

had been better advised, they would have gone back to work weeks or months ago. I am not here to discuss whether the award of the Arbitration Court was or was not good. You and your party are the chief members who support the Arbitration Court. You go even to the extent of appointing one of your own representatives a judge in that court. You had also the advantage of appointing, through this House, the Supreme Court Judge who acts as President. The other member of the Arbitration Court is, as you know, appointed by the employers. So practically you had a voice in appointing two of the judges. I think the existing President was appointed during what was, fortunately, the short *régime* of the Labour Government. I am not arguing whether the pay of the workers was or was not sufficient. Labour men were the greatest agitators for the Arbitration Court; and when they get an award, surely they should attempt to abide by it. If they are dissatisfied, there should be an appeal; and would it not have been far better for the State had the men been well advised, accepted the award, and appealed against it?

Mr. Holman: To whom could they appeal?

Mr. H. BROWN: If a court of appeal was not in existence, it could have been provided in the Act. You will possibly have an opportunity of appealing in the case of *Mr. Curran*, if you are not satisfied with the award you get in his case; and when the appeal is decided you will have to abide by the decision.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. H. BROWN: Where we have a court constituted as we have in this State, we should all loyally abide by it. If the verdict is against the employer he has to pay, but it evidently does not seem to hold against the unions. In conclusion, I hope and trust that the Premier, like *Mr. Deakin* at Home, will be prepared to state for the benefit of the investors that he will have the same protection for their capital as the worker has for his labour; and I am sure, if that goes forth to the world, that greater interest will be taken

in Australia generally; and that investors will come in here as of old and invest their capital with the same chance of getting a return for it. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

On motion by *Mr. Troy*, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday next, 9th July, at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Question passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 4.53 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 9th July, 1907.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the *Colonial Secretary*: 1, Gaol Regulations—Additions and Alterations; 2, Goldfields Water Supply Administration—(a.) By-law No. 87; (b.) Amendment of Schedule of prices of water; 3, Audit Act, 1904—(a.) Orders in Council under Section 35; (b.) Sundry Amendments of Regulations; 4, Public Works Department, Roads Act, 1902—By-laws of the Road Boards of Nullagine, Mount Margaret, Yilgarn, Bunbury, Nelson, Marble Bar, Mourambine, Dardanup, Preston; 5, By-laws of Municipalities of Beverley, Boulder, Claremont, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Leonora, Perth, South

Perth, Subiaco, Victoria Park; 6, Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904—Additions to 2nd Schedule, etc.; 7, Mines Regulation Act, 1906, with Regulations.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) moved—

That unless otherwise ordered, this House do meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and sit until 6.15 p.m., and from 7.30 p.m. onward.

There was a slight alteration in adjourning for the tea hour, it having been usual to sit until 6.30 p.m.; but at the request of certain members in another place, the time now proposed was 6.15, and to bring this House into line it was thought better to have an additional quarter of an hour longer for tea.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): It would be a rather long adjournment, seeing that the means of obtaining refreshment were within the building. Speaking for himself, that quarter of an hour might mean the loss of a train; also to others living at Fremantle, Guildford, and other places from Perth. Still he had no desire to obtrude his personal views, but he would prefer the previous practice.

Question put and passed.

DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Motion to Adopt.

Second Day.

Resumed from the opening day, 4th July.

Hon. WESLEY MALEY (South-East): We have had a long recess, and the striking attitude which the Government assumed last session led us to suppose that there would be some wonderful happenings in the new year, and that the unusual course of holding a February session, for the purpose of imposing taxation on the people, would be carried out. I expected that if the Government did face the music again it would be with some change in the Ministry. But there has been no change made if I may except the one in what may be called the tail of the Ministry—that of the Gov-

ernment Whip. There has been the retirement of a member of this House from the place of Honorary Minister, but amongst those who hold portfolios no changes have occurred. Mr. Gordon's defection from the Ministry some time ago was due to the fact that he stated that there were too many Premiers. I imagine some change has taken place in the Ministry, of what I am not cognisant, or Mr. Gordon would not have eaten his words and gone back to his position as Government Whip. We have before us a Speech which is certainly lengthy, and contains some merit, and something that we may call demerit. At any rate it appears to me a sort of hotchpotch, and really I do not take the Government quite seriously. I am entitled to take them not seriously, seeing that they did not hold the February session which they promised, and when we look around Perth and see the empty houses, and hear of the distress which exists in the city and the country which has occurred during the regime of the present Government. I spoke on the Land Assessment Bill last year, and I said the proposal of the Government to impose a land tax came like a "bolt from the blue." I maintained that with proper financial methods there was no justification for a land tax, and there is no justification to-day. The excuse that is given for not holding that session may be plausible but it certainly is not sound, and I must say that it was not the right course for the Premier to adopt to go away in time of stress, when there were people starving in his own district, to attend what is no more than a show, a pageant, a function without any particular value. Ministers pose at the Premiers' Conference and only half agree to things which they are afraid to decide upon definitely, there being no statutory authority for them to do anything at such a Conference. Last session the Ministry actually threatened to resign if the Land Tax Assessment Bill were not passed by this Chamber. I heard the threat uttered more than once, but still there was no resignation, with the exception of that of one hon. member. I am glad that my colleague the Hon. C. A. Piesse did

resign from the Ministry, and mainly on the question which really was held to be the backbone of the Ministerial policy of land taxation. In the Governor's Speech the Government have taken up the matter very airily. They metaphorically raise their hats and say, "It is a fine day." They refer to the weather. We know that rain is good for the agricultural and for the pastoral industry, but that fact is not usually put in the opening Speech, and it is only there for the sake of padding. It shows that those gentlemen have a light and airy way of meeting Parliament and are polite enough to say how fine a day it is. We are told that the agricultural industry is to have precedence of the mining industry. It certainly has it in the Governor's Speech, so far as the position it occupies in that document is concerned, but it is only nominally in the lead. In the country districts the pinch of poverty has been felt by every man who had been depending upon the growing of wheat for a livelihood. We are told that increased selection has taken place. I am glad to say that that is so and I should be very pained and startled to find that, considering the terms under which selections may be obtained, such an advance had not taken place. There would be a boom in land in Perth, and the Land Titles Office instead of being practically idle would be busily engaged, if similar terms to those offered by the Government were offered by private individuals. For the sum of £12 10s. and the survey fees the Government offer 1,000 acres of land, and in addition the sum of £300 is advanced to any person taking up that land. The Government can hardly take any credit to themselves therefore for any increased settlement. We have to wait and see the result of such a method as that of granting a sum of £300 to the possessor of Crown lands, which has cost him the small sum of £12 10s. The Government is undoubtedly responsible for the depression which has taken place, and in more ways than one. The high railway freights which caused terrible hardship to the agriculturist—a hardship almost too grievous to be borne—were allowed to remain oppressing the

farmer up to the time that his wheat was sold. Not only so, but the Government imposed heavy wharfage rates on implements, stock, and effects coming to our shores. I was astonished when at Albany to learn that this Government, which is opposed to Federation and which would like again to get control of the Customs, had levied as much as £6 for wharfage dues on a wagon which was being brought into the State. The owner of the vehicle protested and the amount was thereupon reduced to £3 15s. In order to verify this statement I went to the foreman of the jetty and he told me that that was the charge which they were entitled to make. The reduction was not made until the wheels and the shaft were taken off the wagon and a fresh measurement was made. The party so treated brought into the State a considerable quantity of stock. All of this went over the wharf in South Australia and the total sum that he had to pay in Adelaide was only 18s. 9d. If these gentlemen who are really against Federation had control of the Customs and acted on these lines it would be impossible for us to get any immigration for Western Australia. The agricultural industry cannot be the leading one where such wharfage rates are imposed on wagons and agricultural implements and the industry is therefore influenced to that extent; on the other hand the milling business is on top in the agricultural districts. I do not know what the wharfage rates are on flour, or what restrictions there are on that article. In fact I only know what I have heard on the subject, and we are all restricted in this direction, for members of Parliament, who used to have the privilege of debating the Customs tariff—which they rightly considered a most vital question—now have no chance whatever of getting to know the facts concerning the tariff unless they go to the places of business at the ports and ascertain for themselves. We have no say in this matter. These high wharfage rates have been put on by the Government, and seeing that the officials differentiated at Albany and were able to reduce the rate on a wagon from £6 to £3 15s., it is pos-

