inquire as to the advisability or otherwise of extending the railway. Winter has gone, and there is an active demand for the land, which is known to be exceptionally good, and yet no surveyor has been there. In reply to a question I have been told that no surveyor was available. I hope the

Premier will take a note of this. There should be plenty of money made available for the survey of land. I know what I am talking about. Some people take a wrong view of it, but we should recognise that money spent in the actual survey of land means the quicker settlement of the land. I am sure I have the Premier with me in these remarks respecting the land ; and I believe that in Dr. Jameson we have one who will do his very best to carry out these ideas. My remarks would not be complete if I did not say something about the reduction of members in the House and the redistribution of seats. I may possibly stand alone, but consistency compels me to say that if I had the power I would reduce members of this House to 40, and reduce the membership of the other House proportionately. I know I may be told there is good argument on the other side, but we have the example of South Australia before us. When we reflect that we are governed by fourteen Parliaments in Australia, with a population less than that of the city of London, and when we remember what South Australia is doing with a population of nearly 400,000, we surely should be proud enough to stand by this, not on the score of economy, but on the score of common sense. One of the boasts of the Premier and of other ardent federalists was that a great many spending departments had been taken away; therefore under Federation we should be able to reduce our membership. And I, too, would go farther and say, "Why not begin with the Ministers themselves?—reduce their number from six to five, if not to four." What would be the resultant advantage? We should have larger electorates and a larger number to choose from; possibly we should obtain men of broader minds; instead of roads-and-bridges members, men who may claim to be statesmen. Although these views may not prove acceptable to hon. members generally, still consistency demands that I should stand by my opinions. I should reduce the members of this House to 40, and the members of another place in like proportion. As regards redistribution, I hope my young friend the Premier, who undoubtedly has the best interests of his country at heart, will give due consideration to the circumstance that a just

redistribution cannot be effected on anything approaching a population basis. There must be a fair representation of industries. I believe nothing but good can come of this; and in advancing my views I have to add that the sooner we arrange for reduction of members and redistribution of seats, and the sooner we make an appeal to the country as a whole, the better will the country be pleased. I for one, although an old member of Parliament, am quite willing to run the risk of whether I shall be returned or not. Whatever the future may bring forth, whether I return to this House or not, I am satisfied that the sentiments to which I am now giving utterance are, and will be recognised as being, in the best interests of the country. I do not desire to trespass on the time of the House longer, though there are many subjects upon which a practical knowledge of administration might afford helpful hints to Ministers. It is quite clear that in a country like this, with such a scattered population, we must have liberal roads boards grants. We must have, also, liberal arrangements for water conservation; not only throughout our agricultural areas and along our stock routes, but wherever water is required by the people, whether it be in an agricultural district or on a newly-discovered goldfield. The Government must not hesitate to supply the people with water. In another direction I have to impress strongly on the Government our need for economical and vigorous administration. Although I have given utterance to-night to some views which may not commend themselves to every member of the House, there is no fear whatever. I am surprised, however, that gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench have not taken full advantage of the position of this State. When we reflect that last year we had a trade of fifteen millions sterling, although our resources are just at their a-b-c of development, so to speak, we must see that there is no room whatever for a doubt as to the future of this great State. I desire to say, farther, that while I honour the young Premier, I recognise too that whether he be in office or whether the Premiership be held by my friend Mr. Nanson, the Premier needs all the support which can be given him by members

possessing a fair grasp of the country. I am impelled to say that it is the paramount duty of the old members of this House to support any Government in power, to give any Government a general support, correcting the ignorance of Ministers if they show ignorance, and helping Ministers with such suggestions as we can hardly expect to occur to them. Many legislative and some public works projects presenting themselves here must be quite new to the present or to any future Premier. We are called a country party. Let us be a country party, and let that name be interpreted to mean that our country is at all times before our party, that we will ever labour to remember that we serve our party best when we serve our country best. I am giving no set speech, but am uttering merely the thoughts that occur to me, with a deep love of my country and a deep anxiety to see the best done for it. I reiterate, I conceive it to be my duty to give support to any inexperienced Minister, always maintaining my own independence, and always observing that there must be a cleavage. While I like the Government to go my way I am not quite such a fool as to expect that they will always go with me; but I do say, and I desire to say it publicly, that whether my friend Mr. Nanson be in office, or whether it be my friend Mr. James, our present Premier, such experience as I have, if the Premier of the day think it worthy of acceptance, will be always at his disposal, not in the interests of either the James Government or the Nanson Government, but in the best interests of our country, Western Australia. (General applause.)

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth): Speaking at this late stage of the debate I intend to be brief. I do not purpose to traverse or criticise the Governor's Speech paragraph by paragraph, but shall select merely two or three leading items and criticise them, as I hope my friends on the Treasury bench will ultimately admit, in an honest and a wholesome fashion. It seems to me that a number of blots are to be found on the Speech, though I intend to confine myself, as I have said, to but three of the number. One of these three is a blot of commission, and I consider it a grave blot indeed. The two other blots I may designate as blots of omission. Before alluding to these three

cardinal matters, as I may term them, standing forth in the Speech and deserving of the most earnest attention, I wish to refer briefly to the matter of the railways and railway administration. The railway administration, indeed, has been prominent from the very commencement of the debate. One of the last speakers on this (Ministerial) side of the House characterised the railway administration of Western Australia as the "Waterloo" of every Railway Minister this State has seen. The expression is rather an unfortunate one; at any rate, I cannot consider it happy, because the view one takes of Waterloo depends altogether on whether he be British or French. I have no doubt every holder of the railways portfolio will claim to have been on the side of the British, and will be therefore glad to characterise his railway administration as his Waterloo, since in the result he comes out well on top. A better expression, to my mind, and an expression conveying a large measure of truth, would be that the railway administration of this State has been the grave of the reputation of nearly every Railway Minister, if not of all Railway Ministers. And this is not owing altogether to the fault of the Ministers themselves, but rather owing to the fault of a system which from the very beginning has been pernicious in character—necessarily pernicious. The system was one which allowed waste, extravagance, leakage, and fraud to permeate almost every branch of that vast business, that large asset of which we have heard so much. That there have been leakage, waste, extravagance, and fraud is of course manifest to all of us. We have heard this stated for years. The recollection of the things which have come to light, discoveries made from time to time of leakages and frauds—I may mention the Perth Ice Company frauds in particular—leads me to point out that my experience in the unravelling of defalcations and of wastefulness has shown that these evils are of a chronic character, that for every ounce you are able to put your finger on there is, behind, a pound or a hundred-weight that you cannot reach or discover. Let hon. members bear in mind the discoveries in which the inquiry into the ice frauds resulted; let them consider what those discoveries amounted to. It is

plain that the frauds in question had been going on for years continuously, and had been chronic in character. Do hon. members think we got to the bottom of the matter? Not a bit of it. The Perth Ice Company was brought in a debtor to the State to the extent of something like £2,000; but does anyone think that this amount represented the full extent of the frauds? It is an open secret that timber of a certain class, chargeable with a high rate of freight, has been sent up to the goldfields, ton by ton and truck by truck, veneered over, as it were, with another class of timber carried at a much lower rate, the whole of the timber, as a result, being carried at that much lower rate.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Can you give an instance of that?

MR. PURKISS: We heard the same sort of statement regarding the transshipment by the railway, of cattle. I am not prepared to prove that there is anything in either the timber business or the cattle business; but, so far as the Perth Ice Company is concerned, some degree of certainty was reached. However, to make a long story short, both sides of the House are on common ground in the statement that the administration of our State railways has been honeycombed with leakage, wastefulness, and a want of trying to get at the bottom of things. Minister after Minister has tried, no doubt honestly, to probe the system to the bottom; but by reason of the system itself his efforts have been frustrated. A striking fault of the system is one which has been brought more especially to my attention since I have been in Parliament. I can see that practically the whole of the Minister's time is occupied by trifles. There he is, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, dealing with little twopenny-half-penny departmental matters which consume practically the whole of his time. A railway servant has a grievance, or somebody wants to get employment in the railway service; and be the individual ever so humble, nevertheless you find him at the Minister's door knocking for an interview, on what no doubt to the individual himself means a great deal, but what is, nevertheless, a matter in respect of which the Minister should never be troubled.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: During the whole time of my administration only four men came to me seeking employment.

