

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th July, 1907.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4-30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

QUESTION — SEAMEN'S ACCOMMODATION ON STEAMER.

Mr. ANGWIN (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the Minister instruct an officer to inspect the accommodation provided for the crew of the s.s. "Pilbarra" previous to her leaving the port of Fremantle on Saturday next, 13th July; such officer to order any alteration necessary for the health of the crew, if required, and such alteration to be carried out prior to the ship's leaving port?

The PREMIER replied: I have no objection to instructing an officer to make an inspection and report.

QUESTION — RAILWAY DEVIATION, GERALDTON-CUE.

Mr. STONE asked the Minister for Railways: Will he consider the desirability of making a deviation on the Cue line between Geraldton and Eridu to enable an engine to take a full load between those two points, and do away with the expense and necessity of two trains and staff being required to take the load, for which one train can haul the balance of the journey? The deviation referred to would shorten the distance from Geraldton to Cue by several miles, with very little cost.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Yes, an estimate is being prepared, but the deviation will not in any way shorten the distance.

QUESTION—CHAPMAN EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

Mr. STONE asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Why were the manager

and staff removed from the Chapman Experimental Farm to a Southern district? 2, Why were the stock and plant sold? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to close this farm? If so, why? 4, Is it the intention of the Government to establish another experimental farm in the Victoria district? If so, where and when?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, The manager was transferred to the Narrogin State Farm to fill a vacancy. The farm foreman was left for a time in charge of the Chapman Farm, and was in May last transferred to Narrogin as assistant manager in consequence of a scheme of reorganisation of State farms. 2, Only aged or unsuitable stock and useless plant were sold. 3, No. 4, No.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS, KALGOORLIE.

Mr. WARE asked the Premier: 1, Why were the names of the electors who were eligible to vote at the last Upper House elections struck off the roll by the Kalgoorlie Revision Court? 2, Why were not the Legislative Council rolls compiled whilst the Legislative Assembly rolls were being revised?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Presumably by the exercise of the powers conferred on the Revision Court by Section 56 of the Electoral Act. 2, For the following reasons:—(a) The remote chance of any Legislative Council election, under any circumstances until about May, 1908; (b) the fact that an alteration in the qualifications of Council electors is, at the present time, under consideration; and (c) because delay would have been caused in revising the Assembly rolls.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE SEWERAGE, MAIN DRAINS.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: When is it the intention of the Works Department to proceed with a farther portion of the main drains in connection with the Fremantle sewerage scheme?

The PREMIER replied: The tunneling contract on the main line of sewer is still in progress, and will probably be

completed about 30th August. The "Monier" pipes are under construction, and, on the completion of the above tunnel work, it is proposed to lay the pipes on this section. Contracts will be let for constructing further sections of the main sewer as fast as the pipes become available.

QUESTION — COOLGARDIE WATER SCHEME, DISMISSALS.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it true that men employed in connection with the Coolgardie Water Supply east of Southern Cross have been dismissed for refusing to accept a reduction in wages? 2, If so, what was the amount of the reduction, and why was this reduction enforced?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, There are three scales of pay in force along the pipe main; one from Mundaring to Cunderdin, one from Cunderdin to Gilgai, and another from Gilgai eastward. The rates now prevailing have been in force for the past three years, including the time the hon. member was administering the Department, and no reduction has been made nor has any been contemplated.

Mr. JOHNSON: May I be allowed to state that during the last day or so I met a man who was retrenched for refusing to accept a shilling-a-day reduction? I will ask the Minister to make farther inquiries, because I know a reduction was made during the last fortnight.

The PREMIER: My information was given me by Mr. McNulty, secretary of the Water Supply Department. I understand there are three distinct sections with different rates of pay. There was probably no room on the ten-shilling section, and the man was found employment under a different scale, at nine shillings.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will call round and make farther inquiries.

QUESTION—FOREST RANGER, ALLEGED NEGLECT.

Mr. GORDON, for Mr. A. J. Wilson, asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it

the intention of the Government to hold a departmental inquiry into the alleged neglect of Forest Ranger Fitzgerald in regard to the checking of timber royalty returns at North Dandalup? 2, Has Ranger Fitzgerald been suspended pending inquiry? 3, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Inquiry will be made into the matter. 2, No. 3, There is nothing to justify such a course at the present time.

DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth day.

Resumed from the previous day.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): I am pleased that nothing has so far been done, in this State at least, to abolish the privilege which members have of airing their grievances on the Address-in-Reply, and I hope the day is far distant when any course will be taken to prevent our having a full opportunity of airing grievances or criticising actions, during one part of the session at any rate. I desire at the outset to say I am deeply grieved to note that the restoration of confidence promised when the present Government took office, or when the Rason Government took office of which the present Government are the relict, is not apparent. Personally, having been in Western Australia for over fourteen years, I do not remember any time when the outlook was less favourable than at present. No matter what part of the State we visit or what business men we meet, we hear the one complaint and cry, "What are you going to do to make things better?" We cannot pass through any part of Perth without meeting such people. Where has all the confidence gone that was about to be restored? Did the Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Wilson) take it with him to Japan to restore confidence there? I am sure that nothing has been done in Western Australia to restore confidence in the present Government at any rate. A promise was made last session that we should meet earlier this year, and we remember that the same promise was made in the previous year, when the members on this (Opposition) side of the House generously gave way to the

Rason Government and allowed them to get into recess on the promise that they would reform the public departments and meet early in the year. The same promise was made last session, yet we are in the same position now as we were then; not a bit farther advanced. I dare say the excuse given, in addition to that of the absence of members from the State, will be that the Government has again reconstructed. We know that a new Whip (Mr. Gordon) has been appointed this session to assist the Government in passing their measures. We must all realise that the present position of Western Australia is not at all satisfactory, and it behoves every member in this Assembly, and every member in another place also, to do all he can to make things better. Of course the whole policy, especially of members on the Government side, has been to blame the present depression on Federation; but that excuse was not brought forward when the Labour Government were in power. The whole blame for the depression was laid on their shoulders, and I should like to see the present Administration bear some of the responsibility to which in my opinion they are justly entitled for the existing depression. Personally I maintain that it did not matter what Government was in power during the last few years, and it does not matter who may be in power during the next year or two: we shall have a very hard time in Western Australia, and in my opinion nothing will assist us to save the country from considerable depression except a few really good mineral discoveries, so that people may come to the State, so that wealth may be produced, and so that we can open up our agricultural districts. I should like to ask what is being done in that direction. I am deeply disappointed and highly dissatisfied with the assistance that has been given towards developing some very promising gold-mining centres and other mineral areas in Western Australia. I shall deal before I finish to-night with one or two of those places, to show perhaps that they are not receiving the assistance they deserve. I am pleased to see the Government are making efforts to open up the

Nor'-West; but a great many other centres are being absolutely sacrificed and not assisted at all, and the purpose of this requires some explanation. As to the promise made to us before we prorogued last session, that Ministers wished to rise early so as to get back to the administration of their departments, it has not been carried out. I should be one of the last to criticise any Minister for touring the State to gain information. I maintain it is the bounden duty of every Minister and every member of this Assembly to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the State, and with all its industries if possible; and I should give Ministers credit for travelling through the country to see for themselves what should be done to push forward its best interests. I would not criticise any Minister travelling in that direction, but I do criticise a Minister leaving the country to go on a pleasure trip at the very time when his abilities, if he has any, should be devoted to the best interest of the State. When we have a Minister practically gagging the House as the Treasurer did last session during the discussion of important financial questions for the sole purpose of going away on a pleasure trip, it is time the people of the country took up the matter and prevented a repetition of it in the future. What would have been said if a Labour Minister had gone away on a four months' tour? The newspapers would have bonned him down, and he would not have had a moment's peace so long as he was a Minister or a member of this Assembly. Labour Ministers should be treated by the newspapers with just as much respect and leniency as any other Ministers. We know that Ministers have been away from their offices a great deal, but I do not blame the Premier for travelling through the Black Range country, because I believe his visit will result in some good; and I am satisfied that the tour of the Minister for Mines in the North-West will have a beneficial effect on that portion of the State. Let us hope so at any rate. The question of finance has been dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition and up to the present

his charges have not been replied to from the Government side of the House. I do not intend to deal with that question; I leave it in more capable hands; but there was one other matter in the speech of the Minister for Works last night upon which I must touch. The Minister for Works gave as an excuse for the expenditure of loan moneys on non-productive works the fact that the Labour Government had constructed the rabbit-proof fence from loan moneys. It is a very lame excuse. Every member knows the reason why the Labour Government utilised loan funds for the construction of that fence; and instead of it being an argument to the detriment of the Labour party, it should be a point to their credit. We all know that the Attorney General secured his seat in the House on the condemnation of the Labour Government over the expenditure of loan funds on the rabbit-proof fence; and I say without fear of contradiction that if it was advisable to have a rabbit-proof fence in Western Australia, it was necessary to push on that work and have it completed at the earliest possible date. We all know that the thousands necessary for that work in one year could not be taken from revenue unless other necessary works suffered. One of the most important departments that should be controlled in a proper manner is the Factories Department. We all know that the present Government have neglected the factories question altogether, that sweating is on the increase; that the Early Closing Act is not enforced, and that the inspectors appointed for the purpose of looking after these factories have been stuck in their offices, some of them doing the work that a boy could do, instead of looking after these factories. It is a great mistake in a country where industries are springing up, in which hundreds of human beings are employed—in many cases in places which are not fit for them to be employed in—to neglect efficient inspection. The better the administration given to the factory question, the better it is for the people of the State. In older countries it is a main point, especially in England and America. There the Factories De-

partment is one of the most carefully administered, and in a young country like this we should follow the example of older countries and not allow our factories to be dens that give disease to all and sundry working therein. I would like the Premier to compel the officers to control the department better than they have been doing for the last 12 months or more. I regret to say that the Government have, contrary to the advice of those in a position to know, appointed justices of the peace who are not fit to hold the commission. It is an absurdity for the Premier to send a letter asking for a confidential reply regarding the advisability of an appointment as justice of the peace and, when the advice is sent back, to make the appointment contrary to the advice given. It is an absolute disgrace, the appointments of some justices of the peace during the last 12 months.

The Premier: You do not say anything about the hundreds that have been refused.