sible that the different ports may have different wharfage rates and a different scale. If there is any wharfage rate on flour, it is time it was removed. Something must have happened. The agriculturist has been obliged to accept for his wheat on the Great Southern Railway in this State 3d. per bushel less than if he had been selling it in South Australia. That was before the freights were reduced, and the farmer held the wheat. I believe that at the present time, or at any rate since the wheat has got into other hands, the prices have advanced to 3d. more per bushel than is obtained in Adelaide. One member of the Government went to Japan, and he brought back a message from that country. He had evidently been studying the flour business for he came back, and in the flowery language of the chrysanthemum advised the Government and those people who would listen to him, in his own grandiloquent way, that we should look forward not to the export of wheat, but to the export of flour. We all know that the world's market is not a flour market but a wheat market, and we also know that in America every effort is made, and all kinds of machinery are employed to enable the producer to dispose of his wheat at the lowest possible cost, both as regards freight and handling, in the markets of the world. I must confess that the question as to whether we are to export wheat or flour is one of vital importance to the farmers, and I think that before I have finished this speech hon. members will agree with me that the Government have not been sufficiently careful in the construction of spur lines of railway to prevent a monopoly of the flour trade to the exclusion of the agricultural interests. The result of this course of action might be the placing of the agriculturist in the hands of any milling ring which might be formed. Now in this connection I come to the question of the Katanning-Kojonup Railway. I have in my hand a plan which I have just received from the Lands Department, and this shows the line of railway as constructed. We had last session hanging on this wall a plan showing the proposed route of the rail-

way, but that route is an entirely different one from the line as actually constructed. The one hanging on the wall shows a route which commended itself to my mind as being a reasonable and fair proposition. The line as constructed I condemn, not only because it is very crooked in itself, but also because the whole question with regard to its construction and the methods adopted to get it constructed in that particular way, require examination. As this line is constructed, instead of the agriculturist having a chance of sending his wheat in a southerly direction to the port of Albany—which is a natural port and nearer by 100 miles than Fremantle—that line is constructed in a northerly direction, as if everything had to go to Fremantle. I connect the statement of the Treasurer that we should export flour with the scheme of construction of that railway in order that the wheat has to be sent into Katanning. If the wheat is intended for shipment, it must be shunted at the cost of the country—an everlasting cost to the country—and then sent on to Albany. Under the present system, of course, it can be converted into flour, and the flour can then leave the mill and be sent in the ordinary way to the port of Albany. Never will the agriculturist in that district be satisfied, considering the course which the railway between Katanning and Kojonup has taken. The question is how was it that this alteration in the route was brought about? The Hon. Mr. Drew and myself were the first two members of Parliament to go over that route for the purpose of inspecting it with a view to railway construction. At that time the hon. member was a member of the Daglish Government. We reached Katanning in the evening, when, as we all know, the train arrives. The hon. member was entertained, and that took some little time. His car was waiting at the station, and it was said the car would be sent on to Broomehill. That is a long time ago, and some underground engineering was apparently going on then. The hon. member and I started out rather late that evening, and inspected by moonlight a great part of the route. When we arrived at Kojonup we had a look round

the country, with which we were pleased. There and then, at a banquet, the hon. member gave to that railway the first lift it had ever received. I must say, as one who knows that district, in which I reside, that the people themselves were not at all sanguine as to the construction of the railway. They did not believe they could possibly get what they wanted; but Mr. Drew very happily gave them a lift in the right direction, and declared in favour of the line. It was then proposed that Mr. Drew should go across the country, just about where the railway goes, and should join his car at Broomehill. The hon. member refused. I had the pleasure of his company; the car was sent through Katanning to Woodanilling, and he joined it there. That was, I consider, the beginning of a business which I, as a local resident, did not understand. I did not understand why that car was sent on; I did not understand the motive, but I understand it to-day; and I understand now why the railway was constructed along the present route. There is no excuse for having the railway on that route. If the land is better towards Broomehill, then the railway should have gone to Broomehill, which place was much nearer the port and involved a less roundabout route. I do not for a moment admit that the land is better near Broomehill. Certainly there was no striking development on the route; there was no striking evidence of sturdy settlement and of strong agriculturists able and willing to clear the soil for the growth of sufficient wheat to feed that railway. The Daglish Government are in my opinion to be congratulated on not being at all mixed up with what seems to me anything but a satisfactory transaction. The engineers themselves condemned the route. I know a letter has been read from one engineer, but one letter may be written by mistake or under hypnotic influence; and I say the same engineer protested to me, when the line was being constructed, that it did not follow the route it should take. Not only so, but in this House, at the first opportunity he had, Mr. Sholl moved that the papers be laid on the table; and on that occasion I felt it my duty, though

the railway was being constructed in my province, to say that I had nothing to do with the alteration of the route, nothing to do with anything which was not aboveboard in that connection. In another place Mr. Harry Brown moved for a Royal Commission, and later on I believe he accepted the Premier's offer of a select committee. I should like to see a Royal Commission, and I think the Government should appoint a Royal Commission, when there is so much at stake; and that every member of Parliament who had anything to do with the matter should be called, and should clear himself from any suspicion of wrong-doing.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Do you know that it was all the fault of the surveyor?

Hon. W. MALEY: The hon. member assumes that I know something of which I know nothing. I know nothing about any fault of the surveyor, but I have it on very good authority that it is not a question of the survey at all. I was surprised to see in the circumstances that Mr. Harry Brown seconded the motion for the adoption of the Address in another place, for I thought, else I should have moved in this House, that Mr. Brown would be championing his cause right through. He may do it yet, I hope he will, and I will not assume that he is making or intends to make a mistake; but I was rather surprised to see him second the Address-in-Reply. I think every member who is concerned in the matter ought to clear it up. We do not want any whitewashing. Every man connected with the matter should be able to face a Royal Commission. I for one am anxious to do so; because while I live in that district there will otherwise rest on me a reflection that I never moved in the matter; and I with the others concerned will have to stand the brunt of the blame. What happened? A deputation of farmers came to me, rather late in the day it is true, and asked me to move in the matter. I said "Parliamentary etiquette demands that the member for the district shall first be interviewed. If you approach the member for the district, he will introduce you to the Minister. If he cannot do so or should he refuse, then you can come to me; but un-

til the member for the district refuses you, I cannot introduce any deputation." I having taken that stand, the matter ended for the time being so far as I was concerned. The construction of that railway was rushed through during recess. Only £5,000 had been voted for the work; and before the full amount was actually voted the railway was practically completed—before the House sat, and before anything could be done by Parliament. I say there was indecent haste in the construction of that railway, and a haste which reflects little credit on the Government concerned. Now about "keeping the coast clear." What did the Government do to keep the coast clear? Well, there was what I may call a revolt at Katanning. Members will recollect that I moved the adjournment of the House to draw attention to what took place at Katanning in reference to the proposed municipality. The majority of the people of Katanning, certainly the independent people of Katanning, wanted a municipality like that of Wagin, over which Mr. Piesse presides, or like that of Narrogin. They wanted machinery for their own protection; they came to the Government, and I pleaded with the Minister in charge of this House (Hon. J. D. Connolly) that their request should be granted. We had an absolute majority, and the conditions of the Act were complied with; but notwithstanding our majority the Government refused to grant the petition, refused the people the right of self-protection. Thus the Government cleared the way for what was going on; they kept that coast clear; and so public opinion was practically stifled, and public opinion is to a great extent stifled in Katanning to-day. I wish to see a different order of things. I wish to see the Moore Government rise to the occasion and allow local government to be local government and not to be engineered from Perth. This is not an engineer's job; it appears to me to be a political job. The nature of it I do not understand and do not profess to understand; but I know, having heard things before and heard things since, that there was a wonderful change in political opinion in the precincts of the Houses

of Parliament when this railway was proposed. First there was a great and unusual opposition to it, and all of a sudden that opposition seemed to vanish; and the Press neglected its duty by not exposing what was going on, or by not taking the stand which Dr. Hackett assumed when the Bill first came before the House. Now the Government claim to be assisting the producer. It was published that an announcement of an important nature would be made at the opening of the Mechanics' Institute, Katanning. An announcement was made. The people were on the *qui vive*. They thought that something of great importance was to be announced; but the only important announcement of which I read—I was not present—was that the Government intended to lend £30,000 to establish freezing works in the North. I do not know whether a certain company registered in Guernsey is to have the advantage of that £30,000, but I hope not. I may say I am in favour of a stock route, and of that stock route being used as far as possible. The Government, desiring to assist agriculture, refused a loan to the co-operative mill at Katanning; refused to allow the farmers to free themselves from the yoke which they bore; refused to assist them in the erection of a mill. Yet the Colonial Treasurer has his name carved on the foundation stone of the hall at Katanning, and on that occasion he as it were fixed the value of the Katanning agricultural industry, by declaring that while he could not assist the agriculturists with money for a mill, he could lend £30,000 to the far-away freezing works over which the Government would have practically no control, and which men in Perth, with scores of thousands at their disposal and interested in that district, were able and ought to have been willing to erect on their own account.