MR. PURKISS: Then your case constitutes a wonderful exception, and I can only congratulate you. The position comes to this. We have discovered that the existing system, which manifestly involves waste, extravagance, and leakage of every description, has led to an improper loading of the expense rate of our railways, and that consequently freights have had to be kept up, and even had to be increased two months ago, merely by reason of wasteful expenditure. Therefore, I think the Government—when I speak of the Government I do not refer to the immediate Administration or the late Administration, for this is a continuous Administration, all one Administration—did wrong in not trying to do a few months ago what they are at the present moment seeking to do; namely, to put the administration of the railways on such a basis as will prevent leakage, waste, and extravagance. Was that not a humiliating admission made by the Minister recently, that something like 118 of the department's wagons were lost—that the officials did not know where those wagons had got to? No wonder the customers of our railways have to pay high rates. No wonder the rates are increased when the system is such. And, be it remembered, this kind of administration has been going on for years. I think the Ministry, before imposing increased rates on agricultural produce, on timber, coal, and other commodities, should have used their best endeavours to set the departmental house in order, to get to the bottom of this wastefulness, to stop this extravagance, this rapine as it were, upon the funds and other assets of the railways, before saying one word about increasing the rates. Having increased the rates, they are going backward and are making—I give them every credit for it—an earnest endeavour to get to the bottom of the maladministration that has gone on for so many years; and I have not the slightest doubt that when they have set their house in order and initiated a pure and economical administration, they will find they can easily take off all the increased rates imposed on various commodities, from timber upwards or downwards, a few

months ago. I recognise that the railways should pay interest on the money borrowed to build them, together with working expenses and sinking fund. It is very well for us to talk of doing away with the sinking fund; but if we go to the money market to borrow, we go to the English creditor with the loan earmarked. We say to investors, "Lend us so many millions for this particular object." The amount applied for is earmarked in the schedule to the Loan Act, wherein we say the interest on the loan shall be so much, and there shall be provided a sinking fund; so that there is a solemn contract between debtor and creditor. We borrowed the money on the understanding that we should provide a sinking fund, and pay so much interest on the money borrowed. I therefore recognise that our railways must be made to pay interest, working expenses, and a sinking fund; and that all earnings in excess should go in reduction of rates. I am of opinion that in order to bring about a reform, our railways should be almost absolutely governed by one good, strong, honest, commercial head, and that such head should have under him good lieutenants. Now from all we have heard in this House, month after month and year after year, our railways have not been managed by a good, strong, straightforward head, and good, strong, loyal lieutenants. That is where the trouble is. I do not care what you call this general manager of the railways. He may be called "General Manager" or "Commissioner."

MR. DOHERTY: Call him a general servant, at once.

MR. PURKISS: I do not think we can have a better example than the management of the large railways of the world. How are the English railways managed? There is a company, with its directors equivalent to our Parliament. [MR. DOHERTY: No.] The directors are the representatives of the shareholders who own the concern. The directors appoint a general manager and give him plenary powers. All the directors do is simply to have a voice as the owners of the property, and to say "Our rates are to be so-and-so."

MR. DOHERTY: But the directors appoint their manager.

MR. PURKISS: So do the Government here, who are representatives of the people.

MR. DOHERTY: Do the Government, and not Parliament, represent the people?

MR. PURKISS: We in Parliament appoint the Government, our directors; and the Government appoint the General Manager or Commissioner. Give him plenary powers, reserving to Parliament, or to the Government who represent Parliament, certain control as owners of the property; such control as to say what the rates shall be, as for instance whether they shall be differential, to decide their quantity and quality. Beyond that, I say I should give a good strong, honest, commercial man full power to manage the railways, uncontrolled by this Parliament; because if we seek to control every act of our General Manager or Commissioner, we shall have either a man who will not stand it, or one who will be an abject slave to his position. I am altogether opposed to the appointment of three Commissioners. It leads to circumlocution. If, instead of one Commissioner who has to act and can act in a moment, you have three Commissioners, there is a formal meeting called, also a secretary taking minutes, motions proposed, differences of opinion, discussion, all leading to circumlocution, and — a bigger danger than ever — leading to a feeling of want of responsibility. One Commissioner transfers responsibility to another. We find two carrying out a certain line of policy against a minority of one, who may tell the public, "I did not agree to that." And on another question we shall find that Commissioner joined with another against the third, who in his turn is in a minority; and he will say, "I was not responsible for that." This will cut away the sense of responsibility which one sole Commissioner would feel so irrevocably fixed on his shoulders. With three we shall have this divided responsibility, which in some cases will lead to no responsibility at all. Let us have one good, strong man. He need not be an engineer, nor need he be a traffic manager; because if he have the nous and the commercial training and the observation to be able to select good lieutenants—a first-class traffic manager and an equally competent locomotive

engineer as divisional commanders—if he have honesty and good commercial training, sound common sense and strict probity, then I know of no reason why the concern should not run smoothly. The same system runs smoothly with companies owning railways worth more than all the railways of Western Australia; and most of the railways run on this system are made to pay; satisfaction is given to the public, to the officers, to the directors, and finally to the shareholders when they receive their $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. dividend.

MR. DOHERTY: It is not easy to get the man you talk about.

MR. PURKISS: No; it is very difficult.

MR. DOHERTY: You would have to build him. He is not in Western Australia.

MR. PURKISS: Of course, in all circumstances of life it is difficult to get a first-class man.

MINISTER: There would be the same difficulty in getting a General Manager.

MR. PURKISS: Exactly. What would your best general do if he had not good divisional commanders? Passing away from this, and just touching on the appointment of Mr. George, I cannot help thinking the Government have not made a mistake in appointing him a Commissioner.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is a bad system.

MR. PURKISS: The system may have been bad. The appointment was made by the immediate predecessors of this continuous Ministry, and has been loyally confirmed by the present Government. Both sides of the House have admitted Mr. George's straightforwardness, honesty, and strength; and I think they have credited him with a very large measure of commercial experience. I think that man, if he make a clean sweep of all those divisional commanders and those lieutenants, and go out of his way to select good divisional commanders and good lieutenants, will succeed. Let him be entirely free from political influence, and I think there will be an end to the maladministration of the railways, of which we have been throughout this debate complaining.

MR. CONNOR: Would you allow him to fix the rates?

MR. PURKISS: No. I say, let the owners fix the rates. I think the owners should retain that power.

MR. JACOBY: Then you again divide the responsibility.

MR. PURKISS: No.

MR. JACOBY: How can he make the railways pay if he cannot fix the rates?

MR. PURKISS: In a word, I have nothing to complain of in the appointment of Mr. George. If we imported the best man obtainable in England, but did not give him undivided control, what would be the effect? When the Victorian Government imported Mr. Speight, they thought they had secured one of the best railway managers in the world; and perhaps they had, but he was the victim of political influence; and that political influence, *plus* the influence of one of the large newspapers in the State, absolutely crippled that man in pocket, and ultimately, no doubt, killed him. And such has been the history of nearly all the best railway men imported to Australia. If we brought down an angel from heaven, endowed with the highest attributes which could possibly be desired in a railway manager, and we allowed political influence to operate, then in a few years we should have to say to him, "The time has arrived when you must go," or we should make the life of that angel so miserable that he would perish in good name, would be ruined in pocket, and would ultimately die.