Mr. HOLMAN: I know nothing about them; I only speak of those who I know have been appointed; and I say again that in the case of more than one appointed in Western Australia, it was a disgrace to appoint them. We heard a lot about the boasted administration of the Electoral Department. During my tour through the Murchison a few months ago, I found that the police had been advised to take a census of stock, and on every occasion they were given instructions when taking the census of stock to take the names of all stockholders and place them on the roll, also the families; but in some cases the police were given instructions not to take any trouble about placing any other names on the roll. I was given that information by more than one police constable during my tour. I maintain that if those who are to be placed on the roll are to be gauged by whether they own a pig or a goat, it is time some change was made in the administration of that department. One important question we have to deal with at the present time is that of immigration. It may perhaps be a little

piece of knowledge to members of this Chamber to know that the great number of the immigrants, instead of being placed on the land with which object they are supposed to be brought, are sent to the Labour Bureau and pushed into billets there, to the detriment of people already in the State. I say it is an absolute disgrace, and that it is unfair on the part of those administering the department. What right have we to bring workers from other countries, push them into positions through the Labour Bureau and allow those here, who have helped to develop the country, to remain in idleness and, perhaps, starve through want of employment? The sooner a change is made the better. Members know that the Labour party some years ago made charges against mining companies bringing out Italians under contract, but we know that at the present there are companies bringing Italians to the State and getting them employment on the mines to the detriment of the English-speaking race, and that something should be done in this matter. The Minister for Mines in every mining camp tells of what members on this side of the House are going to do with the Italians, but I do not know of any case where Italians have been turned away and prevented from working on the mines, though I know of cases where Italians are employed who cannot speak the English language to be understood. I know that there are a number working in my district who cannot speak English to be understood. It is not that I would like to see them turned away from work. I say that when they are here in the State I would be the last in the world to prevent them or any man getting a living, but something should be done to prevent these mining companies carrying out this system.

The Minister for Mines: I wish you would give me some particulars, either privately or here; and I would soon take action.

Mr. HOLMAN: I shall be only too pleased to give the Minister any information I can.

The Minister for Mines: There was a complaint at Gwalia, but when we asked the union for particulars they would not give them.

Mr. HOLMAN: It is a very hard thing for any man to get another turned away. Men would rather leave the mines themselves than get other men sacked. I think we will find that the majority of the English-speaking workers in Western Australia feel that way. Not only have the mining companies been introducing men of foreign extraction to work on the mines, but we find that Millars' Karri & Jarrah Co. have, with the assistance of the Government, been introducing Swedes, Norwegians, Scandinavians, and Danes to Western Australia to work on the timber mills. That is totally unfair. I have sufficient letters from these foreign countries to show beyond doubt that men have been introduced from these countries to work on the mills.

The Premier: They have been introduced as farm labourers.

Mr. HOLMAN: I will show you how some of these "farm labourers" were engaged. Is it necessary to go to Sweden and Norway and give the scale of wages paid on the mills to get men to work on farms? Is it necessary to give pictures of our forest trees showing the vast timber resources, with Sir John Forrest cutting a log in two?

The Premier: Surely there is no harm in advertising our forest resources?

Mr. HOLMAN: Is it necessary to show a rake bringing in logs to the mills? Is it necessary to show the sawyers working at the mill to farm labourers? I will read one or two extracts to show how these men are engaged to go on farms, how they are coming out under contract; how their third-class fares amounting to £13 are paid on the steamers, and then how they are compelled to pay back £18. They are not only brought into the country on false representations but they are also robbed of a £5 note each, and they come here with the assistance of the Government. Not only are they brought here as farm labourers, as the Premier says, but they are given an envelope with

Millars' address on it to go to Lord Street to Millars' office and get work on the mills. But Millars' are too cunning to give them work at their office; they send them to the Labour Bureau, and although these men cannot speak a word of English they go through the crowd of other men waiting at the Labour Bureau and are given work on the sawmills. That is true, and that is the class of immigrant brought to the country. I have been charged in times past with making a great many wild statements, but I have never made a statement yet that I was not prepared to stand or fall by; and that is more than some members on the front bench of the Government side of the House can say. To show how these men are engaged to work on these sawmills I will read a few extracts from letters sent to these men by Mr. August Larsen of 116-117 Holborn, London, E.S.:

"You will be engaged and obtain work immediately upon your arrival, and you will see from this that I have great confidence in your earning good money out there. I note what you say, that upon these conditions a great number of capable men could be obtained from the sawmills where you are employed; and I shall be much obliged if, upon arrival in London, you will give me the names and addresses of all the men you can recommend."

I have had all these letters translated for the information of the House, and if any member desires to peruse them they are available. I intend, however, going farther into the question by-and-by. I have got the whole of the correspondence of the men who came out; I have also got their boat tickets, and their receipts for money deducted from their wages in contravention of the Truck Act; for these men, instead of being paid their wages, were paid in part and handed a receipt for £2 in respect of fares. And these things are being done with the assistance of the Government by bringing them out and by engaging them through the Labour Bureau, while at the same time there are thousands of men in Western Australia who cannot find employment.

Mr. Taylor : Why is the Press silent on the matter ?

Mr. HOLMAN : In all probability the Press did not know of it. I feel sure if the Press did know of these things, they would not shield those responsible; or if they would shield them, then my impression of the Press is a wrong one. We are told that these men have come out here as farm labourers. When the trouble occurred at the timber mills, an attempt was made to induce some of these men who had gone to work on farms to take the places of the mill-workers; but they declined to take the places of men who were struggling to get better conditions. Such men are a credit to any country, no matter whence they came. I have nothing to say against the class of people brought here, but I object to the method in which they have been brought out, and to the Government assisting in their coming in the way they have. The writer says in another letter:—

"One of them will probably be your brother, and the other must be one whom you can recommend as a competent and steady man (I rely on your choice), and he must be accustomed to work on sawmills."

These are extracts from a letter written in August last:—

"Of course you will only purchase a ticket to London. The money I advance you will need to be repaid at the rate of one-third of your wages. I cannot guarantee that work will be found at the same mill for all the men coming from Sjaastad, but the probabilities are that there is nothing to prevent this. I cannot give you the names and addresses of the sawmills. You will obtain work at one of the mills (there are about twenty of them) immediately on arrival; I do not know their names. I enclose a letter which will be useful to you."

And so the letters go on. Much has been said to the effect that if a Labour Government were in power it would do considerable harm by preventing immigration to Western Australia. This

gentleman speaks with authority on this point, and I will read his opinion to show that instead of the presence of a Labour Government being a deterrent to immigration, the fact has been held out as an inducement. Perhaps this will close the mouths of those who try to belittle the Labour party by alleging that the party is an obstacle in the way of immigration. On the 22nd May, 1906, he writes:—

"I received your form and letter—
That is practically a contract note—

with copies of your testimonials, and I believe you are the right man to go to Western Australia. I note from your letter that you are under the impression that the sawmills for which I require men are situated in Canada; but such is not the case. They are situated in Western Australia. This country has a much better climate than Canada, where nearly all work must cease for a certain portion of the year owing to the severe cold; but in Western Australia work continues all the year without stoppage. I send you herewith a few English books about Western Australia, from which you will learn what a future this country has before it. It is my belief that no better country can be found for working men than Western Australia. For a number of years the Labour Party has governed the country; Ministers and Government belong to that party; and as a consequence everything is arranged for the protection of the working man, so that these are well paid and prosperous. In my opinion, it is the working man's paradise, because such good wages as are paid there are not paid in any other place; and as there is a great want of competent sawmill hands, I have decided to send out a certain number of Scandinavians; and in order to convince them of my certain belief that they will obtain work immediately upon arrival, I am prepared to advance them half their passage money, namely 163 kronen [about £9 sterling], on condition

that I am repaid by weekly instalments.

Then he goes on to say:—

"I cannot give a greater guarantee than this as to my *bona fides*. The list of wages which I sent you states the lowest the sawmillers are allowed to pay but frequently more is paid. It is by no means exceptional that a good cutter (benchman) gets 15s. a day, and can earn more by overtime."

I wonder if they work overtime on the farms.

"But, as previously pointed out, the list I sent you only shows the lowest wages. A competent man who gains his employers' confidence would have a very good time, as there is constant work to be obtained and high wages. Such a man would be able to save a great deal of money. What is of great importance to you is the fact that you have five children, one of whom, your eldest son, is a sawmill worker. If he is smart, and able, for instance, to load timber on railway trucks, he could earn his 8s. per day, and he can live for 3s. per day; he would thus be able to save the remaining 5s. Such a young man should be able to save 1,000 kronen a year (about £56 sterling); and if he is careful and industrious he could, in the course of twenty years, save so much that he would no longer need to work, especially if in his spare time he interested himself in farming and fruit-growing. I greatly desire to help you to go out there, but do not wish to advance you more than half the fare. You and your son will thus have to pay your own fares to London.

The Premier : Who is the writer ?

Mr. HOLMAN : That is the agent who is paying £13 to send out these men here, and robbing them of £5.

The Premier : Is that Mr. Larsen ?

Mr. HOLMAN : Yes.

The Premier : Then that is the man engaged in your time ?

Mr. Johnson : His instructions are different now.

Mr. HOLMAN: He is now carrying out the instructions of the present Administration. There were a lot of men engaged in our time. The factory inspectors, for instance, were engaged in our time, but they are now working under your instructions, and are not looking after the factories. Again, in order to force these people to come as quickly as possible, the writer says:—

"I beg to state that I only intend to send out a few sawmill hands, and that I already have several applicants from Sweden; also a man from Kristiania, and one from Larvik, who desire to go. I will therefore ask you to let me know by return of mail what you decide to do."

Then he goes on:—

"I returned a few days ago from Scandinavia, and sent to-day a few Danish saw-mill workers to Western Australia. I think it will be more pleasant for the Norwegians to travel together, and for this reason I enclose a list containing the names of eleven sawmill hands, and will ask you to select eight of them, who together with yourself and son will start from London on Friday, 27th July."

Such a condition of affairs is not fair to this country. Some men who came out under these conditions have informed me that they could earn and save more money in their own country, according to values there, than they were able to do on the sawmills. That is an absolute fact, which is proved by some of the men having returned home; and I will guarantee from the reports that will be published there that no more men will be engaged in those countries for work on the sawmills of this State. The newspapers have already advertised the treatment those men received, and the time has come when immigration of this class should be put a stop to. Instead of bringing out people to settle on the land, we have the Government paying to bring people here, and then allowing them to be forced into competition with our own unemployed. Any Government that will do such actions is not fit to be trusted

with the administration of the State's affairs. Again, the Premier has paid the fares of a large number of men from South Africa. These men were supposed to have originally come from Western Australia, but when they arrived here it was found they did not know anything about Australia, and had never been here before.

The Premier: The only arrangement I made with the Commonwealth authorities was that we would pay the fares of *bona fide* residents of Western Australia. If it be found that they are not residents of Western Australia, we do not intend to pay.