Hon. E. McLarty: There is no analogy between the two undertakings.

Hon. W. MALEY: There is no analogy between them. The one is in favour of the big man, and the other in favour of the little man. I shall come to the big man by-and-by. I shall have a little turn at him. I do not

wish to weary members, but one thing I must say. We have now in charge of the Agricultural Department a Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell) who is introducing milking machines to assist the agriculturist. He is also introducing cows; but the milking machine is to cost £150 in my province, and I am wondering how the cows will be brought to the machine, how many days it will take to bring them in and take them back, and how many times they will require milking. I understand that the cows that are being imported require milking only once a week. The obsolete method of erecting creameries does not seem to have struck the Government. The erection of creameries is a useful work. The farmer must begin and grow little by little; and if the man with a few cows can find a market for his cream and can have the value of the milk, he is in a fair way to prosperity. In a country like this we can do as well as was done in Victoria. A farmer can move ahead slowly and ultimately purchase his own milking machine, if he is satisfied to have one. I do not think a practical man requires any such nursing; he has not got it elsewhere, and should not get it here. Working a creamery is a cash business. The farmer takes his milk in, gets cash for the cream, and takes back a valuable article in the shape of skim milk on which to feed his pigs. I venture to say that at the present time the industry in this State that requires nursing or encouraging in the Great Southern district is wool growing. There is no more valuable staple product in this State to-day than wool. We must bear in mind that Australia is the greatest wool country in the world, and that Western Australia should ultimately equal a large part of the Eastern States in this respect. Out of the £19,000,000 worth of products exported last year, £10,000,000 worth was wool, which will give an index of where we will find wealth in this country when our gold peters out. Instead of encouraging that industry, however, the Government have been restricting the areas of suitable land to 2,000 acres. That may suit a small man, but I know an instance—I suppose

there is more than one—where a man with a small area endeavoured to keep sheep. He had to import a shepherd from South Australia, and for the last ten years he has had a man minding the sheep on the public roads wherever he could put them. Also touching the dairying industry, owing to the distress to the farmers this year, I have seen instances where the cows are pasturing in the same way on public roads. So it is no use painting the picture with the wrong colours. We must be true in giving a picture of the agricultural industry and of what is likely to accrue from certain methods. The Land Tax Assessment Bill was defeated last year. During the recess members of the Ministry have been touring the goldfields making speeches, some declaiming against the Legislative Council, and others making bold assertions which will not bear investigation. I do not know whether any member opposed to the land tax was invited to any of those functions. I for one never had a chance of speaking at any of them, or of contradicting anything said against this House at the time it was said. It may be unfortunate—in fact it is admitted by a member of another place that the Legislative Council has allowed these statements to go unchallenged; but I think members here can stand steady under fire, and that they are here to-day content to battle for what they think is right. I take particular exception to a statement made by the Colonial Secretary, who said that the resolution was passed by a trick. Does the hon. member mean that the majority of members of this House in passing the resolution, did so by a trick? The Government are humourists. I look upon the Government as humourists. We see a speech, and the echo is in the Press; the goldfields have been flooded with their utterances; but we have had absolute silence on the Great Southern Railway. There is so much land to be taxed on the goldfields; it is a very interesting problem there; but there is so much agricultural land, and there are so many people in a very poor way in the Great Southern district

owing to the bad times that the Government have not ventured down there. We had a local function there—the opening of the railway. I expected that there would be an opening of the railway. There were two or three attempts, but not any opening that I considered worthy of a Government which constructed a railway in such a manner to such a place. [*Hon. C. A. Piesse: A good place.*] That is the saving part of my remark. Like the Government, I am humorous sometimes. I am glad the hon. member sees the humour of that remark. We have heard of Sam Weller junior. Sam Weller junior and Mr. Weller senior are characters from Dickens. Mr. Weller senior was a coach-driver, and Sam Weller tells a story of him in connection with the Eatanswill election. Mr. Weller was told:—

“In case you should have an accident when you’re abringing these here voters down and should tip them into the canal without hurting of them, that is for yourself.”

“You wouldn’t believe it, sir,” said Sam, with a look of inexpressible impudence at his master, “that on the werry day as we came down with them voters his coach was upset in that ere werry spot, and every man on ’em turned into the canal.”

These humourists, the Government, had a Mr. Weller senior down on the Great Southern Railway. The Ministry flooded the Press in Perth, after flooding it on the goldfields, but only for a day or two, with explanations why they did not attend the Kojonup banquet. What was going to be a banquet turned out to be a luncheon. At the opening of the railway I expected some interesting speeches, and wished to have a chance to make one myself. It is a hardship on a member of this House after such a long recess not to have the chance to make a speech on an occasion like that. One might distinguish himself, especially in the country, in making a speech on such an occasion. Well, they made a false start with the first opening of the railway. So far as I can learn, even the townspeople of Katanning did not know that a train was to be run. A train ran one fine morn-

ing and had on board the Hon. F. H. Piesse, and some other people of course. This was referred to by the Katanning paper as a “sly opening of the railway,” and locally it was inferred that it was a “sly Government” opening this railway in a “sly manner.” However, another attempt was made later on. I had an invitation to a banquet at six o’clock. I decided to go because it was a good time since I had been to Kojonup, and it was up to me to go into that part of my province. I had no intimation of anything but that the banquet would be held. I knew nothing about the trains or anything else, and so I decided to drive. When I got to Katanning I found the place practically shut up, and I learned that the train had been started about an hour before the usual time—this was a bit of “Sam Wellerism” I think—and that the banquet which was to be held at 6 o’clock was being held at 1 o’clock, also that the train was coming back at 3 o’clock from Kojonup, and that the affair would be practically over before I got anywhere near the place. The members of the Government were awfully indignant when it was stated that they did not send an apology to the opening of this railway. Their apologies arrived two days late—at least one arrived two days after the banquet, that is, the Premier’s—showing that there was not much interest taken in the affair. The Government did not intend to be there. They had a Mr. Weller senior down there. The Minister for Works took great umbrage at what happened, and he hit very hard at the chairman of the banquet. I do not know why. He would have been better employed hitting Mr. Weller senior. The Minister declared that he sent a telegram—an apology. That telegram has never been delivered yet. It may have been sent on that crooked railway and got lost, but there is no doubt that Mr. Weller did the trick exceedingly well for the Government; and I who moved the rejection of the Land Tax Bill and had the honour of getting hon. members of this House to support me, was debarred from the only chance I could have had of combating the wild and woolly statements made

by Ministers in other parts of the State. I am proud to say that they did not venture down in my part, with the exception of the Hon. Mr. Wilson, who had great courage and marked ability. That gentleman decided to have a peaceful trip on Sunday after the opening of the Katanning Hall, and he rode out to Kojonup. I believe a great party went out from Katanning, and they were met by one gentleman, one gentleman only. That gentleman was opposed to the land tax. I have a letter from him dated 20th June, 1907, which I shall read to show the "Sam Wellerism" again. The letter says:—

"At the Kojonup Farmers' Producers League meeting, I am directed to thank you on behalf of the members for the way in which you fought the land tax some time back. It is rather late to do this, but our league was not formed at the time, so could not thank you as a public body. We still hope you will continue to watch the interests of the struggler on the land, as in the past."