MR. JACOBY: Try someone from the other place.

MR. PURKISS: I now come to what I have alluded to as the blots in this Speech, and I have limited my remarks to three of these, because at this stage of the debate I do not wish to speak at length. What I consider the biggest blot in the Speech is a blot of commission. [MR. DOHERTY: That is the five per cent.] It is nothing about five per cent. It is to be found in the eighteenth paragraph, which refers to the retention of the dual system of taxation, to the retention of inter-State duties *plus* the Federal duties. The paragraph reads:—

In October last the Commonwealth Government commenced the collection of Federal duties, and Section 95 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act came into operation. That section provides us with the means of raising a revenue sufficiently large to meet the ever-increasing needs of a rapidly growing State,

and is also recognised as exercising a fostering influence in the establishment and growth of industries, which by such encouragement promise to add to our permanent wealth and prosperity.

The Government distinctly throw down the gauntlet by saying, "No surrender," in respect of the imposition of the inter-State duties and the Federal duties. Well, to me that savours of madness. We have heard various reasons given for federating, from the time the joint select committee of both Houses sat to inquire into the desirableness of entering the Commonwealth. They took much evidence, and were engaged a long time in considering whether it was wise or unwise to enter this Commonwealth; whether the Commonwealth Bill should be sent to the people. Many reasons were given us in respect of Section 95 of the Commonwealth Bill, and we have heard many since. First of all, it has been said, "We cannot afford to do away with the inter-State duties, because we cannot afford to lose the revenue." On the other hand, it is said by the producers, by the agriculturists, "Do not remove these inter-State duties. We cannot afford to lose the protection they give to our native industries." I was very much pleased—and I do not know what the supporters of the retention of this dual system of taxation will say, those supporters who look at it from an agricultural point of view—with reference to the remarks of the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell) to-night. The hon. member admitted candidly and fully that half of these duties do not protect at all, and will not protect. He says, "We do not want them: they are no good to us as protective." He makes that assertion as clearly as possible, and it will appear in print. He made, I assert, the most candid and most full admission that many of these inter-State duties do not protect; mentioning the very items, such as ham, bacon, butter, and so forth.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: He was talking of wheat-producing districts.

MR. PURKISS: He mentioned ham, onions, bacon, and so on. No wonder members representing other agricultural districts feel unhappy.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It is one-sided.

MR. PURKISS: What are we to believe? Are we to believe that it is right to maintain these duties in the interests of revenue, or is it right that we should maintain them in the interests of protection? When it was first suggested, as it was at that joint committee to which I have alluded, when tongue was first given to the argument that we must retain all our powers under Section 95, because we could not afford to part with revenue, our revenue was £2,500,000—

MR. DOHERTY: When?

MR. PURKISS: In 1899. Our revenue was £2,500,000 when we were saying that we could not afford to lose £200,000 a year. Since then our revenue has gone up to £3,700,000, and here we have the same old cry, "We can't afford to lose it, because our revenue won't stand it." If we could not stand it when our revenue was two and a half millions, cannot we stand it now when our revenue is £3,700,000? What nonsense! Our revenue has been going up by leaps and bounds, terrific leaps and bounds, leaps and bounds which, I fear, will lead us into very great disaster and trouble by-and-by. Our revenue in 1898-99 was, I repeat, £2,500,000; in 1899-00, £2,800,000; in 1900-01, £3,078,000; and now, £3,700,000. Here is a revenue equivalent to something like £18 a head extracted from 205,000 or 210,000 people. It is the highest taxed country existing. I defy anyone to prove that there is a higher taxed country in the world. Even Turkey or China cannot touch it. We get from the pockets of every man, woman, and child something like £18 10s. In Tasmania, which has about the same population as Western Australia, the revenue barely reaches a million. In New Zealand, with about 800,000 people, it is about six millions. And here we, a little State with 200,000 people or a little over, are obtaining a revenue of £3,700,000; yet we are told in the face of this that we should not repeal the inter-State duties on the ground of revenue. After what the member for Northam has said, if other agricultural members want proof I can show that these duties are not protective in many instances, but in others they are affording, together with a natural protection, such a difference in price as to amount to something like 50 or 60 per

cent., compared with the outside article. In Victoria duties of 25 per cent. went up to 30 and 35. Many people were horrified, and you will be horrified to find the extent of the difference existing between the prices of commodities in Adelaide and Melbourne and the prices here. Take the case of onions, an article of very large consumption indeed, in fact a necessary, people to a very large extent living on onions.

MR. DOHERTY: I hope not. (General laughter.)

MR. PURKISS: When I say "living on onions," I mean that the onion, in some form or other, is to be found associated with almost every dish on every table; at any rate, we have only to look at the number of tons of onions consumed in any colony or in any part of the world to know what a very large article of consumption onions are. The Melbourne prices last Saturday week show that they were sold for £6. My figures are taken from the *Argus* and *Australasian* of that date, the wholesale price being given. Here in Western Australia onions were quoted by the West Australian Produce—I forget the term, but at any rate the leading firm of produce merchants always quoted by the *West Australian* every Saturday morning—the price of onions quoted last Saturday morning was £10 to £11, a difference of 65 per cent. We get most of our onions from Melbourne, and the price here is, I repeat, 65 per cent. higher than in that city. That 65 per cent. represents the natural and artificial protection.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Is the difference accounted for by the duties?

MR. PURKISS: The difference is not accounted for by the duties, but I say that if you take the duties off you find 45 per cent. of natural protection. Is not 45 per cent. of natural protection enough for you? Do you want 65 per cent.?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: All we can get.

MR. PURKISS: "All we can get"—exactly. We are paying for onions 65 per cent. more, and if you just look at the state of things with reference to onions you will find that for the season ending the 28th February, 1900, we produced locally 349 tons, for the season ending 28th February, 1901, we produced 190 tons, so that actually in the year 1901 we produced 159 tons of onions less than

we did the year before. Is this duty, then, protecting onions? It seems to me to be driving all production of onions out of the country. Here are the figures taken from the statistician's returns. I have them in print, as well as in my own manuscript. Notwithstanding this high measure of protection we had 349 tons of onions produced in one year, and 190 tons in the next, showing, I repeat, an absolute deficiency of 159 tons. What is the use of talking to us about levying a duty on onions to protect the native industry, when it is not doing so, and when the actual production is less? Take the case of potatoes, which are necessary, and of which there is a very large consumption by almost everyone, especially by the poorer classes. The price of potatoes in Melbourne, according to the last quotations in the *Argus* and *Australasian*, the same papers of the same date, was for prime Gippsland potatoes £4 10s., and for New Zealand pink eyes £4 15s. Taking last Saturday's quotations for West Australia from the same produce merchants, there were no local potatoes, and Victorian and New Zealand potatoes sold at from £9 to £10, a difference of 50 per cent. Nearly all the potatoes that we are consuming now are from other States; in fact there were no quotations for local potatoes. The firm which the hon. member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) represents gave their quotations last Saturday, and said there were no locals, and they quoted Victorian and Tasmanian. There appeared to be no local potatoes in the market, and while New Zealand potatoes and prime Gippsland were quoted in Melbourne at £4 10s. to £4 15s., the Victorian and New Zealand potatoes in the market here were quoted at £9 to £10, a difference of 50 per cent. This cry of the cost of living is no empty one. You see a difference on this item of 50 per cent.; and recollect that the Tasmanian grower gets 30 shillings a ton, and is satisfied with it. The potatoes are shipped to Melbourne, transhipped from Melbourne to Western Australia, and duty is paid on them here; consequently we find them quoted at from £9 to £10. Has all this natural protection *plus* the artificial protection, amounting to 50 per cent., led to an increase in the local production? Has that led to an increase in the crop of potatoes here?