Mr. HOLMAN: I can only go by what I read in the papers. We know that a large number of persons landed here a few weeks ago, whose fares had been paid.

The Premier: Paid by the Commonwealth.

Mr. HOLMAN: While I should like to see the country populated, the system of immigration introduced by the present Government should be stopped at once. We should find opportunities for our own unemployed before we bring foreigners into the country by misrepresentation. A similar system was adopted in the introduction of a number of Italians. Names and addresses were written on envelopes in the same way, though I cannot say whether the same system of engagement through the bureau was adopted. An important question is that of a Circuit Court for the Murchison; and although it may be regarded as a local question, it is of considerable importance to the people of the Murchison, who instead of having to pay thousands of pounds to have their cases heard in Perth should be provided with a Circuit Court. I received a letter a few days since from the Premier, intimating that in the opinion of the Government a Circuit Court for the Murchison was not required, as the people could easily bring their cases to Perth for hearing. What would the Attorney General say if it were suggested to remove the Circuit Court from Kalgoorlie, which is more convenient to Perth than is Cue? A through bill of lading from Fremantle

to the Murchison would result in a considerable saving to the people of that field, from whom this privilege has been taken without any benefit being reaped by the State. Any saving to the people which can be brought about without disadvantage to the State should, I think, be made. Speaking in Kalgoorlie, the Attorney General said the reason why the Fire Brigades Bill was not passed through Parliament was the opposition shown by the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) and myself. The Attorney General was afraid to bring that measure into the House, as he knew we could show he had no knowledge of the subject. At Meekatharra instead of the people being allowed to choose their own site for a hospital, the site was fixed for them next the school, and they were not allowed to alter it. The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood) dealt at some length with the question of the landing of camels in the North-West. I protested against those camels being allowed to land in this country, and it will yet prove a matter for regret that the protest was ignored. I desire to mention one matter which is of great importance to members of this House and to the people of this State, the matter of the necessity for an increase in members' salaries. The present salary is inadequate, and members representing out-back districts particularly find, when travelling through the country, that it is an absolute impossibility to meet all the demands on them for coach and travelling fares, postages, telegrams, and such things. I maintain the time has arrived in Western Australia when the salaries of members should be largely increased. And the time has arrived when the travelling expenses and the post and telegraph expenses of members should be paid. The Speech of his Excellency the Governor indicates several important matters that are to be dealt with this year; one of the most important to my mind is the tax on the unimproved value of land. That of course will receive the support of members on the Opposition side of the House. We shall push

the Bill through this time for a certainty and pass it without exemptions. There is one other matter which has been brought forward, the placing of the papers on the table of the House in connection with the appointment of Mr. George as Commissioner of Railways. In my opinion, in spite of any opinion expressed to the contrary, the time will come in Western Australia when we shall see that that gentleman has done a great deal of good, on some parts of our railways at any rate, and these works will stand to his credit. He introduced the system of metal ballast on the railways in the metropolitan area which has been a great saving in the maintenance of these lines. They will now last longer than Mr. George or any of us will last in this country. The question of the greatest importance to the people on the goldfields is that of mining development. We have had it continually drummed into our ears year after year that assistance should be given to the prospectors. I hope they will be better assisted in the future than they have been up to the present time, and I hope members and the people of the country will dwell long and fast before they allow a measure to become law which will do away with the labour conditions on the mineral leases in this State. Such an action will land us in one of the greatest upheavals this country has ever seen if such a Bill is passed. The labour conditions are the only safeguard for the protection of our rights, and once we allow the labour conditions to lapse we shall lose control over our leases once and for all, and then goodbye to peace and prosperity on our mineral belts. I would like to see labour conditions introduced into our timber leases, and stock conditions introduced in the pastoral leases so as to compel those holding large areas of land, whether for mining, for cutting timber, or for stock raising purposes, fulfil certain conditions. The Minister for Mines has tried to inform us that this question of greater security of tenure, the doing away with the labour conditions, has been asked for by the prospectors; that is an absurdity which has been drummed into his ears by the Chamber

of Mines, by stock-holders and boodlers. I have a cutting from a paper several years old, and in it are the remarks of Mr. Trewartha James, a member of the firm of Messrs. James Brothers, of London, and everyone will agree that he is not a *bona fide* prospector. He says:—

“The oppressive and inequitable mining laws, which give no fixity of tenure, no security for capital invested, and seriously hamper the industry. If the Government would only consider abandonment of the vexatious labour conditions, and grant fixity of tenure for mining leases, subject only to payment of a yearly tax on the mining area occupied, as Mexico has done, capital would flow back, the unemployed would find work, and the basis of a solid and permanent mining industry be well and truly laid.”

These are the words Mr. Trewartha James made about four years ago. We have something later in the *Monthly Mining Journal* published by the Chamber of Mines, and as I have said before, the present Government in times past have acted more like willing tools of the Chamber of Mines and others instead of, as they should have done, endeavouring to safeguard the interests of the State. Speaking about aid to prospectors this journal says:—

“Mr. Gregory, during his first term of office as Minister for Mines, gave the matter his careful consideration when framing the Mining Act that came into force on March 1st, 1904. In that Act some provision was made—though not to the full extent deemed advisable and recommended by the Chamber . . . The lesson, however, has not been lost upon Mr. Gregory, who now, in his second term of office at the head of the Mines Department, has picked up the threads where he dropped them, and has issued regulations still more in accordance with the views of the Chamber.”

It goes on farther with a lot of flap-

doodle about aid to prospectors, and the article goes on to say:—

“The Chamber is in thorough accord with the present day tendency of Australian mining legislation, which is to abolish the system that makes the tenure of the gold mining lease contingent on the fulfilment of certain labour covenants, and to substitute in its place the condition that so much capital—in money or in labour—shall be expended and so much work done annually. This principle is embodied in the new Tasmanian Mining Act, and also in the Mining Bill now before the Queensland Assembly. And West Australia might well follow the example of those States. It is not easy to understand the arguments in favour of the labour covenant system. When a man obtains from the Government an agricultural area or secures the lease of a tract of pastoral country, he is not required to employ at once a certain amount of labour on pain of forfeiture. Nor again is it easy to see how the system is of any benefit to anybody—although the Labour party apparently think very highly of it. The obligations to fulfil the labour covenants is a negligible item in the case of large established mines, or of large companies taking up new leases which they desire to prove and develop rapidly, for such mines or companies will naturally employ labour far in excess of the amount demanded by law. The obligation is quite unnecessary in the case of leases whose owners have worked at them sufficiently to demonstrate the fact that they are payable propositions, and have advanced to the stage of being able to take out ore and realise its values. They will naturally have to employ at least the amount of labour legally required—probably a good deal more. The only effect of the labour covenant system is to prevent pro-

spectors, working miners, small syndicates, and small capital companies from taking up leases and working them. Unless circumstances be exceptionally favourable, a large amount of labour must be employed before sufficient payable ore can be taken out to give the owners an adequate return for their outlay; and what length of time will be required for this is at the outset very uncertain. Individuals or syndicates whose capital is strictly limited are certainly not encouraged to take up a lease and work it by the prospect of having to pay out £10 to £20 every week, on the chance that if they go on paying long enough they may presently get their money back with interest. And, if the first crushing proves a disappointment, as is more often the case than not, they have little inducement to persevere and in nine cases out of ten they are content to let the first loss be the last, and abandon the lease altogether. But, if there were no labour conditions to be satisfied, leaseholders of the above description could get through the initial dead work more slowly, perhaps, but at far less expense, and then they would have some encouragement to persevere and develop their property into a paying mine, employing a fair amount of labour. A very brief consideration of the labour covenant system ought to show every thinking man its inherent absurdity. In the case of established mines and paying propositions, it is absolutely unnecessary; in the case of promising but unproved leases it is simply vicious, because it acts as a strong deterrent to enterprise. Let it also be observed that the proposition is not only to abolish the labour covenants, but also to substitute for them something which at any rate connotes the employment of some labour, namely, the annual expenditure on the lease of so much capital—either in money or in labour

—in the performance of mining work. The amount of money or labour to be expended, and the quantity of work to be done, together with other equally important details, are matters to be carefully weighed and considered when the principle has once been admitted."

Yet the Government come down and repeat these exact words used as argument for the introduction of what I may term is an iniquitous proposition. It will be a sad day for the people of Western Australia if any tinkering is done with our labour conditions on the mineral areas, or if anything is allowed to be carried through the House which will do away with those labour conditions. I for one will strongly oppose such an attempt, representing as I do the largest mining area in Western Australia. I shall oppose it to the bitter end, and I hope members on the Government side will assist to prevent this country from being robbed by repealing the conditions of labour on mineral leases. In the district which I represent, which is the largest gold mining district in the State, only three companies are working, yet thousands and thousands of ounces are sent down by men who work their own shows themselves, yet each and every one of these leaseholders will fight to the last before they allow the labour conditions to be done away with. In the face of that I ask members, and in the face of every prospector in Western Australia raising his voice against it, will they allow such a thing to be carried out? I go farther than that and say that when the question comes before the House I shall bring forward a few facts so as to give members on the Government side an opportunity of considering the matter and which will show them the risk we shall run. If the labour conditions are done away with the areas will be locked up and not worked at all. Of the three companies that are working in my district at the present time two of them hold hundreds of acres of land, yet only work 16 or 18 acres. The Peak Hill Company has 300 acres of gold mining leases and they only work 18 acres; the

remaining area which has returned profits in the past years is not being worked at all. If these leases were thrown open at the present time they would probably give employment to hundreds. A number of men would return to Peak Hill and work them if they had an opportunity of doing so. Rather than do away with the labour conditions on mining leases I prefer to see the present system of amalgamation and concentration put out of operation, so that where leases are held they shall be worked. I shall not deal farther with that question at the present time: we must do all we can to make Western Australia as prosperous as possible. This will not be done if we allow our leases to be locked up. I will deal with a few local matters, in regard to prospecting, and I hope the Minister for Mines will listen to this and that members on the Government side will also listen so that they may get an idea how the Minister has assisted the prospectors in the past. I will give him credit for erecting a battery at Nannine which will do good work. I also give him credit for giving a water supply to Meekatharra, which has done splendid work. In connection with that I will show what the introduction of water has done for Meekatharra in the first six months of this year. More stone was crushed by the State battery than during all the previous year. Last year they crushed 4,501 tons of stone, and when the water system was introduced, during the first six months of the year they crushed 4,510 tons and returned more gold than any State battery in Western Australia. In connection with the encouragement to our prospectors we find instead of giving the people a reasonable rate, the Minister for Mines charged 6s. per thousand gallons, but generously consented to reduce that to 5s. 6d. if it was agreed to take 60,000 gallons per week. This means that the Marmont, a locally-owned mine worked by the prospectors, will have to take 60,000 gallons of water a week before they can get the water at the cheaper rate, of 5s. 6d. This means that the progress of the district will be retarded because it would take a mint of money before

people could pay for water to crush their stone.