I am proud to have that letter; prouder than to have aired my eloquence at the Kojonup banquet. My colleague, Mr. Piesse, got there in time: he happened to be on the train. He is not a party to this, and I am sure my colleague, with myself, regrets that anything of this kind should have occurred. I must say that parliamentary etiquette demands that members of this House should be treated with decorum and respect; and when members of the Ministry intend going into a country district—though perhaps we cannot expect a knowledge of parliamentary etiquette from a Ministry which is new to the game, the Premier being only three years old politically—it is their duty to inform local members of their intention, so that these may have an opportunity of being present. As an independent member, I had not intended going there by rail—not that I had any suspicion that Mr. Weller senior would be there—but I had intended to drive over, so that an "accident" on the line, if any, would not have made the slightest difference to me. But it is the duty of the Government on such occasions to

communicate with the members for the district, asking them to co-operate with local members of the Assembly in the conduct and organisation, and not leave such matters to Mr. Weller senior. I think members will agree that my wife and myself have been badly treated. We arranged to drive over from Katanning; and I say we were openly and publicly insulted by the Government of this State—there are no other words for it. In generosity, I will put it down to their ignorance of parliamentary etiquette. I do not want to labour this question which has already been sufficiently painful to me and to my wife, who has a brother occupying a seat in this House. The undeserved treatment we received is the less excusable when we remember that the member for the district who is connected by telephone, and could have been rung up at his house from the Moojebing post-office, was treated no better than I was. He should have been better treated; he should have been informed. It does not matter whose duty it was to do so; there has been neglect, and I hope the Government will take this lesson to heart, and be careful in the future to see that there is no Sam Weller about, and that all arrangements are up-to-date. I should not like to say that the Government had tried to keep me from speaking, that it was a pre-arranged affair; but it certainly is an extraordinary thing that when I had the honour of opening a hall a short distance from there a week or so before, I said I regretted that in opening that hall I was only making a public speech and not a political speech; that as there were to be a concert and dance afterwards, I could not deal with large public questions as I would like to do. In view of that statement, it does seem extraordinary that Mr. Sam Weller should get to work—whom he was working for I do not know; it certainly does seem incongruous. As to the Governor's Speech, if the Government were serious in dealing with the finances, they would not introduce anything likely to be debatable; and I think the Government have made a mistake in referring to the increase in the land revenue. It augurs

anything but well for them to take credit for taxing the people. Owing to certain legislation which was passed, it has been necessary for selectors of land to pay for survey fees, and the receipt of those fees would cause the revenue to expand. I hope the Government in making any explanation in regard to the buoyancy of the land revenue, will tell us how much of this represents survey fees taken directly from the pockets of the people; and then we may judge how much of the increase they deserve credit for. At the present time there is a state of chaos in the Lands Department. I have just come from the Lands Office, and I was astonished to see that while some good men were working, others had gone off as soon as the clock struck three—or it might have been four o'clock. There were some men hard at work doing their best for the country, but others had gone. That sort of thing should be put a stop to. I must say that the Land Act Amendment Act accentuated the difficulty in the Lands Office; it had created more work for the officials, and has led to endless confusion. I believe the Government were aware of what would happen, and were preparing or had under consideration a consolidating measure. That measure was not brought forward, however; and I think that was a pity; as the land regulations require to be made more simple. We have no end of clauses, no end of different agreements and contracts; and very few of the officials in the Lands Office are competent to give an opinion on many of the clauses. There is the Lands Titles Office, which should be a trained and skilled department, but owing to the action of the Government in talking of a land tax, there has been no speculation lately, and that office is practically idle. But while there has been very little doing in the Lands Titles Office, there has been a lot of work in the Lands Office which could be and should be done by the Titles Office, such as the registration and transfer of mortgages. All such matters as these should be attended to in the Titles Office; and the Government are taking a great risk when they allow this work

to be done in the Lands Office. Already mistakes have been made, mistakes will be made, and there is no assurance fund in that office for the protection of the country against the result of mistakes. In the Titles Office there is an assurance fund for the purpose of saving the country the cost of any mistakes which may be made. It is desirable that the whole of this branch of the Lands Office work should be handed over to the Titles Office to be done by men trained to that work, and thus relieve the Lands Office. Whether there are too many officers in the Lands Office or whether they are incompetent, I say there are too many of them. The best of them should be retained and the others got rid of; and then it would be better to pay the good men higher salaries. The Government have been creating what I call sub-treasuries throughout the country districts in connection with the Lands Office. If districts are to demand this and that, and if a political boss, because he happens to have influence, can say we want this and we want that, and the Government give away sops, I think different methods should be adopted, that it is time the Government put this sort of thing down. Instead of establishing sub-treasuries and creating employment and bringing people into one or other centre outside Perth, the Government should recognise that the selector has channels through which to send his money to Perth. Every man deals either with a bank or with a storekeeper, and he can get his money sent to Perth with the greatest ease—much more simply than by the Government establishing sub-treasuries, and much more economically for the country which has to pay. It is much more simple for the individual to send in his taxes, so to speak, than for the country to pay for collection; and I do not think the Government are doing anything useful towards assisting settlement on the land by establishing these sub-treasuries. Other economies may be effected also. We require radical reform in one direction—I refer to the construction of spur railways. I was informed that after the appearance in print of certain comments by some au-

thority in respect of the Kojonup railway construction thousands of sleepers were taken up and replaced by others. This was after certain comments had appeared in the Press Inquiry should be made into this matter to see what has been done and what has been the cost of these spur railways. The Working Railways branch, so far as I can learn, has taken no hand in the construction of these spur lines. That branch has permanent-way men and a staff, many of whom are being dismissed now. Why not, instead of dismissing those men, have given the Working Railways branch an intimation of what was wanted, and sent down those men to do the work? Why should the Public Works Department have to engage special labour to do this work, when we had men already employed whom the Government did not know how to find work for? Apparently the different Government departments work against each other. Why are there so many political bosses in this State? Are we going to have America rejuvenated here? The time has come when political bossdom should be put down. We should endeavour to devise a scheme for putting our own people on the land. It will be better to do that than to get foreigners on the land. If our own people are not useful, they should be labelled so, and not allowed to stand in the way of other people. We have a sinking fund, and while the present Government are in power I hope the sinking fund will not be disturbed, but left there solid and concrete. I hope the Government are not anticipating a demolition of the sinking fund. If so we shall have another Black Thursday in Western Australia. I do not know why we should go on piling up the sinking fund. We might call "stop" for a little while at present. But this sinking fund is the best security Western Australia has. We cannot invest our funds in a better way or give a better security to Western Australia. Our greatest industry is the gold industry. We had what I thought a goldfields Ministry last session trying to impose taxation on the people of Perth and the agricultural settlers. Now it seems we

have an agricultural Ministry. We have a gold industry with an immense production of gold. All the biggest things in the State come from the goldfields. Why do not the goldfields members cheer that remark? If I were a goldfields member I should cheer it to the echo. But I am using the remark in another way. The industry is a rich one, and if a tax were put upon it, it could pay the tax. What services does the agricultural industry receive? It is refused the assistance of a few thousand pounds for the erection of a mill to turn our wheat to account in these bad times. Practically nothing is received. The gold industry has the Coolgardie water scheme, which is wearing away like the gold. There is the Mint, which gives gold mines London prices for their gold in Western Australia, less a little exchange. That is of immense service to the gold industry, and for this service—for the service of having the cash in Western Australia—they pay nothing. The wheat grower and the wool grower do not get any assistance. He cannot get such a service as the Coolgardie water scheme, which is a single service. Even if the gold industry paid a small royalty there would be no need to talk of any retrenchment or any pruning. The country could go on without it. I am loth to put a royalty on anything we produce, for gold should only be won once. But the dividends go to people who live outside the State. Let us be reasonable and obtain taxation from where it is least felt, and where it will do most good and cannot do any permanent injury. We have had a timber trouble, and there have been gifts made by the Government to the timber industry. The Combine's genius is responsible for this. We have allowed to the Combine, or given to the Combine, a reduction in freights. We have given them a rate which is very low to enable them to take train loads of timber away from the mills. That means that the Combine has a monopoly of the trade in Western Australia. If any big milling company had facilities for sending goods to market in train loads, it could almost charge what price it liked and distribute the trucks when they ar-