For the season ending 28th February, 1900, there were 8,373 tons of potatoes, and for the last year from which we have had the statistics compiled, 1901, the total production of potatoes in this State was 4,836 tons. Notwithstanding this 50 per cent of natural and artificial protection, our potato yield decreased in one year by 3,537 tons; and yet members talk about protecting native industry. As to bacon, it is no use to talk about protecting that. The member for Northam admits at once that there is no bacon to protect, for two reasons; one being that while bacon growers are able to get the price they can for pork as pork they will never go in for bacon curing, and until you have a dairy industry well established in this State you will never have a bacon-curing establishment on anything like a large scale, because one is the complement of the other.

A MEMBER: No; wheat.

MR. PURKISS: For prime sides of bacon in Melbourne last Saturday week the wholesale price was quoted at 8d. per pound. Here in Western Australia it was quoted at 11½d., another difference of 50 per cent.

HON. F. H. PRIESSE: Not quite.

MR. PURKISS: Very nearly. Take 8d. from 11½d., and it is 50 per cent. in round numbers, as nearly as possible; at any rate quite nearly enough for my argument. It only wanted another ½d. to make it 50 per cent. There we are again; and where will you buy? Take up any catalogue. Take up the catalogue of the Fresh Food and Ice Company, or take up Watson's, next door, or that of any storekeeper, and you will find that where they quote bacon they will quote Queensland, Victorian, New Zealand, and so forth, but not a single line, not a word, with reference to West Australian bacon. No; we know it is not made. There may be a side or two made here and there, and so forth, but if you look at the figures and see the enormous quantity that comes in, the little bit of bacon made here is not worth talking about. So with ham. In Melbourne the best bagged ham—and bagged ham is a trifle more expensive—is quoted at 10d. In Western Australia it is 1s. 3d., this being an increase of 50 per cent. And so we can go through to butter. Take

the butter industry. Practically there is no such industry here. One butter factory was established two or three years ago, and it must have been an object lesson, and still is an object lesson, to every one of us. That factory, or rather the syndicate who put that factory up, got the land for nothing. Then they went to the Government and asked for £500 to put up the building. They got it. Then the machinery cost another £500, and they went to the Government on their knees and got that £500. That is how the syndicate got the factory. When I was in Busselton last time, I had the curiosity to go and see this butter factory, and to see it is almost heart-breaking. It is shut up, and I asked Mr. Gale to show it to me, and he did so. I asked him how much butter had been made since it had been established, and he said "I would be ashamed to tell you." What is the use of protection in the face of this factory? It is a shame and a delusion. Protection is absolute hypocrisy in the case of bacon, potatoes, hams, and butter, because there is nothing to protect, and where there is some slight thing to protect, surely 50 per cent of artificial protection with the natural protection is enough, and a great deal more than enough. In the interests of the revenue, and on the ground I have adopted in the interests of protecting the natural industries, there is no solid argument to stand on. It seems to be almost disgraceful to say that we should increase the burdens of life by £200,000 in the face of a revenue of £3,700,000. And this brings me to the next blot in the Governor's Speech which I have to speak on. When the Speech refers to a Commission appointed to inquire into the classification and reorganisation of the Civil Service, of course that is very good, and I am in accord with it, but I should like to have seen a Commission of able and straightforward men to have gone right through from top to bottom, and to have swept out the drones from this vast hive that exists.

MR. GORDON: That will be the result.

MR. PURKISS: They do not say that, and they do not say whether there is to be an examination, or what the classification or reorganisation is to be like. I hope that reorganisation will improve the service, because it must be manifest

to all of us that there is room for retrenchment. It must be manifest. It is absurd to extract nearly £4,000,000 from the pockets of 200,000 people. Where is it going to end? Our revenue this year is nearly £4,000,000, and if the Government go on taking that amount out of the pockets of the people, then there is likely to be a reverse. It is all very well to talk of a surplus. As your income is, so will your expenditure be. A few months ago we were talking of a surplus at the end of the financial year, on the 30th June last. First it was £100,000, then £200,000, then £300,000. Where has it gone to? It has been whittled away. First it came down to £200,000, then it was £173,000, and I think the Treasurer said to-night there was £211 in the Treasury.

MR. DOHERTY : And 7s. 6d.

MR. PURKISS : Yes; £211 7s. 6d. What has become of it? It has all been whittled away. So will all the surpluses be whittled away.

MR. DOHERTY : You remember you have voted for them.

MR. PURKISS : I have not voted on the question yet. The surpluses will always be whittled away. Is not a surplus always a standing temptation to the strongest Minister? While you have men clamouring, while you have supporters clamouring in the nature of members and outside the walls of the House, if you have a surplus, the argument that the funds will not stand a gift of money for a certain work is taken away, and the beggars say, "You have a surplus; give us £500 for this road and £500 for that road." There never will be a surplus, but an accidental one, and then it ought to be traced. The Estimates have been ignored from time to time and from year to year. The underlying principle of constitutional government is this. The people are the taxpayers; they have a say as to how the money of the State shall be spent. The Treasurer comes to this House every year and says, "I estimate the revenue for the year to be so much. What will you do with it?" The Estimates are passed and are boiled down into the Appropriation Act. Then the Minister spends what is in the Estimates and no more. The Government spend what is down in respect of a particular vote, and

for that vote only. But that is not what has been done in the past and what has led to all the mischief. This was one of the planks of the platform put forward at the series of elections which took place last year. If the Ministers knew what a boon it would be to govern constitutionally in that way, they would do it. It would do away with the pertinacious requests from friends for money. If I headed a deputation for a request for £1,000 for a road, all the Minister would have to do would be to call in the Under Secretary and ask "How does such and such vote stand." Then the Minister would say, "I am sorry, gentlemen, but the vote is exhausted." That has not been done in the past, and the pernicious principle has been carried farther by the reappropriation of loans, which I maintain, and always have maintained, was absolutely dishonest. If you go to a London creditor and say, "I want £1,000,000," and you ear-mark that in a Loan Bill, the London creditor looks at it; he looks at the country and he looks at the work for which the money is to be used, and he has a right to know that the loan is used only for the purpose for which it was obtained. We have had these earmarkings, and we have these farther loans for reappropriation. If such a thing had been done by a private individual, I do not know what to call it, but a criminal lawyer might give it a very harsh name. If a man borrows money for a special purpose and tells the person from whom he is borrowing the money the purpose to which it is to be put, if the borrower spends that money in another way, I do not know what the lender would think; yet this is the system that has been carried out. I ask Ministers to consider, and to think, and to look this question of economy straight in the face. I feel perfectly satisfied that Ministers will do it. I feel perfectly satisfied that members know there is an extravagant waste, not only in the Railway Department, but throughout the service. The pruning knife can be used to a large extent, and consequently there ought to be due economy. Ministers ought to be able to cut our expenses down to very much less than £3,700,000. We can do then with very much less revenue. We can then look straight in the face at a

reduction of the railway rates and the repeal of the food duties. I do not wish to weary the House at this late hour.

MR. DOHERTY: What is your opinion about the £60,000 land purchase?