The Minister for Mines: You must remember the large capital outlay.

Mr. HOLMAN: In connection with the Nannine water supply there was a large capital outlay and the Government are securing 12½ per cent. on their money. This is absolute robbery. The Government not only do that but the fact of doing so retards the progress of the field. If the Minister is satisfied with a reasonable return on the Meekatharra water works he will give a cheaper supply, for Meekatharra has turned out more gold than any centre of its size in Western Australia. There is another field within eight miles of Meekatharra called the Eight Mile. I asked for assistance in the way of crushing facilities for this place, but what did the Minister do? There are hundreds of tons of stone there awaiting crushing, and a report was made, it was a favourable report, but when I asked for assistance for crushing facilities the Minister said he would allow them to crush at the Meekatharra or the Nannine battery at the minimum rate charged at those batteries. The men could not afford to cart stone all that distance, and it prevents men from mining low-grade ore. We in Western Australia must depend on the low-grade ores to make our mines successful, but the Minister allows a man if he has four-ounce stone to get a reduction in the cost of crushing, but if the stone only runs 8 or 9 dwts. he gets no reduction at all. Was that the right way to assist the struggling prospector? It is no use giving him assistance where it is not required. What should be done is to give the prospector a bonus of 5s. or 6s. a ton in order to assist him to cart his stone to the battery.

The Minister for Mines: I am going to see if I can put up a small plant there. You want us to give the prospector half the cost of the cartage.

Mr. HOLMAN: If the assistance which I suggest were given to the prospectors the result would be that they would be able to take up the low-grade leases and crush the stone and make payable properties where at present they do not exist. Under the present system they are forced to

take the eyes out of a mine, and when that has been done, abandon it; with the result that proper mining operations are not undertaken. Some time ago application for assistance was made by a man who desired to erect a battery at Mindoolah, where a similar state of affairs exists with regard to the promising outlook as at Meekatharra, 8-Mile, and other districts in that portion of the country. I may say that at Meekatharra thousands of pounds of prospectors' money lie in the sands and slimes; but the Minister will not allow the prospector to get the gold out. If a "hoodler" comes along and asks for a railway, or a smelter, or anything else, he has no trouble in getting it; but if the prospector asks for assistance he is not able to get it. At Mindoolah where there are about 100 prospectors, an application was sent down to the Minister some time ago for assistance in crushing. As I said before, a private person asked for help from the Government in the way of a loan in order to enable him to erect a battery. This was seven or eight months ago, and that assistance was not given by the Government. In the meantime, however, while the Minister was thinking of whether or not he should send along the assistance, the man was able to erect the battery himself, and to crush for the people. He then wrote to the Minister for Mines stating that he had done the work himself and did not require the assistance from the Government. I have a copy of that letter here, but will not delay the Chamber by reading it. The prospectors of the district asked for a subsidy of 2s. a ton for all stone crushed, but they have not received one penny of assistance from the Government, though they have to pay much higher rates for crushing than are charged by the State batteries. You will agree that considering the State has received hundreds of pounds for mining revenue from this district, it is very unfair that the people contributing towards the revenue in this way should receive no assistance in return. This is only a particular instance, and there are a large number of similar cases in various parts

of the goldfields. If the assistance which I suggest were given to the prospectors it would mean that very soon districts which, at the present time are worked by but a few men, would have hundreds or even thousands of men employed in advancing the mining industry. During the last few years Meekatharra has turned out nearly 50,000 ounces of gold, and at the present time they have to pay exorbitant rates for the cartage of stuff from Nannine although the distance is comparatively short. It would only cost a few thousands of pounds to connect Meekatharra with the main railway, and I hope that this work will be started soon. I intend during this session of Parliament to bring down a motion in that direction. The cost of mining timber in that district is very heavy indeed, eight inch timber costing from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per foot, and, as the whole of the ground has to be timbered, it will be recognised that it is practically impossible for mines to be worked without very great cost. In addition, the people pay for cartage as much as £2 10s. a ton, with commission charges, for mining timber and other articles from Nannine, and in addition there is the cost of the materials being carted over the 400 miles of railway. If the railway ran to Meekatharra, the saving would be considerable and would amount to quite £2 per ton. Last year I dealt with the question of public batteries, and members who at that time were inclined to disagree with what I said will, I am sure, now agree with me that the statements I made then—and I admit I spoke fairly strongly on the question—have been borne out by the public batteries report. There is still, however, plenty of room for improvement in the direction of the management of the public batteries, and there are several cases where we have battery managers with whom the prospectors refuse to crush. The sooner alterations are made the better. The question of assistance to prospectors, instead of as in the past being a parrot cry to gain popularity, should become a real question, and that assistance so necessary for the future of the industry should be

given. A question which has been before the people of Western Australia to a very considerable extent during the past four months is that of the timber trouble. Although that matter has been touched on once or twice in this Chamber, I will deal with it from my own point of view, as I have been accused, outside this Chamber, by members of the Government, with doing what was not right in connection with the trouble. I have had to stand unfair charges in the past, and I am in duty bound to this House, and to the people of the country, to deal with the question in a full and fair manner. As to the Arbitration Act, I maintain that the fault has not been with the Act altogether; but the trouble has been caused owing to the rotten administration of it by Ministers. [*The Treasurer* : The bad advice of the leaders.] The members of the Treasury benches have been led by the noses by the Combine, and have been made tools of in their hands. I am at one with the member for Mt. Magnet when he says that the Arbitration Act has been instrumental in preventing a great many industrial disputes. When the true facts are placed before members as to the timber dispute, I am sure they will agree with the attitude which I took up in the matter. A great many of them already agree with it, and showed, during the course of the dispute, that they did so, and this in the best possible manner, for they put their hands in their pockets and by this means assisted the workers very considerably. I wish to say a word or two with regard to the remarks made by the member for Perth, and I am sorry he is not in his place to hear what I have to say. He stated that we, on this side of the House, took part in the dispute for the sake of notoriety. I will ask him, who is always twitting us on this side of the House with being paid secretaries of labour unions, what he does for a living. The work of a secretary of the union is just as honourable as that of a secretary of a road board, or as the tool of a gas company.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. member should not make personal reflections. I am

sorry to have to rise at this point, as up to now he has not said anything objectionable.

Mr. HOLMAN : I withdraw "tool," which word came out in the heat of the moment, and I will put in its place the words "secretary of a gas company, or cricket association." It is all very well for a man like the member for Perth to talk about notoriety. He is the paid secretary for any position he can get, and these positions range from secretary of a building society, secretary of a cricket association, and secretary of a gas company and a roads board. And such a man attempts to ridicule men on this side of the House because they have been secretaries of unions. I have never got my living from a union, and if the member for Perth were to do as I have done, go into the back country and work there for a living, he would do some good. Had it not been necessary for me during the timber trouble to look after other people's business instead of my own, I would, during recess, have gone to the back country and tried to assist myself by prospecting. But I was called upon to do a better work, though not for myself, as I received no payment for what I have done. This timber trouble has received the unbounded support of the whole of the people, not only of this State, but of the Commonwealth as well; and this shows that there was reason for the fight which was put up. The trouble was not a strike by any means, and had the Government carried out and administered the Arbitration Act it would not have lasted more than a fortnight; and by this means the Government would have prevented one of the greatest lock-outs that has ever occurred. The Labour Government, when in power, had to deal with a similar trouble almost immediately after they took office. This was in connection with the Potosi mine. They took immediate steps and thus prevented what might have been just as great a trouble to the State as the timber one has been. The cause of the timber trouble arose on March 17th of this year. A notice was posted in the mills stating that the men, mechanics, etc., who would not accept a reduction in wages and in-

creased hours, would not be kept on. The men refused to accept this decrease in wages and increase in hours, with the result that the mills did not work. The award came out on March 13, and it was to come into force on March 18; but in the meantime the notice to which I have referred was posted. As soon as that notice came out and the men refused to accept the terms, the trouble became a lock-out. The steps the Government should then have taken were to set the law in motion and sue the company for committing a breach of the law by locking the men out. Had that action been taken by the Government the employees, who fought afterwards for 8s. a day of 8 hours, would have been forced to go back to work. As a matter of fact they turned up in order to go back to work at the mills. On March 18 at the Jarrahdale mill the men actually worked for $7\frac{1}{4}$ hours, and at Wellington for $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours; but the whole of the mill hands at Wellington were sacked because one man sat on a drum while doing his work. Every man turned out at Mornington, but they could not work as there were no engine-drivers and mechanics. At Hoffman's mill the engine-drivers refused to go to work although the mill hands turned up there also. At Waterous, Waroona, and Worsley many men were prepared to go to work; but they were practically dismissed and paid off. When once these men had been dismissed and paid off, they were entitled to work for any rate of wages they thought fit. Once the relationship of employer and employee ceased, any of the latter had the right to demand what wages he thought he was entitled to for the work he had to undertake. That is what was done by the men in the timber trouble. The result of the action taken by the Combine has been that there have been lost to Western Australia some hundreds of the best bone and muscle the country ever possessed. This is a great and serious loss to the State and the reason I took part in the struggle was to try and prevent these men from going away from Western Australia. All the trouble took place on March 18th and personally I did not take part in the struggle until

the night of March 22nd, or nearly a week after the difficulty between the employers and the men really started. How can it be said, therefore, that I led them into trouble? At the request of the leaders and members of this side of the House, I went down to the scene of the trouble to inquire into what was going on. It will be remembered by members that in 1903 I also paid a visit to that district to inquire into an impending trouble, and on that occasion, when I saw that the men were in the wrong, I practically forced them to return to work, although they had been advised by others to cease work. On the present occasion when I found that the company were in the wrong and had broken the laws of the country, I said that they should be forced to obey the laws and be brought under the jurisdiction of the Act, just as I had told the men on a previous occasion that they must obey the laws. I took just the same stand this time as I did in 1903. On March 26th I was one of the delegates to wait on Millars in order to see whether we could not do something to settle the trouble. The mere fact that I was a delegate was used against me in the police-court afterwards. I do not desire to say anything now to produce ill-feeling, but I cannot help remarking that the attitude of the Government was not that of the protectors of the people, and they did not do their duty as they should have done it. The attitude of the company in connection with the trouble was such that the Government had the right to step in and stop them had they thought fit. As a matter of fact the Government are far more to blame in the matter than the Combine, for after all the latter cannot be blamed, when they found they had the support of the Government, if they took on themselves to say what rate of wages the men should receive, and what hours they should labour. Nothing came of the conference in which I took part for the sole purpose of trying to prevent the men from leaving the State. When I was down at the mills I saw that the women and children were in a state of starvation, and I therefore initiated the fund for the

relief, and I must say, in the history of any industrial trouble throughout the civilised world, no request for funds has ever met with such a ready response.