rived in Perth to any destination it pleased. This gift to the Combine was a good gift, and the Government has been a very fatherly Government to the Combine. We have a very solicitous Premier, at the present time, for the Combine. I had the pleasure over thirty years ago of conducting large transactions in South Australia, for I had the control of a good deal of timber business, and I had to supervise and take charge of all the Government contracts, and I say this, that there are men engaged in the timber business in South Australia who know Western Australia and know all about the timber, and who are prepared to do business. They know where Mr. Smith lives, and Mr. Smith is competent to know how to get his timber to market. There is no necessity to pose. I believe Mr. Smith has gone to South Australia. I believe this has been a little bit of posing, and that there is nothing in it. South Australia is trying to grow its own timber. It is like Japan, trying to grind their own flour, so that they will not have to send to Australia for the flour that is much damaged. And so it is the same in South Australia. That State will deal with Western Australia as it thinks fit, for we in Western Australia have to send to Australia for the flour. We have treated South Australians like we treated Mr. Tanner, who came here and selected and then went back again and brought his family and cattle over and then found he could not get the land. The Government of South Australia must recognise that in treating with a Government like our Government, they must go very slowly and encourage their own people and beware of a Government acting in the way that our Government are doing. I have a painful duty in drawing attention to a somewhat serious matter and I do not want to be jocose. There is another powerful Combine we have in the State—I will not name it, but this matter is connected with the trams, and the Minister for Works has been very solicitous for the welfare of that estate. The Minister for Works has allowed his Secretary to approach a land owner with a view of getting as-

sistance from that land owner in the name of the Government for a particular company. Why does the Under Secretary for Works go out of his way to get assistance in this particular manner as a speculator in a private estate, through which estate a road has been made? True it has been given over to the roads board for public use; but why is this done in regard to an absentee company? What is the reason for it? Members should be careful not only in that but in other things in respect of that same company. I should be very careful, seeing what has happened. That sort of thing ought not to be done. Our own people dare not go to the Government with a reasonable proposition, yet here was a most unreasonable proposition and a most improper thing to do. Every district has its political boss—I do not say he is in Parliament, but I say there is a boss in Parliament somewhere. Sam Weller upset the coach: he was the boss. We have evidence throughout the land that there are political bosses and the Government should be strong and resist anything that approaches the American style. I wish to refer to another little matter and I refer to this not that I think there is anything wrong, but I think it was very indiscreet for the Minister for Works to put the statement in the way he did. I do not imagine that there is anything wrong. I think everything was above board, except that it was a great disappointment to the townspeople of Albany. There was a sum of £12,000 set apart for a water supply for Albany, and by some arrangement which I as a member for Albany do not understand, that amount was reduced to £3,000. Since then Bunbury has been offered £4,000, one better. I do not know why that has been done, but the Minister referring to this said it was by arrangement with the member for Albany. I think the member for Albany is above reproach, but the members for the Province should be informed of what is going on. I should not have to go to another place, as I did go with another member, and when the remark was made to me that member said, "I certainly would not like to put the thing

in that way." Members should not be humorous but solid and staid. We have a great country and I have every faith in the country. With good government we should win the respect of the Commonwealth, and the difficulties in respect to Federation which are real would disappear. I believe there is a grand future for the Commonwealth, and I hope with members here that I shall live for the next 25 years and see the dark days that we have undergone for the past six or 12 months disappear and never be known again. I am not prepared to throw over anything I have said or forsake any of my first pledges. I am still in favour of Federation, and I believe Federation did a great good for Western Australia. The first time I was informed that it was otherwise was by a jocular Government.

The PRESIDENT: Before any other speeches are made, I wish to say that although extreme latitude is allowed, yet the motion before the Council is an Address in reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): I think I can congratulate Mr. Maley at least in putting up a record in regard to the length of his speech. I do not know of any previous occasion on which he has entertained the House for so many minutes as he has done this afternoon. It puts one in a difficulty. In the Governor's Speech we have a picture of the State of Western Australia with its brighter colours brought out. On the other hand the picture Mr. Maley has drawn for us this afternoon is one with very dark colours and a sombre view. Probably the truth will be found somewhere between the two. It was difficult in Mr. Maley's remarks to distinguish between his humour and sincerity, and although he charges the Government with being humorous, he is one of the first order. It is difficult to know when he is sincere, and when he is only funny. Certainly the charges brought against the Government of underground engineering in connection with the Kojonup Railway

ought to be inquired into farther. I hope before the session becomes very much older his charges will assume a more specific character instead of the general terms in which he has placed them this afternoon. The entrance into this Chamber of the mover of the Address to His Excellency is simultaneous with the re-discovery of the Northern Province. The information we have had of that great country during the last few weeks and months has, I am sure, been of the utmost value to all persons who are interested in the country's development, and especially to members of Parliament. We shall look forward to the development of that country in the North on more ample lines than has been witnessed in the past. We shall expect a great development in almost every industry suitable to this State, mineral and pastoral especially. With Mr. Pennefather, the newly elected member for that district, I think the Speech of His Excellency is to be noted for the confident and assuring tone which runs right through it. To a large extent I am in sympathy with a note of this kind being sounded; for I think that if there has ever been in the history of our State a necessity to sound a note of this kind, it is the present time. One hears in the street the remarks of croakers that things are going to the dogs, and of course the Government are held responsible for the bad times we are passing through. So in these circumstances I think a change in the direction noted by His Excellency's Speech is somewhat of an antidote to what we hear every day as we go along. Without wearying the House by going through the numerous items in the Speech, I may say I had the pleasure of listening to the Minister for Mines in the Mechanics' Institute the other evening, and I thoroughly approve of the way in which Ministers travel about the State during recess; for if we are to know anything of the State and its requirements, the Ministers must travel about and see for themselves the actual needs of the several districts. I think the Premier in his trip through the Black Range district, also Mr. Mitchell in his constant travelling about as Honorary Minister

for Agriculture, and Mr. Gregory in his North-West trip, have provided for us an amount of information that it would be impossible for any private individual to obtain, and especially one whose ordinary work keeps him about the city. I think, therefore, that trips of this kind are of great public value. It has been asked, how can Ministers attend to the duties of administration while travelling round the country? My opinion is that the happy mean should be taken by Ministers in this matter; that while keeping a close watch on the administration of their several departments, the members of the Ministry must of necessity travel about and see what are the needs of the country and observe what development is taking place. Of course members in both Houses of Parliament bring under the notice of Ministers the needs of their several districts; but it is desirable that Ministers should obtain at first hand direct information as to the necessities of the country. This remark applies only to travelling within the State, and not to such occasional trips as that taken recently by the Premier in going to the Premiers' Conference at Brisbane. My remarks also do not apply to the Treasurer's trip to Japan, of which we have heard so much, and up to the present with so little result to anybody as far as I am able to gather. Our association with Federation is mentioned in the Governor's Speech, as I suppose it will continue to be mentioned until things federal run more smoothly than they are at present; but I have not heard of any direct charge of injustice that has been brought against the Federal Parliament or the Federal Government. I know that Federation so far has not worked out as we expected it would. We knew we were losing the control of our Customs revenue, and we agreed to it when we voted for Federation.