MR. PURKISS: I quite agree with a bold stroke. There never was a good rule yet which had not a very good exception, and this is one of those exceptional cases, similar to that in connection with the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, which Ministers were justified in making. I quite agree with what has been done, although I am one of the victims. Still I was given what I asked, and I have no feeling of soreness or anything about it. I had a little suspicion when they were running after me, and I wondered what was up. Notwithstanding that, it would not influence me, the small amount I got; and as the hon. member asked me the question, I tell him I quite approve of the policy of the Government in regard to that matter, and from inquiries which I have made and from statements which have been made to me, I do not think the member for Cue is very far out when he said that probably the result arrived at in the future will be a saving of £100,000 in the interests of the Government. So much for the Governor's Speech. I think, in conclusion, it is only due to members, as I think it is due to my constituents, that I should just explain why I am sitting here (Opposition cross-benches) rather than there (directly behind the Government). Members understand that I was returned in the interests of the Leake Government. I had strong support from the Leake Government, especially from the late Premier. I took my seat, as I gladly did, behind the late Premier. Members will all recollect the turmoil that was rife just after my election, and at the elections associated with the one when I was returned. The balance of power was very nicely poised; depending, I think on one vote given to one side or the other. Members all know how very hard and strenuously the late Premier worked to retain his position. He fought a very hard fight—a fight against odds, a very uphill fight indeed, and he almost succeeded, but not quite. And he found, after this fight, that it was necessary to make some sacrifice to keep the party

intact, and he kept them together to preserve the position in respect of which the fight had been. It is an open secret that in order to do that he included my friend the Minister for Works in the Government. Members also know—it is an open secret, therefore I am not divulging anything—that a good deal of resentment was felt at the time at the inclusion of my friend the Minister for Works in the Government. I felt very bitter indeed. It put a severe strain on my loyalty to the late Premier, and for this reason, that on my platform and on the platforms of various supporters of the Leake Ministry a great deal had been said about the “wobbling” of members, about their changing sides, about members “ratting” from one side to another. That argument was made use of, not by myself but by my supporters, against the candidature especially of my opponent, Mr. Wilson. One of the leading arguments used against that gentleman, at any rate by my supporters, was his passing so readily from one side to the other.

MR. TAYLOR: That's what beat him.

MR. PURKISS: I did not have, nor have I now, a word to say against the Minister for Works and Railways, who I know will understand me when I say that I do not wish to be in any way personal in my references to his inclusion in the Ministry. The late Premier saw that the inclusion of the member for Guildford was the only means of consolidating the position of his Ministry. Notwithstanding the strain put on my loyalty by the inclusion of the Minister for Works, I remained loyal. I said nothing. I recognised that my late leader had fought a hard fight, and I therefore sat loyally behind him. But did the present Premier and the present Treasurer, who were the late Mr. Leake's henchmen, his loyal friends as well as his political supporters, continue to sit behind him?

MR. DOHERTY: No; certainly not.

MR. PURKISS: They came over to these (cross-bench) seats by way of showing their resentment. When, therefore, I find a few months later those gentlemen taking office and including the very man whose selection for a portfolio caused them to sit as nearly as possible in opposition to the late Mr. Leake, a

feeling of discomfort is created in my mind. I do not understand their conduct. Farther, there is the throwing over of the then Treasurer (Mr. Illingworth). [MR. DOHERTY: That's it.] To me, the proceeding has an un-English savour; there is something un-English about it. [MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.] The conduct of these two gentlemen, I know, caused the greatest grief to the late Premier. I have reason to know that Mr. Leake at that particular juncture felt nothing so much as the personal desertion of those two great friends and old political supporters. When I see these gentlemen a few months afterwards taking office and joining with them as their colleague the very gentleman whose inclusion led them to remove to these cross-benches, I cannot well understand their conduct.

MR. DOHERTY: There's a chair on this (Opposition) side for you.

MR. PURKISS: I am quite prepared to admit that the Minister for Works is a good man and has proved himself an excellent administrator. [MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.] He has done good work while holding his present portfolio.

MR. DOHERTY: He has proved himself an excellent Minister.

MR. PURKISS: Yes; he has proved himself an excellent Minister; and I think he has both surprised his friends and disappointed his enemies.

MR. DOHERTY: He has no enemies.

MR. PURKISS: I thought it due to members of this House, and also to my constituents, to state my views. I have nothing farther to say on that head; and I certainly have no more to say on the Address-in-reply, because I feel I have already wearied hon. members somewhat unduly.

MR. D. J. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): On a recent evening the Premier brought the debate on the no-confidence amendment to a hasty conclusion. As a member of the party on this (Opposition) side of the House, I requested an adjournment, since the hour was becoming late. I made that request believing, of course, that a gentleman in the Premier's position would grant to the Opposition a request of the nature indicated. However, the Premier —

THE PREMIER: I should just like to give the hon. member's statement an

emphatic denial. The call for a division came from that (Opposition) side of the House.

MR. DOHERTY: I asked you across the House to grant an adjournment, and you replied, "No; go on with the division."

THE PREMIER: I deny that.

MR. DOHERTY: I thought, at the time, the Premier was using the force of the big majority behind him to the great discomfort and disadvantage of the Opposition; but now I readily admit that probably I erred, and that I must put down his conduct to want of experience. Viewing the political situation as it was last year, we see that the Leake Government came into power on a high wave of public opinion. When, however, the waters returned to their natural level, the people of this State found, though too late, that none of the promises made by the Leake Government had been carried out, and that there was not even the indication of one political principle or one economic reform. The late Premier, when leading his party, carried with him the people of this State; otherwise he could not have conducted the business of the House at all, for numerically his party was in a minority. It was only the full knowledge that he had the people behind him which enabled the late Premier to carry on the administration of the State. How was it that the deceased gentleman had the people behind him? For various reasons, the primary reason being that, one man having ruled the country for ten years, the people demanded a change. How came that change to be demanded? Through the promises of the gentlemen who then led the Opposition. They promised to the people economy; they promised to the people a reduction of food duties; they promised to the people good railway administration; they promised reduction in railway rates; and lastly, they piqued the curiosity of the people by such statements as that once the Opposition got into power they would clear out the pigeon-holes, which would disclose such facts as would for ever damn the administration of the Forrest Government. Now these gentlemen have been in office for 18 months; and I ask, have they produced from those pigeon-holes one document staining the

Forrest Government? If they have, certainly that document has not been shown to the public. I have said that the power behind the Leake Government was the support of the people. The Opposition realised the position, and for a long time dared not throw out a challenge. But, in an evil hour, or more properly in an evil moment, the gauntlet was thrown down, and a fight took place—a fight which, I have little doubt, every hon. member wishes had never taken place, because in it politics gave way to personalities, and political principles were rendered subservient to private considerations.

MR. HASTIE: That is because you were not in it.

MR. DOHERTY: One pleasant reflection of my political life is that I was not here at the time the fight was fought, and was, therefore, not forced to take part in it. Next, we had the Morgans Ministry; and to show that the people did not want a change from the Leake Administration it is but necessary to adduce the fact that when the Morgans Government went to the country three Cabinet Ministers were defeated. This fact shows conclusively that the people still wanted the Leake Government. May I now apply the same political barometer to the gentlemen in possession of the benches opposite? What occurred in the case of the Morgans Ministry has occurred in the case of the present Ministry. At two by-elections which have just been fought, the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) and the member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins) were returned in direct opposition to the James Government. We do not want any greater proof of the change of feeling in the country. No matter what majority the present Government have behind them—we do not mind even how they got the majority—the recent by-elections clearly indicate the fact that the people are tired of the promises and tired of the administration of the present Government, and that they want a change. As to the manner in which the Government obtained their majority, I do not care to say much. Possibly the facts of the matter may leak out, and then the people of the country may want to know more about the subject.

MINISTERIAL MEMBER: Oh, let us have it now.

MR. EWING: Go straight for it.

MR. DOHERTY: The first plank in the political platform of the present Government is railway reform; the next is economy in the civil service: the next, total abolition of unauthorised expenditure, including Form J. As for the last plank, let Ministers bear in mind their declarations to the people on the point, which declarations constituted one of the strongest factors operating for their accession to power. How will the Estimates shortly to be presented to the House accord with the promises of Ministers in this respect? The forthcoming Estimates will show the greatest unauthorised expenditure which any West Australian Parliament has known, and will show a more frequent use of Form J than ever known hitherto. The principal planks of the platform on which gentlemen now in office attained power have been submerged. Of course, there is redistribution of seats; but we know what a false measure that is. Ministers do not care or wish to have that passed. Let me take up the subject of railway reform and see how the present Government have reformed the railways. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) was the first holder of the Railways portfolio under the new Government. In the exuberance of youth, that hon. member took charge of the Railway Department with the intention of proving himself an absolute and thorough reformer. In his wisdom, he thought that having just left the desk of his counting-house he was the born genius, the strong man we have heard so much of, who is to bring the railways to a successful financial issue.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: He started well.