Mr. Gull : It was for the timber workers' wives and children.

Mr. HOLMAN : And for the timber workers also, and those who got into trouble by doing their duty to the workers. A little while afterwards a public meeting was held in Perth—one of the most enthusiastic and most largely-attended meetings ever held in the State. Certain resolutions were carried. Prior to this I had interviewed the Premier, and tried to get his assistance not only to find work for the men but to bring about a cessation of the trouble. The Premier knows that as soon as I took part in the trouble I wired to him to see whether we could place a few of those men in employment at which they could earn a few shillings. Unfortunately, I could not get anything done. The meeting was held in the Town Hall. In the meantime I had met the Premier and arranged a conference between employers and employees. The Premier did all he could to bring it about. He also went to Mr. Stubbs, the mayor of Perth, just before we held our meeting, and informed him he considered a settlement of the trouble would be brought about, and asked him to do all he could to prevent the moving of certain resolutions which were to be brought before the meeting.

The Premier : I never went to Mr. Stubbs ; Mr. Stubbs called on me.

Mr. HOLMAN : Well, Mr. Stubbs met the Premier. I do not mean you deliberately went to him. There was a meeting between you. I will qualify my statement. Above all things I wish to be fair, as I have always tried to be in the past. An attempt was made to bring about a settlement; because, though we were holding a public meeting, before we, the speakers, went on the platform, I may mention, to show how things were worked, that the mayor called us all into his private room and tried to lay down to us what we were to say in that meeting; and it was not until I told him he had no right to speak to us in

that manner that he saw the position. Then he asked that all that had taken place in that room should be confidential. Attacked and criticised as I have been, I must, to put myself right with the people of the country, explain fully what took place. Before the conference was appointed I told the Premier that if it was to be arranged I would not say one word to the meeting to cause any straining of the relationship between employers and employees, or to harm the conference; and the Premier must bear me out. And long before the conference was held I told the Premier that the Government should take action, because it was beyond the means of any ordinary private person to carry such a case through the law courts of this country. At that conference certain things were agreed to; and the Premier has absolutely misled the people of the country by stating that we refused to place matters before the men. I will read his remarks on the subject:—

“The Premier said he had tried to bring about industrial peace, and had succeeded in the first place in getting 1s. an hour for navvies, and that a navvy earned 1s. an hour he knew by experience. He related the matter leading up to the first conference, and as there was then a deadlock, he asked the parties to submit the matter to the men, but the leaders objected to this course. The men were not given a chance to say anything on the question, and he could say that he felt it was not possible for him to do anything then.”

That is a deliberate misstatement.

The Premier : In what way?

Mr. HOLMAN : “The men were not given a chance to say anything on the question”; and also that “the leaders objected to this course.” The only thing we refused to do was to recommend that a ballot be taken; for that was a deliberate trap, and had those men taken a ballot on that question every one of them would have been lugged into the police court and betrayed as I was. It was my duty to

prevent these men from being led into the trap.

The Premier : You know it was only when there was a deadlock that I suggested a referendum. The thing never entered my mind or the minds of those at the conference, until there came a deadlock between the two parties; and then I suggested a referendum to the men.

Mr. HOLMAN : At this time, while we were sitting in conference, the whole power of the registrar and the Ministers had already decided that action should be taken against me; and before I could give the Premier the answer I was to carry back on the following day, I was served with a police-court summons. If we had agreed before we left the conference to recommend that a ballot of the men be taken, we as leaders would not have gone back on our word. But the men, rather than see me sacrificed in the police-court, would have voted against their convictions, thinking they would get me out of a difficulty by voting in favour of going back to work. The men would have done anything rather than sacrifice those fighting on their behalf. The men had at that time left their employment: they were not at all responsible to the company. The men were looking for work elsewhere, and we, their representatives, were spending the money as fast as we could get it in procuring employment for them. And had we done what we were advised to do in the first place by people in New South Wales and Queensland, we should have sent 300 or 400 men to Queensland. But what an advertisement that would have been to the State! We tried to the last to prevent any man from leaving the country, if we could avoid it.

The Premier : Did not I, when you wired to me from Bunbury to know if there was any possibility of assisting the men out of work, reply that the Government would start the Donnybrook Railway almost immediately, which we did within a fortnight?

Mr. HOLMAN : Yes. The Premier wired in reply to me from Dardanup. I had wired asking him whether there

were any drainage works or other works on which men could be employed. The Premier replied that he intended starting the Donnybrook-Preston railway within a fortnight. But I afterwards saw the Minister for Works and tried to get that railway started; yet none of the men were placed on the line, nor could I get any promise from him. I do not think one solitary man from the timber mills was employed on that work. The Government kept back the work as long as possible, and when they did start, they had only a dozen or eighteen men clearing a bit of a track; and that was about some six weeks or at least a good many weeks afterwards. Now as to the summons served upon me. I went to the Premier and told him some time before that it was impossible for a poor man to act as plaintiff in such a case in the police court. I told the Premier more than once—I told him at the deputation—that a lock-out or strike case would probably cost a thousand pounds. The truth of that statement has been proved by the costs in the recent case; and this shows that unless Government takes up the matter, no poor men, or any union engaged in such a dispute can get justice in the police court. I say that during the past few months justice has been prostituted in the courts of this country.

Ruling as to Offensive Remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not reflect on the Judges.

Mr. Holman : I am not reflecting on the Judges.

Mr. Taylor : The magistrates are not protected by the rules of Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER : I am sorry to have to make this reference now, because I am sure no one could object to the hon. member's speech, except when he made a personal reflection on the member for Perth.

Mr. Holman : That was a slip.

Mr. SPEAKER : I am glad to acknowledge that the hon. member has been exceptionally good in his remarks.

Mr. Holman : For me.

Mr. SPEAKER : It is necessary to draw the attention of the House to a

reference which has been made to the Judges. This matter is provided for in *May*, although not specially referred to in our own Standing Orders. As members know, anything omitted from our own Standing Orders is settled by the authority of *May*. I may also say, my reason for making this observation is that one member in my opinion did sail very closely to the wind ; but I did not think myself justified in calling him to order. However, my attention has been drawn to the fact to-day, by a very prominent person, that I was perhaps a little too generous. I venture to differ from that gentleman and from any other member of this House, and say with all respect that though I gave the hon. member every liberty I do not think he exceeded due bounds, though he sailed very close to the wind. I will make the following quotation, and I hope members will bear it in mind. It is from *May*, page 316, "Reflections upon the Sovereign, etcetera" :—

"Unless the discussion is based upon a substantive motion, drawn in proper terms (see page 263), reflections must not be cast in debate on the conduct of the Sovereign, the heir to the throne, and members of the royal family, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the Speaker, the chairman of ways and means, members of either house of Parliament, and judges of the superior courts of the United Kingdom, including persons holding the position of a judge such as a judge in a Court of Bankruptcy and of a county court. Nor may opprobrious reflections be cast in debate on sovereigns and rulers over countries in amity with Her Majesty.

"In order to guard against all appearance of personality in debate, it is a rule, in both houses, that no member shall refer to another by name. In the upper house, every lord is alluded to by the rank he enjoys, as 'the noble marquis,' or 'the right reverend prelate'; and in the Commons, each member is distinguished by the office he holds,

by the place he represents, or by other designations, as 'the noble lord the secretary for foreign affairs,' 'the honourable' or 'right honourable gentleman the member for York,' or 'the honourable and learned member who has just sat down.' The use of temperate and decorous language is never more desirable than when a member is canvassing the opinions and conduct of his opponents in debate. The imputation of bad motives, or motives different from those acknowledged ; misrepresenting the language of another, or accusing him, in his turn, of misrepresentation ; charging him with falsehood or deceit, or contemptuous or insulting language of any kind—all these are unparliamentary, and call for prompt interference. The same right to claim courteous treatment in debate is due alike between both Houses of Parliament ; and abusive language and imputations of falsehood, uttered by members of the House of Commons against members of the House of Lords, have been met by the immediate intervention of the chair to compel the withdrawal of the offensive words, or, in default, by the punishment of suspension."

There is some reference to the House of Lords which I think it is unnecessary to quote ; but it is open to any member to have the use of this authority. Then follows a paragraph headed "words of heat" :—

"On the 10th December, 1766, notice was taken of some words that had passed between the Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Chatham ; upon which they were required by the House to declare, upon their honour, 'that they would not pursue any further resentment.'

"The House of Commons will insist upon all offensive words being withdrawn, and upon an ample apology being made, which shall satisfy both the House and the member to whom offence has been given. If the apology be refused, or if the

offended member decline to express his satisfaction, the House takes immediate measures for preventing the quarrel being pursued farther, by committing both the members to the custody of the Sergeant ; whence they are not released until they have submitted themselves to the House, and given assurance that they will not engage in hostile proceedings."

There is a farther reference the reading of which would I think be unnecessarily taking up time. I have no desire to anticipate; but having my attention drawn to what may be called my generosity or liberality of mind, owing to my having allowed one member to make an unfair reference to the Judges, I felt bound to read that quotation. As I have already said, I believe I am liberal in my own views at all times, and therefore I put a liberal construction on the hon. member's remarks. I did not think for one moment that the hon. member had exceeded his rights, otherwise I should certainly have called him to order. I hope the hon. member (Mr. Holman) will not make references to such persons holding prominent positions, because, though it is a privilege of members to express their views in this House, nevertheless we have certain rules to guide us; therefore I am sure members will pardon me for making this special reference.

Mr. Foulkes: I am sure the House is deeply indebted to you, sir, for what you have read; and it would perhaps be of assistance to some members like the member for the Murchison (Mr. Holman) if copies of the extract were made and given to them.

Mr. Holman: A remark of that sort comes with ill-grace from the member for Claremont. However, we cannot expect anything more from a man like that. I say it is a disgrace for any man holding an honourable position to make such an insinuation with regard to me. If I want a copy of that quotation, in all probability I can buy it; and if I want a block of land I can buy it, and not crawl round to any Government to get it.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry I did not quite catch the hon. member's reference for a moment, but certainly it was very improper from the hon. member for Claremont or from any other member.