Hon. G. Randell: People should not have voted for it.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Not 10 per cent. of the people knew what they were voting for.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: The hon. member who has just spoken was one of the leaders in the federal campaign, and

the Premier of the State at that time threw in his lot ultimately with the federal movement, and it is not to be wondered at that the man in the street who does not read much should at the time have taken his opinions from those men who held high office. We were promised, although not in any statutory form, the construction of the Western Union Railway; and I think if it had not been for the absence of one of the West Australian senators during the last session of the Federal Parliament, the Bill for authorising the survey of that railway would have passed. I notice that the measure is mentioned again in the Governor's Speech just delivered to the Federal Parliament.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I do not think it will get much farther.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: I certainly hope it will be carried this session. The Premier having recently visited Brisbane and been in association with the Premiers of the Eastern States he has made some remarks since as to the view and the attitude which Western Australia should adopt in present circumstances. He has said:—

“At the Brisbane Conference, the shibboleth was almost universal, ‘What is best for my State?’ Outside the Conference the same feeling was everywhere in evidence—what is best for Queensland, Victoria, South Australia? And I am satisfied that the people of each State when voting on federal questions would vote simply from this standpoint. They would talk glibly enough of the federal idea, but whenever they descended from the abstract to the concrete, the federal idea would almost inevitably resolve itself into this question, ‘What is best for our State?’ Now it behoves us, in view of this fact, and fact it is, to live in no fool's paradise, but to do what our neighbours do—to consider when we are dealing with federal questions, simply how they will affect Western Australia.”

That was the influence which was brought to bear on the Premier while in Brisbane, and that is the advice he gives to the

people of Western Australia. But in making those remarks on his return to this State, the Premier appeared to me to take the view that they at the Conference were like a lot of terriers quarrelling about a bone, as to which was to get the biggest share. But on the other hand it was not long before the Premier got away from that idea, rising to a higher level ; and speaking at that higher level, this is the advice he finally gives to the people of Western Australia:—

“We have a great country here, great in her immediate past, in her present, and in her promise for the future. Since the advent of Responsible Government some 16 or 17 years ago, we have increased our population five-fold. We are a mining country, easily the largest in Australia. We are an agricultural country, having in ordinary seasons the largest average wheat yield in Australia. And our agricultural progress is so marked that during the last seven years we have increased our area under crop five times over. The old order clearly is giving way to the new. Men no longer regard this country as incapable of producing. If we take our developed area as an indication of what can be effected over our millions of acres, the outlook is hopeful indeed.”

Now the advice he gives in the last part of his speech I think compensates for the doleful view he took in the earlier part of his speech of our association with the Federal Union. I do not agree with the suggestions the Federal Treasurer has made for the distribution of the surplus after the present per capita system has been abolished; for I do not think any Federal Parliament will consent to an injustice of that kind being inflicted on any one State. As to other portions of his Excellency's Speech, I do not intend to speak on the question of land taxation, nor on the reduction of the Council franchise, which is something that has been appearing in all the Governors' Speeches for many years, and we never seem to reach it in real earnest. But one other question to which our attention

is called in the Speech is that of the sinking fund for the ultimate repayment of our loans; and while I believe it is impracticable if not impossible—in fact we cannot alter the sinking fund, because our loans have been raised on the understanding that there is a sinking fund—yet I think the suggestion made in his Excellency's Speech is worthy of being looked into, namely that we might diminish our annual contribution to the sinking fund by one half, and extend the period of loans from 35 or 45 years to a period say of 56 or 60 years. I think that might be done, and a half per cent. sinking fund would be sufficient to meet the loans when they matured. There is no mention in the Speech of a previous proposal for reducing the salaries of Ministers, in connection with an amendment of the Constitution Act. Probably Ministers with their fuller experience think they earn all the money they get; and I for one shall not seek to amend the Constitution Bill in that direction when the measure comes before us. On the question of liquor law amendment embodying the principle of local option, I hope this will be a measure embodying in a real sense the principle of local option. The proposal to complete the Claremont Hospital for the Insane is one which will have the support of all members of this House. This Government and previous Governments who have helped in this direction are to be commended for their action in carrying on this necessary work. There are no other items in the Speech on which I wish to take up the time of the House, and I conclude by supporting the motion.

Motion to Adjourn.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : I move that the debate be adjourned.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : If any member is ready to speak, it will be better to go on, this being the first day, and we should endeavour to close the debate to-morrow.

Motion put, and negatived.

At 6.15, the President left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Debate continued.

Hon. J. A. THOMSON (Central) : It was not my intention to speak at all on this motion. I have previously remarked that I did not see much occasion for speeches on the Address-in-Reply ; but that is only my own opinion. However, as I am to some extent responsible for the House meeting after the tea adjournment, I will make a few remarks. On reading the Premier's speech at Bunbury, and also the opening Speech put into the mouth of His Excellency, we find that the tone of both is distinctly optimistic. I like not only to read of but also to know people who are possessed of that hopeful spirit, who seize every favourable opportunity to express their unbounded confidence in themselves and their country. At the present time at least, when a severe depression undoubtedly exists in the State, it is cheering to know that the head of the Government, and I suppose other Ministers, believe not only that the existing depression will be speedily removed, but that it is hardly worth mentioning. Unfortunately, Ministers are not able to dispel the clouds that surround us by simply expressing the hope that they may be removed, and by making light of them into the bargain. By simply waving the magician's wand and saying all will be well, we cannot bring back to this State and its people the prosperity that we desire. The fact remains that a depression has existed for a considerable time, nearly twelve months ; it still exists, and so far as I can see, there is little hope of its being removed. Looking at it from a business-man's point of view, as one who has an opportunity of feeling the pulse of the whole State while controlling a business that has its ramifications in every part of Western Australia, I do not know how the Government can believe that this depression is about to be removed, or can be removed by any means except the lavish expenditure of borrowed money. And even if we could by borrowing and spending bring back prosperity, I question whether the Government would be in a position to borrow. But if they were, I do not consider borrowing a wise

policy to pursue. Rather do I believe in living within our means, instead of pursuing the spendthrift policy of the past. The Premier and his Government are quite correct in stating that this is only a fancied depression, for in reality it does not exist, or would not exist had we been living within our means. We have in the past been borrowing so much money and spending so much of it in the State that we have thereby caused a seeming and not a real prosperity ; and when we cease to borrow and spend so much, our affairs do not seem so prosperous as they ought to seem. But in my opinion the Government ought to look for some means of producing a better state of affairs, if they are not able to raise the necessary loan moneys. If they do not consider it wise to borrow too lavishly, they ought to devise means of raising sufficient revenue to carry on the affairs of the State without necessarily depending on the London or any other market for loan moneys. It has been rightly pointed out that this House is responsible for the failure to pass the Land Tax Bill introduced last session by the Government. This is right enough, but in my humble opinion the Government themselves are largely responsible for the rejection of the Bill. I believe that if the Legislative Assembly had sent us a Bill with what I may term the necessary force behind it, the measure would now be on the statute book. That the measure was necessary was I think made pretty clear ; but it should have been clearly understood that something would happen if it were not passed ; and I think it would then have received the sanction of this House. But I do not think that the land tax proposal went anything like far enough. In my opinion real prosperity would result in this State if we had a tax on unimproved land values ; not a tax such as is proposed in the measure of last session, but one without any exemption whatever ; a tax that would have the effect of either causing the people who hold much land that they are not using to good advantage to use it to good advantage, or that would make it not worth their while to hold the land. I maintain it to be fair and equitable that

there ought to be no exemption whatever. The small man would not be asked to contribute much, for he would not have much landed property to be taxed; and in all my travels throughout the State I have not heard a single small farmer or small property-owner complain of the proposed land tax.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Were there any farmers in the districts through which you have travelled?