MR. DOHERTY: I am coming to the start. We all know—or if we do not know we ought to know—that in order to be a successful railway manager a man must have great experience of mechanical engineering, a thorough knowledge of the construction of railways, and a good business knowledge of traffic.

MR. EWING: Whom are you quoting?

MR. DOHERTY: Let us now consider the qualifications of the first Minister to take charge of the railways under the

new Administration. What does the member for East Fremantle know about mechanical engineering? He is innocent of the difference between a cylinder and a piston, or between a piston and a connecting-rod. What does he know of the scientific aspects of railway construction? He cannot tell a theodolite from a camera. What does he know of the carriage of goods? He may be able to load up a tip-draw with a hundredweight or a ton of stuff; but the idea of his being able to manage a concern with large traffic like the railways is preposterous. Still, in his youthful enthusiasm he considered himself the born ideal railway manager Western Australia needed. Let us see how he got on.

MR. HIGHAM: He had common sense.

MR. DOHERTY: Well, I wish he had bestowed some on the hon. member. The first act of the Minister was to dismiss the General Manager, the very man who had the knowledge necessary for the Minister's assistance. However, the Minister said: "I must get rid of this man." For what reasons? If the real reasons were brought to light, if they were reduced to their correct basis, it would be found that their character was more personal than anything else. [HON. F. H. PRESSE: Hear, hear.] The man who had the requisite technical knowledge was dismissed by the Minister. Even supposing, for the sake of argument, that the General Manager before coming to this country did not possess much knowledge of railway management, still the fact remains that he did manage our railways for ten years; and surely in those ten years he must have become acquainted to some extent with the technical and commercial aspects of railway management. Surely the General Manager of that day had more knowledge than the member for East Fremantle of the conduct of railway traffic to a successful financial issue. However, the member for East Fremantle said, "No; I do not want the General Manager." The dismissal of Mr. John Davies, as is well known to all hon. members, resulted in the initiation of a series of acting appointments. Mr. Davies was dismissed, or rather was suspended for six months, this country having to pay him salary for those six months. Then a Royal Commission was appointed; and Mr.

Davies was put on his trial before that commission, with the result that the Government went down. The verdict of the commission being in favour of Mr. Davies, the Government were forced to give that gentleman six months' leave of absence, and in addition to vote him £1,000. Thus the late General Manager received £2,500 of the country's money for doing nothing; and he received this amount at the instance, practically, of the energetic new railway expert who formed a member of the first Leake Administration.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The country had a great belief in Mr. Holmes.

MR. DOHERTY: Probably the country has not yet judged the hon. member. The only occasion on which he was called on for an act of administration arose when a very few men asked for a small increase in their wages—an increase of one shilling per day; and he said, "No. It is just; but I will not give it to you."

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: He never said anything of the sort.

MR. DOHERTY: Well, I distinctly remember the Government admitting in the House that what those men claimed was absolutely just; and the then Commissioner said it was not that it was not just, but it was the manner in which they asked for it. If a man wants a rise in wages he must certainly ask for it; and as we know, the Government threw the commerce of this State into disorganisation simply to satisfy the vanity of one Minister, who was supposed, too, to be a strong Minister. We shall never know how many thousands of pounds this country has lost through that one act of that Minister; and still the Premier tells us that Minister was a strong man. There is only one possible decision, and that is the decision we asked the Government to give us the other night: go to the people and see whether the country is satisfied with your administration of the railways, and with the administration of your past colleague.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member would make a good poker-player.

MR. DOHERTY: No. I can say honestly, though the Ministry raised the cry of the need for stable government—and that was the one reason given by members who supported them and who

did not believe in increasing the rates—that all we in Opposition wanted was an appeal to the country. And during that appeal the same Government could have sat on the Treasury bench and carried on the administration with the same stability; and in a month's time the whole question could have been settled by the people, and by the people only. But the Government who occupy that Treasury bench fully believe they themselves are the people, because in every instance they have flouted the people and flouted Parliament. Our only remedy will be found in a general election, when I have no doubt of the result. Up to a certain point the people will probably tolerate the conduct of certain Ministers; but at the general election it will be found they will tolerate that conduct no longer. Now we come to the solid facts of the speech of the Colonial Secretary (Hon. W. Kingsmill).

MR. GORDON: It is a treat to come to facts.

MR. DOHERTY: This is how the hon. member starts his speech; and he was the member whom the Government put up to defend their railway policy:—

It is the desire of the new Government to start the new railway accounts for this year with what I may term a clean sheet. . . . I have here a report on the matter from the new Commissioner of Railways, Mr. George, to whose energy and whose foresight, combined with the energy and foresight of the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, much credit is due for the discovery to which I am about to refer. As a fact, I may say the credit for that discovery is altogether due to those gentlemen.

Here is a gentleman who was Commissioner of Railways for 12 months; and he admits he was incapable of discovering these errors; and it was a new man with a new clean sheet who discovered them. And if that does not condemn the Colonial Secretary when Commissioner of Railways, I do not want any farther evidence. He himself admits he was incapable.

MR. GORDON: He is not Commissioner of Railways.

MR. DOHERTY: He was until the present Government, understanding quite well that the country were no longer prepared to keep him as Commissioner, shifted him from that position into a soft and easy billet as Colonial Secretary. And the country must never forget that in so doing the Government put out a

man who was their best supporter in the House, the only man who pulled them through, the man to whom they owed their origin—the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth). Did they regard him? No. Mr. Illingworth must go; and a man who himself admits he is not capable of finding out a glaring error is put in a position of honour, and their old colleague is thrown over. And that is the Ministry so many hon. members support! The Colonial Secretary continues by saying that on the 15th of June he was furnished with an estimate of the expenditure for that month of £120,651; and that afterwards vouchers came in which raised that estimate to £170,551. That is £49,000 which the new Minister knew nothing about. He admitted there was a lost amount of £88,000 which is still missing, in respect of the stores account. There was £22,897 extra for railways, bringing these lost amounts to £72,797. So this man, who was supposed to be in charge of the railways, could not understand where the £72,797 was. But he says:—

After receipt of these vouchers a second lot came in, amounting to £22,897 14s. 11d. But the end was not yet, because farther vouchers came in, approximating £40,518 16s. 1d. I say approximating, because the final adjustment between the Railway Department and the stores account had not yet taken place, but that will simply be a matter of a few pounds, possibly a few shillings—making a total of £235,580 16s. 1d.

These additional vouchers amount to £113,315. Now all those increases transpired in one month, and of them the Minister then in charge of the department knew nothing till they were brought suddenly before him. I question this. If, in the ordinary course of business, a man lost £113,315, or lost the track of such a sum, I think it would be said he was not fit to conduct his business; and in the same way, a man who is Minister for Railways should know month after month how the expenditure and income are going; because all he has to do is to divide the annual totals by 12. Had he done so, he would have known that the expenses during some months had not been charged up; and here we find that £113,315 has gone wrong, and he knew nothing about it. But again he admits: "The end was not yet." There was to this account a credit of £10,445. This means

there were certain stores the railways had taken over. The new Commissioner (Mr. George) did not believe in having these charged against his administration, and sent back the account to the Stores Department, and had it charged against general revenue. The Colonial Secretary proceeds to say that the expenditure for the month of June was estimated at £120,651, and that there was spent over and above this amount £102,870, or 84 per cent. in excess of the estimate. Can we say that a man who is 84 per cent. wrong in his estimate for one month is fit to control such a huge concern as the Railway Department? It is peculiar that under the present administration the railways of Western Australia for the first time show a deficit. The men who had come into power on the strength of the promise that they would effect economic reforms and give us a better administration of the railways have caused for the first time in the history of this State a loss of £1,198, the gross revenue of the department amounting to £1,353,704, the expenditure being £1,044,902, the interest and sinking fund £301,000, total £1,354,902, showing a deficit of £1,198.