Mr. Foulkes: I did not gather the effect of the hon. member's statement. It was something about buying land from the Government. I might inform the House—(Labour dissent).

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is entirely out of order.

Debate resumed.

Mr. HOLMAN: If I want a railway for my part of the district I come with a genuine case, and get it put where it is wanted. In connection with the remarks you, Mr. Speaker, have made, I may say that I did not intend to say a word against any Judge in the country. I know too well the responsibility of a Judge to treat the matter lightly, but I was dealing with the magistrates who take upon themselves to give decisions and to do things which, in my opinion, are not right; and I maintain that for the protection of the poor workers of the country who have not the money to fight cases in the courts I am going to raise my voice on every occasion so that the poor can get justice, and so that it is not only the man with money who can move the courts. We have heard remarks from the member for Claremont which go to show the callous minds—I cannot find words to express myself—the insidiousness of some men; because they think that if a man is not in the same class or school as themselves he is something to be cast aside and trampled on. When such a man by his legal profession and training may have aspired to being one of the Judges of the country, we can see that it is possible for even the position of a Judge of the country to be disgraced by such objects. I intend to deal with any magistrate or person who makes improper remarks from the bench, and I intend to deal with them in the place where I can get the matter rectified. I was dealing with the issue of summonses in this case. While we were in conference, summonses were being prepared with the knowledge of the Government, because I am informed

on very good authority that the Government gave the necessary authority for them to be issued. The only information on the Government files at the time the summonses were issued was a letter from an irresponsible lawyer without any guarantee of indemnity for costs, thought that is the reason advanced for the action taken. As soon as the letters came in they were received by the Registrar, who at all times has been a person directly opposed to any working man. He is something of the same calibre as the member for Claremont, who inclines to believe himself loftier than any other man. The Registrar was only too ready to take action; and before I could give my reply to the Premier on the question of taking a ballot, those summonses were taken out against us, that is, while we were sitting in conference. If a ballot had been taken at the time it would not have had fair play. We sent out instructions to the men to deal with the question as they thought fit, and we allowed the Premier to publish what he thought was a fair account of the proceedings of the conference so that no one could say we were misleading the men in any direction at all. The summonses were received on Friday afternoon, and Saturday was only a half day, while Sunday was practically no day at all in regard to doing ordinary business; but on Monday morning we had to appear in court. In the lock-out cases it was altogether different. The unionists' lawyers were running about for a fortnight and could hardly get the case heard at all. That is not justice, and I say that in this case justice has been prostituted. Also in regard to the Government's action in connection with the engine-drivers, I have something to say. The second schedule of the Machinery Act has been amended so that electric lighting plants and machinery come under the Act. What did the Government do when unskilled men were driving the Combine's lighting plant at Yarloop? Information was given about it, and the inspector went to report. He caught a man driving the plant but no action was taken, and it was utterly

impossible for anyone outside to take action in this case; it must be done by the inspector. Uncertificated drivers were driving at Jarrabdale, yet no action was taken. Thus assistance was given by the Government to the Combine. After the public meeting in Perth a deputation waited on the Premier to present the resolutions carried. What reply was given? A more incorrect or misleading reply was never made by any Premier to any deputation waiting on him; and I am sorry that any Premier should give such reply so absolutely misleading and incorrect, while a vile insinuation has been thrown forth by the Attorney General that should not come from any honourable man. The Attorney General insinuated that the action taken by the Labour Government when in power—the words he used were as follow:—

“The Minister for Labour, Mr. Holman, instituted proceedings for a lock-out against the Potosi Consolidated Gold Mining Company without having allowed the Registrar any voice whatever in the decision.”

That is absolutely incorrect, because not only did the Registrar have a voice in the decision, but I placed the whole of the case in his hands, and he was sent to the district to take charge of the case, and he also advised the solicitor during the hearing of the case. The Attorney General also said:—

“The proceedings taken, however, did not at all partake of the character of a prosecution of the offending party by the State, nor was any officer of the Crown Law Department entrusted with the duty of prosecuting.”

That is an absolutely wilful misstatement; because the whole of the case was placed in the hands of Mr. Sayer, and he advised throughout the case. No action was taken unless the advice of the Crown law authorities was taken. Also Mr. Sayer was the man who recommended that Mr. Ewing be appointed to conduct the case; and at the very time we decided on that, Mr. Sayer was in my office. To show whether the Registrar

had anything to do with the case, while Mr. Sayer was consulting with me in my office about the case the Registrar got another solicitor and was engaging him to conduct the case; but Mr. Sayer pointed out the absolute advisability of having Mr. Ewing appointed on the case, and I took up my telephone at once and told the Registrar that Mr. Sayer was in my office and that he advised briefing Mr. Ewing. The statement of the Attorney General in the reply to that deputation was absolutely incorrect, misleading, and unfair; and the files, if the Attorney General read them, would prove what I say to be absolutely true. I have already spoken in public and given the Government an opportunity of replying to my statements, and had they a leg to stand on they would have replied before this.

The Premier: We will give this reply: we will lay the papers on the table of the House.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am going to move for the papers. We will see where the Crown Solicitor fixed the fee and advised the proceedings. Then the Attorney General went farther. It only shows the calibre of the gentleman who gave the reply. He said:—

“As a matter of fact all the proceedings were initiated by and conducted to the close by the official solicitor of the Workers' Union, and the only part the State had in the conduct of proceedings was that through the instrumentality of the Minister it became responsible for all the expenditure incurred.”

That is a fair specimen of the judgment of the Attorney General. When the people of this State know that the Attorney General himself appeared on the opposite side and was beaten by a better man, of course there will be seen the grounds for his statement. I wonder what the Attorney General would say if I were to accuse him of being a paid agent of the Chamber of Mines, which he was until he became a Minister of the Crown. In all probability, if we look at some of the actions that have gone on since, we might accuse him of being in the same position now; but we shall not, because it would be unfair for us to do it, perhaps.

When a Minister is prepared to make a charge like that, a totally unfair and incorrect one, I say that he should be prepared to take any charges laid against him. I have given him the opportunity. It is not taken. The whole of the reply to the deputation was absolutely unfair, incorrect, and misleading. Therefore I think we are justly entitled to some explanation. As regards the settlement of the difficulty, so far as I am personally concerned there is no one in this country better pleased to see a settlement of the trouble than I am, because instead of seeking for notoriety, as the member for Perth accuses me of, all I desired was to see the position of these workers made better than I found it; and I am thankful indeed if we succeeded. We do not say that the Government did nothing to bring about a settlement; but we say that had the Government done their duty in administering the laws of this country, the trouble would not have lasted more than a fortnight. The Government could have settled it very quickly. Mr. Lovekin is to be congratulated for what he did in bringing about the conference between the opposing parties. To Mr. Lovekin is due much of the credit; and speaking as one of the principals, I have only good words for his efforts in bringing about the conference. The thanks of the country are due to him for what he did. I had never met him until this occasion. I believe the Premier came on the scene about two days after we had been sitting. Just at the time Mr. Lovekin arranged the conference, I remember that the Premier rang up when I was in the room and arranged with Senator De Largie to have a conference; but I was not to be in it. I was barred by the Premier; but at the time the Premier was barring me from the conference, Mr. Lovekin had arranged the conference between Mr. Smith and myself. We have had Ministers looking for a little bit of reflected glory, and they are entitled to all they can get. We have some recollection of the Minister for Mines striving to get some credit and glory from the Italian Government when Diver Hughes raised the Italian from the flooded mine. If all Ministers are

going to get glory in the same way they can get it so far as I am concerned. In connection with the police court fines there is something we must rectify. The legal costs in this country are too high altogether. I have tasted them and know what they are and can speak with some authority. I say it is absolutely impossible for a poor man to get justice in the courts, that is, the police courts at any rate. The fines amounted to £50, but in the case of the Potosi case the fine was only £10. In the one case the workers were affected; in the other, the employers. Even when evidence was being given the magistrate would lean over and tell the shorthand writer not to take it down, knowing that the case would go before the Judges to be decided on the evidence that was taken down in that book.

Mr. Foulkes: That was the very reason; a certain amount of evidence is not admissible.

Mr. HOLMAN: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. I was giving the evidence.

At 6.15, the Speaker left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. HOLMAN (continuing): Before the adjournment I was dealing with the case brought at the police court. I wish to say here that, although it may not be considered wise for me to criticise the magistrates, I maintain that it is our bounden duty to get up and protect the men who may have to go before the court at any time. This, in my opinion, is the place where such action should be taken. In dealing with this case it is as well to have the whole of the facts put before the people, so that in future action will be taken to see that the interests of any individual, no matter how poor or humble he may be, will receive justice in those places where justice is supposed to be meted out. That justice was not granted in the case in question. Take the attitude of the magistrates. When an ordinary workman goes into court in his ordinary working clothes he is not treated with the same respect or courtesy as a man in a higher position. In this

case it did not matter what was brought forward by the other side, they were always given what they desired—any amendments were made which they asked for. We all know that a summons can be amended at any time; but, in this case, a very material alteration was made in the summons after the case had been heard and dealt with. It appeared on the summons that we were charged with doing something in the nature of a strike between certain dates in Perth; when the case had been heard the words "in Perth" were struck out. The magistrate had heard the case, had listened to the evidence which was brought before him, and then altered the summons to the effect which I have stated. I contend that he should certainly not have been allowed to make that alteration. Again, when the other side desired to find out the position of the relief funds, Mr. Magistrate Roe gave an *ex parte* order on the bank under the provisions of the Evidence Act. He not only gave an order to produce certain documents, but he subsequently amended that order so that it should cover every document in connection with the case. This I maintain was unfair, for no *ex parte* order should have been made, as it might have placed the opposite side at a disadvantage. This order was made on the West Australian Bank, and by it word was given to the bank to produce certain documents in order that it could be seen in whose name the funds were. They not only brought that document into court, but they also produced every particular that they possessed. That is not right, and it shows that the whole of them were working together hand in hand, so that anything possible might be produced. Again, in the treatment of witnesses, those who gave evidence on our side included many working men who came straight in from the bush, and took their place in the witness stand without having had an interview or conversation with a lawyer, or anyone else, and they were not prepared in any way. The magistrate allowed them to be bully-ragged and to be treated more like bloks of jarrah than as men. I had to rise from my seat in court and protest against the treatment which was meted out to these men. The witnesses on the other side, however, were treated in a very