Hon. J. A. THOMSON: At least I have not heard them complain when the proposal was properly explained to them. Suppose that the tax had been a penny in the £ on the unimproved value. What would that mean to a selector with, say, 640 acres, a square mile of country? The unimproved value of that would not be more than 10s. or 15s. an acre. Would a tax of a penny in the £ on the unimproved value be felt by such a person? And what would it mean to the small property-holder in Perth, living in his own house on his own land? The land, we will say, would not be valued at more than £100 or £200, and a tax of a penny on the unimproved land value would not touch him. In my opinion this is a highly necessary tax, and I hope the Government will press it with due force. The House should consider that not only is the tax necessary in order that the State may pay its way, but that the tax is fair and equitable, and that by imposing it lands now unused will be peopled by those we are so desirous of attracting, who cannot now acquire any suitable land near railways or near centres of population. The Speech makes no mention of the immigration policy; but paragraph 2 states that our "agricultural areas give promise of a prosperous season, and every effort is being put forward to secure permanent settlement." We are endeavouring to induce the immigration of people from the old lands, but I fear that the immigration policy pursued in the past was a great mistake. Less than three years ago I had an opportunity of visiting the old country, and during last session I think I told the House that had I been commissioned by the Government to procure immigrants of a desir-

able class from my own part of Scotland. I, as one who could have spoken with authority on local conditions, after spending twenty-eight years in Australia, should have had no difficulty in inducing hundreds of farm servants from the north of Scotland to come out here. But I say now that I could not honestly ask a single individual to come out, and tell him that his condition here would be better than it is now in Scotland. About six months ago I wrote to my brother at Home to send me, through the Agent General's Department which would see to their assisted passages, two good farm labourers to whom I was prepared to give constant employment, a good house to live in and proper food, with 20s. per week for a start and 25s. when they became used to the new conditions, and could wield an axe and otherwise work like Australians. My brother replied; and I can vouch for the correctness of his letter, because he supported it with a newspaper clipping showing the present rate of wages in Aberdeenshire. His reply was in effect:—

"I have your letter as to sending out two ploughmen to you, but I can assure you that the rate of wages you offer and the promise you have made of improving their positions when they are able to save money and take up land themselves, would have very little effect here, because most of the good ploughmen are going to Canada. Those who are remaining here have no difficulty in getting as ordinary ploughmen £21 10s. to £22 10s. for the six months. That of course does not include their keep. They have proper places to live in. They have properly-cooked food, and their beds are made by the servants of the house. On a large farm they have a proper place for meals, and in a small farmer's house, where he has only one or two men, they eat at the farmer's own table and are treated in such a neighbourly way that you can really class them as members of the family."

Can any member of this House tell me that the farm labourer in Western Aus-

tralia—they are not worse treated here than they are in New South Wales or Victoria—can be assured of regular employment from one year's end to another? Can any farmer who can be held responsible for it engage a man for six months and keep him as they are in Scotland? I am correct in saying that the labour offering in Western Australia is of a very casual nature indeed, that a man will get employment in the busy times only, that is at ploughing time or harvest time, and that he then has to hump his swag and go round looking for employment. There are some who can afford to have a certain number constantly employed; but the ordinary cockatoo farmer, can he have them constantly employed all the year round and under favourable conditions? I say certainly not. What is the result? These labourers have then to knock round the country and get into dismal habits with the terrible life they have to lead. We can call it nothing but hardship for a man who comes from the old country, where he lived under better conditions. In most instances they are treated like good beasts. Their food is improperly cooked, if it is at all cooked; and it is of the roughest nature, while in large instances they are not found with sleeping accommodation whatever; they just go round with their blankets and have to find sleeping accommodation for themselves. If I told the farm servants, as they are called in Scotland, that the conditions in Western Australia were as pictured by me—and I am trying to do it truthfully—how many immigrants would I have got out? I complain that the Immigration Department is not telling the whole truth to the men it is bringing out here, with the result that the large majority of those assisted immigrants are not remaining here. They come here at the expense of this State, and they are going away to the Eastern States. During the last three months I have had personal knowledge of three families, assisted immigrants, who came to Western Australia, and all of them have left. Two went to New Zealand and seven to New South Wales. They were all assisted immigrants, and each of them went away with something

bad to say of this State, not considering for a moment that they were under any obligation to Western Australia at all. I told them they were. One man, a well-to-do farmer from Ayrshire, who came with £1,000, which I saw him deposit in the Western Australian Bank, stopped here three months and went over the State, but said he could not find any land under the conditions pictured to him before he left Scotland; and he was so disgusted with the misleading statements made to him that under no circumstances would he be persuaded to remain, though I did my best to keep such a man, who had a good deal of money. He went to New Zealand. I had a letter from him the other day, in which he said that he had no difficulty in buying a nice place there for £500. [*Member* : He did not get a farm.] He got a nice little place; he has not entered into details about it; it is what he terms a nice little place. I have no fault to find with the immigration policy of the Government, but I would like to sound a note of warning in regard to the class of people being brought out and in regard to the class of lecturers in the old country who induce people to come out here. I am afraid that many of these lecturers are like unscrupulous canvassers; they get as much as they can for their money, and get as many people to come out here as possible so that the Agent General may say they are doing well. When these immigrants come out they must have a grudge against the State, and they must be dissatisfied from the jump if they find that everything is not as it has been depicted to them at home. I did intend to ask the Colonial Secretary without notice whether this last batch of immigrants, who I notice in the newspapers are found with quarters in the various coffee palaces—whether the Government are paying for this accommodation and for their food while they are there.

The Colonial Secretary : No. We do that for immigrants; we find them a decent cheap place.

Hon. J. A. THOMSON : It is good that the Government are not doing for this class of people what they would not do for Australians. I do not think they would do it for Australians. I could not

help going down to look at the recent batch of immigrants who came out under the supervision of someone—I do not know whether he be employed by the department or not. The newspaper gave the name of the gentleman as Mr. Lane ; and that gentleman spoke as though he had been engaged in some way, or had had some promise from the Agent General for bringing out a batch of young gentlemen to this State. I feel that the statements published in the papers as having been made by this gentlemen are very misleading indeed. I noticed in the papers a report that he sent to Mr. Throssell that he was bringing out people with £30,000. When they arrived at Fremantle the agent there reduced it to £9,000, but from the class of people I saw I should say that it would amount to £90 at the outside. This Mr. Lane was asked, as reported in the papers, how many people he brought out ; and he said "About 30 or 40," as if a man who was on board with them could not say exactly. When we hear such statements given by a reputed agent here, what kind of statements would he make in the old country? Not very long ago a settler at Torbay raised £700 from potatoes in one patch, and now he has left for England with his wife and family to be employed by the Agent General in the old country. If that class of person is employed as lecturer, I can almost imagine what he is saying to the people he is inducing to come to the State. He will be spinning a yarn about making this money, and that it is open to the people to come out and do just as well as he did. That is very misleading. I do not credit anyone who could make £700 out of one patch in one year going home to seek employment from the Agent General. I believe he would remain in Western Australia to turn out one or two more seven hundred pounds from his patch—at least I would—instead of seeking a job from the Agent General. I also quite approve of the Government endeavouring to foster the dairying or any other industry in connection with the settlement of people on the land, but I

ask them to be careful indeed as to whom they sell the cows to. I recollect some 10 or 12 years ago cows and bulls were brought to Western Australia under somewhat similar conditions, and most of the cows were sold to dairy people about Perth with the result that the dairymen were put into the way of having good milking cows, but the State did not benefit at all ; because most of the calves were knocked on the head or were not used for the purpose to which we expected the product of these pedigree cows would be put. Most were sold to the dairymen because the dairymen were prepared to give the biggest price. The Government sold to the highest bidder. There was some mention made in the Premier's speech at Bunbury of a stock tax, but I see it is omitted entirely from the Governor's Speech. I have no idea what form this proposed tax will take, supposing it is the intention of the Government to introduce such a tax, but I believe it would be a fair and equitable one, seeing that the pastoralists in the North-West are getting, not only a lot of current revenue, but also loan moneys by way of assisting them to prevent rabbits getting over their pastoral leases, and also by way of freezing works. I think it would be a fair and equitable tax indeed ; but as there are no particulars in regard to it—it is not even stated whether it is intended to be introduced or not—we will have to wait awhile. However, I would strongly advocate a stock tax. [*Hon. R. F. Sholl*: A general one throughout the State, of course.] Yes ; so long as it be under equitable conditions. The squatters in the North-West get huge areas of land at a very nominal rental, and a large amount of loan money and current revenue is spent to assist them in becoming very wealthy, as they are. Loan money is spent in the erection of rabbit-proof fences. The poorest taxpayer has to contribute his mite to the erection of these fences which are entirely in the interests of the pastoralists, because wherever there are small holdings and farmers in large numbers the rabbits give no trouble. It is only the large pastoralists or squatters to whom the rabbits give some trouble.