THE PREMIER: We are charging sinking fund there, and it was not charged previously.

MR. DOHERTY: The Forrest Government always charged sinking fund, and always had the pleasure of producing a balance-sheet showing a surplus. The charge against your Government is that you promised reform, promised economic administration; and here you produce a balance-sheet showing a loss on the railways for the first time in the history of Western Australia. And there is still a worse tale to tell, which reflects even less credit on the Government. We now come to the Estimates for 1902-3. The Minister, in giving his forecast for 1902-3, estimates the revenue at £1,600,000, the expenditure at £1,331,556, to which he adds interest and sinking fund £301,000, making a total of £1,641,556; showing an anticipated deficit of £41,556. This is the gentleman who said, "Let us put our railways under a new system, and we shall have reform." On his own showing there will be a deficit of £41,556; and to show how this will work out, to show that it is even worse than the estimate would lead us to believe, I shall

quote a few figures. The old rates for the previous year realised £1,353,704; the new additional burden on the people is to realise £1,600,000; so there is necessarily £246,286 taken out of the pockets of the people. The Minister admits the increase is due to the rates; and even with that increase he shows an anticipated loss of £41,000. The Minister admitted the other night that the Coolgardie Water Scheme means a saving to the railways of £90,000 as between 1901-2 and 1902-3.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We do not get the Coolgardie scheme water for nothing.

MR. DOHERTY: You said your difficulty last year was the expense of water.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not say so.

MR. DOHERTY: I take your own words. I put the question to you direct across the House; and you said the difficulties we had to contend with were the supply of water at the stations between Coolgardie and Northam. You admitted that £90,000 was the saving by reason of the partial construction of the water scheme, which brings up the amount to to £336,286. Add to that the deficit the Government admit, £41,556, and we find their administration of the railways will result in a loss of £377,852. That is a beautiful tale to tell; and yet their cry was: "If you only give us a new Commissioner, we will put the railways in a good financial position." Here are their own figures, which clearly show they have put the railways in a worse position by £377,852. And remember, Ministers had during last year the advantage of increased rolling-stock, equal I believe to about £600,000 worth landed in that year; they had the advantage of the hauling power of new engines, and the carrying power of the trucks; and still they show a worse balance-sheet by £377,853 than was shown by any previous Government. Yet they tell this House they are the people who have a right to administer the State railways!

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. DOHERTY: As to the appointment of Mr. George, I will begin by admitting that he is my personal friend. I have great regard for him, and feel sure, no matter what position he takes up, he will put into his duties his whole energy. And one thing the country can depend

on : no matter how long he is in the Government service as Commissioner of Railways, his hands will be as clean on the day he leaves it as on the day he entered. The people of this State may be certain of that fact, and certain that he will do his utmost to administer the railways to the very best of his ability. Members on this (Opposition) side of the House never questioned the ability of Mr. George. What we took great exception to was the manner of appointing him. We think that the members of Parliament were insulted, and that the people of this country were insulted by the manner in which this appointment was made. Had there been an interval of six months before Parliament could be called together, there would have been some excuse; but Parliament was within arm's length of meeting, and as if there were some tremendous hurry, some great haste, the Government rushed this question through. In looking at the agreement with Mr. George, I find it pointed out that the matter was to be brought before the Governor immediately. There was to be no delay, and Parliament was to have no voice in the appointment of the Commissioner. There is no doubt that the Government intended to change the whole system of railway management in this country, and when the cry arose they climbed down, as they always do when there is a public outcry. They were not even strong enough to face their original idea. The Premier put it this way: "Probably I should not have appointed Mr. George had I been in power, but as my old friend Mr. Leake made the appointment, I am going to take the burden of his sins. I am going to carry out the agreement made by the previous Government." I wish another member on another question similar to this, put forward in the House, would defend it in the same manner; but he did not explain his reasons for his position in reference to his friends Mr. Leake and Mr. George. I refer to the question of the Judgeship in relation to Mr. Pennefather, which was brought up in this House. I may point out that, in Victoria, Mr. Trenwith, who was Minister for Railways, appointed a Commissioner for five years by agreement just as the Peacock Government was defeated. The new Premier said he did not consider his Government bound by that agree-

ment. He thought it would not be best for the country, and he would not confirm it. Why did not the Premier here do the same thing, and show that he was independent of party politics and party spirit, and consult the House on one of the greatest questions we have had in this Parliament? I think it was the Colonial Secretary (Hon. W. Kingsmill) who made fun, or brought into ridicule, in this House what was said in reference to a visit to the goldfields, and who referred to Don Quixote and his man Sancho Panza. May I call the attention of the House to this particular point. Mr. Leake, in his policy speech in the Queen's Hall, spoke against the Esperance railway; and what did the Government do? They sent the Minister for Lands to the goldfields, what to preach? To preach land settlement, and "sit on a rail" all the time. He said, "I believe the Esperance railway should be considered," and he tried to smooth over the people on the goldfields. Is not that a parallel case?

THE PREMIER: I did not understand that.

MR. DOHERTY: I remember it distinctly. It is of such recent date that I distinctly remember his saying he would consider the matter of the Esperance railway. He was sitting on a rail, and the only rail the people of Esperance ever expected to get was the very rail he was sitting on. The hon. gentleman who sits directly opposite, the present Minister for Railways (Hon. C. H. Rason), was quite indignant when he was brought to task in reference to his quoting Victoria and Queensland and never touching New South Wales. He must have passed over New South Wales because New South Wales generally is altogether against this State. With reference to New South Wales the capital cost per mile is £13,682, whereas in Western Australia the average capital cost is £5,239. The capital cost in Western Australia being £8,443 less than that in New South Wales, the railways here necessarily should be a far better paying concern. The gross earnings in New South Wales amounted to £1,286 per mile and those in Western Australia to £999. The working expenses per average mile in New South Wales amounted to £735, and in Western Australia to £771, the amount here being

greater still. Here is the worst point in relation to this. The percentage of working expenses to revenue in New South Wales amounted to 56, whereas in Western Australia the percentage is 83, and the Minister told us it would be higher next year. That is one of the worst statements that has ever been made, or I believe ever will be made, plainly showing that the gentlemen in power should not have the government of the railways of this State. May I point out to the House that when the contract in reference to Couston and Company was laid upon the table of the House, the Minister for Works, without giving any explanation, asked the House to pass it. He did not ask the House to pass it by his silence, but I think he did that which was worse—he connived that the contract should be accepted. What was the result? The Opposition were the only people to take up that question, and although I spoke very strongly on it and was condemned by some of my own party for the manner in which I referred to it, they have now said that I was distinctly right, and the result is a report laid on the table of the House. Why did not the hon. gentleman, when he laid the contract on the table of the House, give full particulars? I ask that question, and want an explanation.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will give you an explanation.