different manner. Men who attended the court were particularly struck with the unfair treatment to which our witnesses were subjected, and could not fail to see the "kowtowing" which went on to the witnesses on the other side. Some of the latter swore that work ceased at certain mills on March 30th, and that I had been in the vicinity of these mills in the meantime, the inference being that my presence had stopped the working. I only went to that mill six or seven days after the date on which the mills ceased working, so it was impossible therefore for me to have had any effect upon the action of the men. That is the evidence we were convicted on. Other witnesses swore that owing to the advice I had given work ceased. As I have told members here, I did not appear on the scene at all until the trouble had existed for a week. When Mr. Roe gave his decision he made certain statements that he had absolutely no right to do. He exceeded his position as a magistrate. He referred to some advice alleged to have been given by me as being dishonest. He is not there to criticise my remarks for, as a public man and a representative of the people, I can go to any platform and talk as I think fit without Mr. Roe criticising and saying that any advice I might tender is dishonest. The advice referred to was this. It was alleged that I said if the men received 7s. 3d. they should do work to the value of 7s. 3d. I repeat that remark here. I defy Mr. Roe to say that it is dishonest for a man to give value for the money he receives. I suppose what he wants is for a man to do 15s. or 16s. worth of work and only receive 7s. 3d. for it. With regard to the costs in the action, they were probably the highest that have ever been given in a police court case. The first amount claimed was £441 1s., and this was subsequently amended to £486 0s. 2d. The sum allowed was £263 8s. 2d. I would like to ask members whether they do not consider that the time has arrived for them to say that legal costs should be reduced to such a limit that any man will have the right to go into court if he has a grievance, and get that grievance righted. Under the present system it is absolutely im-

possible, so long as these exorbitant charges are allowed to be made, for any but a wealthy man to go into court, and I would advise anyone in this State, if he is charged with an offence, to plead guilty and suffer the penalty instead of allowing the case to be heard and such charges to be built up against him as was the case in the action I am referring to. The sooner that something is done to cheapen the cost of litigation the better. When the Labour Party were in power an action was brought against a company, and the solicitor who was employed to appear for the Government was allowed £100 for conducting the case. This sum was granted him on the advice of the Crown law authorities. Out of this £100 the whole costs in the action were paid, including travelling costs, police court costs, and also the expenses of the appeal. The Hon. Mr. Moss, in criticising that bill of costs in another place, moved a vote of censure on the Labour Government for what he termed the heavy fees that were allowed the lawyer in question, and he said that it was a scandal and a disgrace that such fees should have been granted. He added that the police court fees should not have amounted to more than five or six guineas, and the cost of an appeal to the Supreme Court would not exceed £30. This was the very gentleman who conducted the case in the police court recently, and his first charges amounted to £441, and subsequently were brought up to £486; eventually they were allowed as I said before at £263. If it were a scandal and a disgrace for the Labour Government to give £100 to have a case conducted away up in the country, not only in the police court, but to follow it on to the courts of appeal, what can be said of the fees charged by the gentleman in question, considering that he only appeared in the police court in Perth? The huge sum allowed for the costs in the action proves that it is impossible for any union or any working man to combat a case brought against them in the police court. It is a disgrace to any Government that such a state of things should be allowed to exist. In the case in question, even if the men had been in the wrong, the Government should have taken the case up and compelled them to obey the law. As a matter of fact,

however, the men did obey the law, and the only mistake was that many of them did not remove from their homes at the mills, but tried to stay there until they could get work to do elsewhere. If these men had shifted away at once, had left their homes with their wives and children, and had made a camp for them out in the bush, it could not have been alleged that they broke the law at all. I am pleased that the trouble is over, and as far as I am personally concerned—and the same remark applies to all the members on this side of the House—I will do my utmost to get the employees and the employers in the timber trade to work in harmony with one another. To show that we were in earnest in that desire I may say that never has it occurred before that work has been resumed so quickly after the settlement of a dispute between employers and employees as was the case in connection with the timber trouble. The settlement took place on a Friday evening, and on the following Tuesday morning every mill owned by the company could have been worked by as many men as were at the various centres. As a matter of fact, however, all the mills could not be put to work at once, as there were not sufficient bush workers to bring in the timber to the mills. If in the future there is any farther trouble in connection with Millars' Company their concessions should be cancelled and they should be made to comply absolutely with the laws of the land. I would suggest that it would be advisable for the Government to take over and work some of the timber mills in order to show what can be done in connection with the timber industry. The work we did throughout that trouble was simply to provide food and clothing for the women and children and for some of the men, and to prevent others from going away. It speaks well for us that no violence at all was offered by the men. Although I have had a varied experience in this and other States, I never saw so much misery and poverty as I did during the four months' timber trouble. The Government should see that some provision is made by which workers at the mills can take up a bit of land for themselves, where they can make a home so that when the timber mills have cut out the timber, the men will be able to

get a living on the land. The case I have referred to is not the only one about which I have to complain of the magistrate. Only a few days ago another instance occurred in connection with another trouble. And here is a nice specimen of a magistrate to meet out justice. I am referring to a magistrate called Lovegrove. This is a nice thing for a man to bump up against in the bush. The man charged was only a settler on the land, and therefore should not receive any consideration. The man's name was Tischer, who was brought up and charged with refusing to close a gate on a public road. The magistrate said:

This is simply a faction fight.

Tischer: It is a matter of principle with me. I have taken up land under the liberal laws of the country, and I expect an outlet from my property to the market.

Lovegrove: Well, you shut the gates across the road.

Tischer: Public funds have been expended on that road, and it is the main road from the settlement to the township.

Lovegrove: If the roads board likes to permit the gates, you should have nothing to say about it.

Tischer: But surely we can express an opinion.

Lovegrove: You should do what the roads board tells you; and I'll make you do it.

Tischer: Yes, but I can appeal against your decision.

Lovegrove: I won't argue with you. I know all about it. You can't tell me, you know.

Tischer: But what about all the public money that has been spent on it?

Lovegrove: God spare my life! This is a specimen of the settlers! You can't talk to them. It's no use.

Then he adjourned the Court. I think, God-spare-my-life-Lovegrove ought to have short shrift from the Government.

Mr. Foulkes: Mr. Lovegrove denies it.

Mr. HOLMAN: I met Mr. Tischer on one of my visits to the South-West, and he explained the whole of the facts of the case to me, and I am prepared to believe him and the published reports rather than what Mr. Lovegrove may

say now. Mr. Tischer said that the statement which appeared in the Press was not half as strong as what took place in court. Is a man to be brought before the court and treated like a dog? We should not allow that in a free country. Lovegrove stated he knew all about the case before he went on the bench. Was he a fit man to go on a bench to adjudicate? But this magistrate is not the only one who knew all about the case before going on the bench. The gentleman I have referred to previously knew a lot about the case which he was going to hear before he went on the bench. I heard before I went into court that I was going to be potted. Only recently on the Murchison we had a magistrate dealing with a matter—but perhaps the member for Cue can speak of that case more fully than I can. Anyone who reads the report of that commissioner will say that beyond doubt the charges made, if they could be called charges—the statements, I prefer to refer to them as—made by the member for Cue were absolutely true. The magistrate could bear that out, but he said nothing because the person he was dealing with was a Government servant. The member for Pilbarra drew attention to the action of a magistrate in the North-West—another nice specimen of a magistrate. Then we have the magistrate who dealt with the famous Gerald Browne case. That was a case in which a man was killed when running away. It was absolutely unnecessary for the shots to be fired. The man was running away, but the police knew him, and could have secured him at any other time, but Gerald Browne, who shot the man, was supposed to be of high standing and of good family, therefore was allowed to leave the State. We know very well that had it been a policeman who, in the execution of his duty, shot a man who was committing a robbery, that policeman would have had to stand his trial, and justly so, because a life should not be taken by anyone. But in regard to the case of Gerald Browne, the police knew the man he was following, and there being several policemen to the one man they should have surrounded him and taken him, proving themselves to be men. It was cowardly to shoot at a man who was running away, and it is a standing

disgrace to the Justice Department that Gerald Browne should be allowed to leave the State.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not reflect on the administration of the department if he reflects on the Ministers. The hon. member has full power to place any matter he has to complain about, such as the conduct of a magistrate, before the House by substantive motion drawn up in proper form. The hon. member has the power, if he wishes, to bring before the House in that manner the conduct of a magistrate.

Mr. HOLMAN: If Gerald Browne had not left the country, I would have moved the adjournment of the House, and compelled the Government to make him stand his trial. I am not reflecting on the department. As far as my limited knowledge will allow me, I am pointing out the action which has taken place when another course of action should have been followed. I will refer to a case which occurred in the North-West where a man under great provocation took up a gun and shot another man who had treated him badly. That man was brought before a magistrate three times I believe, and was allowed to go. But the department brought that man to Perth, placed him before the Court, and he received a sentence of six years. That was months after the crime took place. If it was just to allow Gerald Browne, because he was the son-in-law of an ex-Governor of this State, to leave the country with a crime on his hands, it was quite justifiable to allow this other man to go. However, the offender was charged three times before a magistrate in the North-West; but he was a poor man, and the Government must make an example of somebody. It is time influence was done away with. If a working man has to stand his trial for taking the life of another, then the son-in-law of a Governor should be compelled to stand in the dock. I feel deeply about a case like this, because it places us in this position. We have had to stand our trial, and the poor man is at a disadvantage, while the rich man has all the advantages. One of the objects of the Labour party throughout the world is to see that all men are placed on the one footing, and not allow men with influence to escape.

A case took place at Kalgoorlie over sweating sovereigns, but I do not intend to condone a crime in any way; if a man breaks the law he should suffer the penalty, and Gerald Browne should have suffered the penalty when he broke the law. In the case I am referring to, which occurred at Kalgoorlie, the three men charged each received a penalty of three years' imprisonment. I have the Judge's remarks here on the case and we find that he said the men were equally guilty. But one man was let out four or five months ago after serving 18 months sentence; this case has been brought under my notice; I do not remember the circumstances exactly. I remember seeing it in the paper; but the mother of one of the men who is in gaol has placed the case before me. The man whom I wish to refer to assisted the police when they were in danger of being kicked or maimed for life. There was some trouble at Kurrawang and this man came forward and assisted the police, and is therefore entitled to some consideration for that. When the Judge delivered sentence he considered that the three men were equally guilty, but one man is let out after serving a sentence of 18 months. If one man is let out all of them should be let out, they should be treated alike. Here is a case in which the Attorney General could exercise his clemency and release the other man. The Attorney General knows the man I refer to, and he is in a position to exercise his clemency, and I do not think in this case he would be doing any harm if he allowed the other two men to go, or at least one of them. I do not think one man should be let out and the others kept in. I have been rather lengthy in my remarks, but I have had some important matters to place before the House. I have tried to do my duty: my sole idea being not to criticise those on the other side of the House, but to place before the people of the country the necessity for taking a stand to protect the interests of the people of the State. It is my desire to do all I can to bring about progress and prosperity to the State. I only hope the Government will in their wisdom take notice of some of the remarks I have made and administer the laws of the country alike to the rich and the poor,

and not as has been done in the past for the advantage of one side alone. There are a number of matters I desire to touch upon, but I will not transgress longer. If I have transgressed the rules of debate to-night I have done so unintentionally and for the sole purpose of placing before the House my views as well as I could.