In Tasmania the small farmers welcome the rabbit ; they get a nice revenue from it. In winter time they get on an average 7d. a head for the carcases, and 1s. 6d. to 2s. a dozen for the skins. So they consider the rabbits a god-send and a blessing. Of course the squatters do not like them because they are not able to keep the rabbits within bounds, but the small man likes them. He likes to see his youngsters going out to trap the rabbits and make a bit of money. I notice in paragraph 13 of the Speech—of course it was made public before the opening Speech was printed—that the Government have decided to dispense with the services of the Commissioner of Railways ; or rather have not dispensed with them, but have allowed him 12 months' leave of absence, at the end of which period he will retire. In my humble opinion the Government have made a great mistake in allowing that gentleman to leave the service. Whatever his previous knowledge may have been with regard to railway management any man in his position who has ability, energy, and determination must acquire great knowledge of the working of our railways, and become thoroughly accustomed to the conditions existing in Western Australia. To my way of thinking Mr. George, the late Commissioner of Railways, has done wonders during his five years' term of office. He has brought great ability to bear in the management of the railways and, from what I can gather, the employees of the Department are of opinion that he has given satisfaction to them. Of course there are some who are never satisfied, but he has been what is called "a very fair boss." He was a hard "boss" in certain directions, for he was always determined to have his way, and in that he was right. If you have a man at the head of affairs and do not give him full power to act as he thinks best, it is impossible to get the results which would be obtainable from a man of ability who has really the supreme command. If the Government succeed in securing the services of a Commissioner of Railways who has had really extended Australian experience I shall be very satisfied indeed

and the country will have reason to feel grateful ; but if it is intended by the Government to import a man at a high salary who has had no previous experience in managing Australian railways it will take him—no matter how able he may be—at least a year or two to get knowledge of local conditions. The first year or two he will have more to unlearn than to learn, and his experience will be gained at the expense of the taxpayers. Paragraph 18 of the Speech mentions among other matters that it is intended to bring in a Bill providing for the reduction of the franchise for the Legislative Council. Some of the members who have spoken before me have already referred to this. In a measure this House has almost become accustomed to being threatened with Bills of this description. This course has been followed by succeeding Ministries, and really perhaps the stage has now arisen when not very much notice is taken of it. Considering the present feeling of the majority of members of this House I can hardly expect that a Bill having any suggestion for doing away with the Upper House or of largely decreasing the franchise will even be considered. However, I am in favour, as much as ever I was, of a substantial reduction in the franchise, and I maintain that, if members of this House are as they pride themselves generally on being, representatives of the property owners, they should be ready to help the smallest as well as the largest property owner.

Hon. G. Randell: The smallest property-owner is represented now.

Hon. J. A. THOMSON: The smallest property-owner is not.

Hon. G. Randell: It is his own fault if he is not.

Hon. J. A. THOMSON: As all hon. members know, the franchise for this House is very different from that for another place. We are representatives of propertied classes or the householders. If a householder with a £25 annual qualification is considered worthy of having a vote for the Legislative Council, why should a man who is paying 5s. a week for his cottage not have the opportunity

also of voting for members of that portion of the Legislature? Why should there be such fine distinction? It is well known by hon. members that in many of the country towns and districts houses are let at as low a rental as 5s. a week, and the people who occupy them compare very favourably with many people occupying places in Perth at a rental of from 12s. 6d. to 15s. a week. I consider that if the franchise were lowered to £10 and a vote given to all householders it would be liberalising this Chamber, and would make the power of hon. members much greater because they would be representing many more electors, and it stands to reason that a member of Parliament returned by 2,000 or 3,000 electors carries more weight in the deliberations of the Legislature than one who is elected to represent only 100 or 200 electors.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: You might do away with the qualification altogether, for you would then have more electors still. It appears that you do not require this House?

Hon. J. A. THOMSON: If a Bill for the liberalisation of the franchise is brought down, members will have an opportunity of saying whether they consider that the Chamber should be done away with. However, it is not likely that this Legislative Council will vote to have itself abolished. The only course which any members holding views I do—the liberalising of the Legislative Council or the abolition of it altogether—should follow, is to advocate that the franchise should be reduced so that members might be returned to this Chamber who hold views similar to mine. I notice that among the proposed railways are those from Port Hedland to Marble Bar and from Mount Magnet to Black Range. No member has ever been able to accuse me of making use of my position in this House in order to curry favour with my own constituents, but I will say here that I believe that both these railways are urgent necessities and that it will pay this State handsomely to have them constructed at as early a date as possible.

I believe that they will pay from the very start, and that is more than we can say of many of the railways which have received favourable consideration recently, and which, in some instances, have been constructed. Of course it must be remembered that some of those railways may have been built for other purposes. Both of the railways I have mentioned are of great necessity in connection with the opening up of the country through which they will pass. Clause 24 of the Governor's Speech states:—"In the early part of the year a board was appointed to consider and report upon the best method of obtaining for the metropolitan area a supply of water from the hills. The board's labours are nearing completion, and as soon as the proposals are before my advisers the question will receive immediate attention." I suppose that means that it has been decided to take this metropolitan water supply from the proposed scheme at the Upper Canning. I do not pose as an expert in water supply matters, but I do think, as a person with surely some practical knowledge, that it is a huge mistake to spend money that is so urgently required for other development purposes in obtaining a supply of water for the metropolitan area from any other source than the Helena Vale Reservoir. We know that hundreds of millions of gallons of water are running to waste over the weir at Mundaring every year. [*Hon. W. Patrick:* Thousands of millions?] Yes; and that is occurring at such a short distance from the metropolitan area as at the Helena Dam. Apparently no scheme for the utilisation of this waste water has received any consideration at all from the Government. This is a great mistake, for possibly for the next 20 or 30 years there would be an abundant water supply from this source to meet all the requirements of the metropolitan area. I think that any practical business man, if this had been a business concern, would have at all events given a great deal of consideration to this proposal before commencing to go into the question of obtaining the supplies from any other source. We have to consider that this goldfields water

scheme is a huge undertaking for a small community like that of Western Australia. I am pleased indeed to know that there is not such a heavy loss on the work as many anticipated, and that it is coming nearer to being a profitable concern every year. If the metropolitan supply were taken from Mundaring it would be assisting not only to make this scheme a better one from a payable point of view, but would also assist the people on the goldfields to get water at a lower cost than they do at present. The whole matter deserves more consideration than it has yet received from the Government or from the influential newspapers. I have spoken to a few people who have knowledge of these matters, and when they had the figures before them they were satisfied that there would be an abundant water supply for the whole of the metropolitan area to be obtained from the Weir at Mundaring for at least 10, 15 or 20 years; always provided that the goldfields were not requiring much more water than they now receive. If we do not take this water from the metropolitan area, and thus assist the scheme, what will happen to Western Australia should the goldfields not continue to have the same population in the future that they have now and will therefore not require the same quantity of water from the scheme? By making these few comments on the Address-in-Reply I do not wish to show that I am antagonistically inclined to the Government. Far be it from that. Nearly all the proposed measures are of a very liberal nature and will receive my whole-hearted support. My only complaint is that a few of them do not go far enough. But that too may be rectified. Taking it on the whole it is a very liberal programme, and I honestly hope that many of the measures that are outlined in this speech will be put on the statute-book of Western Australia, and that the Government, or any Government who may be in power, will receive my whole-hearted support in carrying through any legislative enactment that I think, in my humble way, will be of value to the general mass of the people of Western Australia.

On motion by the *Hon. M. L. Moss*, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.16 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 9th July, 1907.

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The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the *Premier*: 1, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1907; 2, Additions and Alterations to Gaols Regulations.

By the *Minister for Mines*: Regulations under the Mines Regulation Act.

By the *Minister for Works*: 1, By-laws passed by the Road Boards of Nullagine, Marble Bar, Mt. Margaret, Yilgarn, Bunbury, Nelson, Dardanup, Preston, and Moorambine; 2, By-laws passed by the Goldfields Water Supply Administration.

By the *Treasurer*: 1, Amended Audit Act Regulations; 2, Order in Council under Section 35 of the Audit Act.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The **PREMIER** (*Hon. N. J. Moore*) moved—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of busi-