MR. DOHERTY: We had another matter. We come to a report which is somewhat an interesting one, and that is the Auditor General's report. It seems that this House will not or does not stand up for him. We should be the people standing between the Auditor General and a Government who will not go straight. The report laid upon the table of the House absolutely indicates that the present Government are not going straight. The member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), who was sometime Colonial Treasurer, accused me in this House of owning land. I wish the Premier to listen to this because it interests me very much. The hon. member accused me of owning land at East Fremantle. I give that an absolute and emphatic denial, and the member who represents Cue knew at the time that I owned no land in that particular quarter. But I know this much about that land. The only

transaction in which I appeared was this. I bought some land about seven years ago, and I did not put it in my own name but in that of a friend of mine who lived up the country. I told him it would be a good investment, and he bought it, and held it for some years. A few weeks ago he came down and said he had received an offer. I will tell you how the offer was made. In the first instance a land agent in Perth, Mr. Gardiner, wrote to him and asked him what he would take for this land. He wrote and said he did not feel inclined to sell it, but if he did he would take £600. Mr. Gardiner wrote to him to say that an agent, a Mr. Learmonth, would take up the transaction. Mr. Learmonth stated the amount and commission, and the total sum was £600. The gentleman who consulted me asked me the value of the land. I said from £650 to £700 was the value of it. He immediately saw Mr. Gardiner, who is, as you all know, a land agent in Perth, and is now the State Treasurer. Mr. Gardiner agreed to give him £650, and Mr. Learmonth gave him immediately £650 cash. The other transaction in relation to which I was accused of being interested, and in regard to which I assure the House I had no interest, pecuniary or anything else, was a transaction with Mr. Moss, in which Mr. Moss, Mr. Solomon, and Mr. Frank Connor were interested. Mr. Learmonth, who was acting for the Government, asked Mr. Moss if he would sell the land. He said, "You must not tell either Doherty or Connor anything about my wanting to buy this land, for if you do they will probably want to stop the sale of it;" that is, being members of Parliament, we would know about this particular swindle. Mr. Moss said, "Mr. Connor is interested in the land, and I must consult him." He was consulted, and the land was sold. Mr. Learmonth told Mr. Moss emphatically that this land was for a land speculator by the name of Corbett, and that it was to be cut up and subdivided. Not only that, but he took commission off Mr. Moss; and not only so, but with the connivance of the Government he went to the owners and induced them to believe that he was a free agent and was not in the employ of the Government; so he got a commission that ultimately went

to the credit of the Government, which proves connivance, deception, and fraud. It becomes a question, what are the duties of an agent? The duties of an agent are very clearly set out. It was not my land. I want to tell you the duties of an agent. This man came absolutely to say he was acting as an agent for Mr. Moss.

THE PREMIER: Supposing he did?

MR. DOHERTY: He came to Mr. Moss and told him a deliberate falsehood. I was not in the transaction at all.

THE PREMIER: With due respect, this agent is not in the House, and I think we ought to be very careful in using words charging with falsehood a man who cannot defend himself in this House. We have nothing to do with what passed between Mr. Moss and the agent, and it does not affect the matter.

MR. DOHERTY: It affects the Government.

THE PREMIER: It is most improper to refer to a person as having told an absolute falsehood. It is a gross breach of the privileges of Parliament, and no member ought to be guilty of it.

MR. DOHERTY: I will read this: "With the connivance of the Government he went to the owners of the land and induced them to sell, in the belief that he was acting as a free agent and that he was not in the employ of the Government (your Government). Not alone was he in the Government pay, but getting commission from the vendors, which ultimately went to the credit of the Government (your Government), which proves connivance, deception, and fraud."

THE PREMIER: I do not mind that; but it is a cowardly attack upon an absent man.

MR. DOHERTY: I am taking the words of Mr. Moss, that this gentleman went to him with the full knowledge that he received from your Government, and told an absolute deliberate falsehood. Is that the position you occupy, or wish to occupy, in this country—to employ a man who will tell falsehoods and lies? Surely there are other means to get land than that. Have you gone down so low in your own estimation—not other people's, because you are low enough in theirs now?

THE PREMIER: I like to have fair-play for an absent man.

MR. DOHERTY: I can assure the Premier this agent whom the Government employed will have an opportunity in the law courts of setting himself right.

THE PREMIER: He seems to have made you very annoyed somehow or other.

MR. TAYLOR: Any member should feel annoyed if he sees a dishonest action.

MR. DOHERTY: I asked him with reference to this matter. He told me about it, and I believe him. He never received a penny commission, and I believe what he told me. This is the duty of an agent:—

No agent is permitted to enter, as such, into any transaction in which he has a personal interest—

He had a personal interest—

in conflict with his duty to his principal, unless the principal, with full knowledge of all the material circumstances, and of the exact nature and extent of the agent's interest, consents. Where any transaction is entered into in violation of this principle, the principal, when the circumstances come to his knowledge, may repudiate the transaction, or may affirm it and recover from the agent any profit made by him in respect thereof.

THE PREMIER: That is "Bowstead on Agency," I suppose?

MR. DOHERTY: A very good authority. When the whole of the history of this transaction is written, the Government character will not be as bright as it looks to-day. This authority says:—

When an agent enters into any contract or transaction with his principal, or with his principal's representative in interest, he must act with the most perfect good faith, and make full and fair disclosure of all the material circumstances, and of everything known to him respecting the subject matter of the contract or transactions which would be likely to influence the conduct of the principal or his representative.

This gentleman was employed by the Government, and he told an absolute and deliberate falsehood. He should have told the whole circumstances, or not have taken the commission. If he had told Mr. Moss that he was buying for another party, well and good. But this man, without any necessity, told a deliberate falsehood, and I believe with the knowledge of the Government. I will trouble the House with another paragraph:—

An agent purchases his principal's property in the name of a third person. The transactions will be set aside without inquiry as to

the adequacy of the price. An agent may purchase property from his principal, provided that he deals at arm's length—

Does the Premier know what that means?

and fully discloses all that he knows respecting the property; but if any underhand dealing or concealment appears, the transaction will at once be set aside on the application of the principal.

I cannot blame the agent, but I blame the Government who employed him and forced him to tell a falsehood.

MR. HASTIE: Why not sue the agent?

MR. DOHERTY: Mr. Moss and his friend will not be in the position of plaintiffs, but as defendants. The Government have forced them.

THE PREMIER: No doubt these authorities will be quoted in the proper place. You need not bore us now with quoting them.

MR. DOHERTY: I wish I could bore some light into the hon. member: it would be of advantage to the country. I may say that the people of Fremantle naturally feel somewhat alarmed at the idea of the Government in constructing a railway that will cause them farther carriage of goods five or six miles. It appears to me that a high-level bridge would equally serve the people of North Fremantle and Fremantle as it does now. I cannot understand how the members for Fremantle can support a Government who are doing the best they can to ruin that portion of Fremantle which I represent. There is one other matter in the Governor's Speech I should like to refer to, and that is in reference to the late Engineer-in-Chief. I hope the Government will take into consideration some compassionate allowance, because the late Mr. O'Connor gave to the country a wonderful service. There is one other officer who deserves some consideration, Mr. Hayden, who was Inspector of Railways and who gave his life-service to the country and saved a great many thousands of pounds by bringing out a patent. I hope he will not be forgotten when the Estimates are brought forward. I feel bound to say that enormous extravagance will be prevented if the Government can see their way to remove the food duties and relieve the people of the country of the burdens which now are imposed upon them. I did intend to speak farther, but I feel that the time is somewhat late.

The fundamental law of the British people is that the people should rule absolutely, and on this question I hope that the people will have a chance in the near future of saying what they mean, and that the verdict will be against the present Government.

On motion by MR. JOHNSON, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past ten o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 6th August, 1902.

Papers presented—Question: Railway Travellers' Comforts—Question: Mining, Sunday Labour—Question: Unemployed Labour, Influx—Address-in-Reply, eighth day—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: Papers relative to accident at the Burbanks Mine, asked for by Mr. Reid.

Order: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—RAILWAY TRAVELLERS' COMFORTS.

MR. JOHNSON (for Mr. Hopkins) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether he is aware that all-night passengers on long journey trains are called on in winter months to undergo unreasonable hardships because of their not possessing travelling rugs. 2, Whether the Minister will arrange for a crate of rugs and pillows to accompany such trains for distribution to passengers, more particularly to women and children travelling second-class, who are not infrequently poorly clad. 3, Whether he will cause