Mr. J. BREBBER (North Perth) : My reason for rising to-night to address the House on the Address in reply to his Excellency's Speech is that there are two matters in regard to which I cannot coincide with the proposals of the Government. Had it not been for those two items, I should not now take up the time of the House. Those matters are the graving dock for Fremantle, and the establishment of freezing works in the North-West. But before dealing with those subjects, I should like to congratulate the Government on their resolution to carry forward the proposed taxation of land values, and I assure the Government that my support will be freely given on that matter. I desire also to congratulate the Government on the fact that they are recognising the resources of our North-West country and am pleased to think they are going to assist in the development of those resources by sinking for artesian water, and by the construction of railways from Port Hedland to Marble Bar and from Nannine to Black Range. Those are works for which the Government deserve credit for introducing; and one Minister in particular deserves credit for bringing the resources of the North-West prominently before the people of the State. The Minister for Mines has devoted much time and energy to this subject; he has gone through that country and examined it for himself; and having returned with a personal knowledge of those great resources, he has placed them clearly before the public, so that we can recognise what a great asset we have there. Another matter on which the Government deserve to be congratulated is the decision to erect three lighthouses on the North-West coast. At no distant date the Commonwealth will take over the control of lighthouses, and if we have not by that time erected sufficient lighthouses on our

extensive coast-line, our prospect of getting them after the Commonwealth has assumed control is, I am afraid, small indeed, if we may judge the Commonwealth's actions in the future by what they have been in the past in regard to this State. A board of engineers is at present considering the best scheme for supplying the metropolitan area with water, and I trust that whatever decision is arrived at the Government will consider well the future requirements of the city and metropolitan area. Let us have no pottering patched-up scheme which will only serve for a few years, and which in the end will run the city and surroundings districts into a heavy expenditure. With regard to the dock at Fremantle, I am sorry the Government have taken up this question. The dock question is not one affecting only Fremantle or Perth or any particular district; it is a national question. The harbour works at Fremantle were built, not for Fremantle alone, but for the State; and if a graving dock is to be built, at Fremantle or elsewhere, it should be for the benefit of the whole of the State. My disappointment in this matter is because the Government have decided upon a site in direct opposition to the opinions of the best experts we have had here. I had an opportunity last session of quoting the figures and remarks of one engineer who reported on the project; but there is one paragraph which I did not then quote; and as it shows that the experts are distinctly opposed to the site now chosen by the Government, I shall quote it to-night:—

“Consideration may now be given to the question of site for the graving dock. On a plan forwarded with this report I have shown seven sites which at one time or another have been proposed, namely: No. 1 at Arthur's Head, No. 2 at Rous Head, No. 3 on north side near and below the railway bridge, No. 4 on the south side just above the railway bridge, No. 5 on the north side above Brown Point, No. 6 on the south side at Preston Point, No. 7 on north side of Rocky Bay. The three sites below the bridge should, in my opinion, be dismissed at once, for the reason that in so small a harbour a large vessel about to be

docked or undocked, even in calm weather, would be a great obstruction to shipping either entering the harbour, coming alongside, or leaving the wharves, especially the one on the north side.”

That is the one at Rous Head which the Government have decided on, and which has been condemned in no unmeasured terms by the best experts on this question we have ever had in the State. Closely associated with this question of a dock site is the opening up of the river to Perth. That is no new question. It received consideration by the James Government and by previous Governments; and it has always been recognised that the opening up of the river is a matter calculated to benefit the whole of the State, and therefore should be taken up by the Government. That Mr. Walter James recognised this is shown by his purchase of land for a high-level bridge to connect with Cottesloe station, which formed part of the scheme for the establishment of a dock. I have no objection to a graving dock being constructed at Rocky Bay. My own constituency has no interest in this dock question, which more particularly affects Fremantle than any other part of the State; but if we are not going to have the best site, let us at least have the second best, which according to the experts is at Rocky Bay. In this matter the present Government have thrown aside the policy of every preceding Government, and started on a new line of policy. These changes of policy are not desirable. We have a splendid illustration of this in the city of Perth. Some years ago a commission sat to inquire into the best means of getting over the difficulty of the city streets crossing the railway, and that commission recommended that a railway viaduct be constructed from West Perth to East Perth, so that the whole of the streets might then pass under the viaduct. That was adopted as the policy of the Government of the day. The Commissioner of Railways recognised that policy up to a certain point. A bonus was given to one individual for designing a bridge at William Street that would meet the requirements of that policy. That design was afterwards altered in the direction of making the bridge of

cheaper construction in the centre, in order that when the viaduct was built the cost of connection would be lessened and the ramps could still serve as approaches to the high-level station. A bridge at Beaufort Street was also part of the viaduct scheme, and these bridges were to be connected in the centre, thus giving access to every part of the high-level station. That was a splendid scheme by which William Street, Melbourne Road, and every other crossing street might have had through connection under the viaduct. But the Commissioner has changed his views, and there is now being built at Beaufort Street a bridge which must be entirely destroyed if the policy of a previous Government is carried out and a viaduct built. In this connection also I desire to know from the Minister for Railways what his engineer's estimate would be for cost of reducing the gradient of the approaches to the Beaufort Street bridge 2ft. 6in. Plans were presented to the City Council showing a bridge with the approach gradients reduced to the extent of 3ft.; but the Commissioner states that it is impossible to reduce the gradient, the result being that the new bridge is to be built with a ramp as dangerous as the old one. I am led to believe that for a paltry expenditure of an additional £2,000 that gradient could be cut down 2ft. 6in. in the ramps. I am quoting these bridges to show the House that it is not a good thing for one Government to adopt a certain policy, and a succeeding Government to entirely alter that policy and take up another; and this is an illustration of what is going on in regard to the Fremantle dock. The policy of a previous Government was to place the dock at the best possible site in the river; but the present Government has thrown over that policy, and decided to place the dock at a site which has been condemned in no unmeasured terms by the best experts. I do not desire to labour this question now, but an opportunity will again occur to refer to it, and I shall be prepared with figures to fight it. I come now to another matter in the Speech in regard to which I am not at one with the Government—the proposed freezing works in the North. Freezing works would certainly be a good thing for those pastoralists who have cattle to

send in; but I would ask the Government to consider how this proposal is going to affect the people of the State. We have recently opened up a new stock route to the North, and the Government should consider how this latest proposal is likely to affect those who have had to find money to open up that stock route. I say, the best of it, the prime stock, will be put into those freezing works, and be sent Home or to other markets of the world where it will command the highest price; and the second-class stock will be sent to the markets of the South. I do not think the State is justified in imposing taxation for a work of that kind. I will read a few figures which astonished me when I was collecting them. If we are to subsidise the pastoral industry in the Nor'-West, we must ask, Who will benefit? I have here the names of six firms who have leased an area of 13,214,280 acres, or very nearly half the area of England; and we are about to make these people a present of £36,000. In the Ashburton district one firm alone owns 670,000 acres. It seems to me this industry is of such proportions that a paltry sum of £36,000 is neither here nor there to the pastoralists who will receive it. The erection of such works ought to be left to those who require them. Let the pastoralists push their own business with their own capital, and do not tax the State to build freezing works for firms of that magnitude. I should say, if the Government will build those freezing works and take the management of them, and see that they are not run to the injury of the country, there will be some reason or excuse for the expenditure; otherwise I can see none whatever. I should prefer the Government to use £36,000 in boring for coal in that country which geologists have recognised to be probably coal-bearing—from the Irwin River down to Moora. If we look at any geological map, we shall find it stated that this will probably be coal-bearing country. If coal be discovered in that country, it will form one of the finest assets of the State; not only that, it will be the making and the saving of the Murchison Goldfields. The Murchison District is very scantily timbered, and there is difficulty in finding firewood. A good coalfield there would be quite as valuable

as the Murchison Goldfield is to this State.

Mr. Taylor: The country of which you speak is all in the Midland Company's area.

Mr. BREBBER: No. The country I speak of as probably coal-bearing extends not only over the Midland lands but over a great tract owned by the Government. [*Mr. Taylor:* Where?] In different sections sandwiched between the sections owned by the Midland Company. And whether coal is found on the company's lands or not, surely if we discover such an asset on any lands, the State will be benefited? I do not wish to detain the House. My principal reason for drawing attention to the two matters I have mentioned is that the Government may understand from the start that on these points, so far as I can judge, the reasons they have advanced lead me to think that I cannot support them. I shall, therefore, reserve myself the right to provide such figures as will make my arguments more convincing when these matters come before the House. I thank members for the attention I have received.

Hon. F. H. PIÉSSÉ (Katanning): Before dealing with the subjects mentioned in the Governor's Speech I should like to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, upon your again assuming the Chair. I am also pleased as an old member to see you in such excellent health. In reference to the Speech, paragraphs 2 and 3 deal with subjects which are dear to my heart, subjects in which I have for many years taken an intense interest. Though I recognise the importance of the mining industry, which has done so much for Western Australia, and so much for those people with whom I have been closely associated, yet we cannot lose sight of the fact that we have in our pastoral and agricultural industries a most important factor in the building-up of the national interests of this State. It is gratifying indeed to find that land selection has been so extensive, amounting as it has under the conditional purchase regulations to something over 800,000 acres during the past year. The area is not so great in comparison with past selections, but the tenure carries with it those obligations

which I think we all agree are necessary for the development of the country's interests. The conditions will secure the cultivation of the soil, the carrying out of the varied improvements required, and will in a great measure remove those objections raised in the past against so much land being held without the development demanded by the land laws. I am pleased indeed to find that the Government intend to take a new step by preparing some of our heavily-timbered lands in different parts of the State, ringbarking and otherwise fitting them for the occupation more particularly of the new settler. A large area has been set apart in the South-Western District, bordering as it does upon the Balgarrup and the Bridgetown rivers; and this area will, I am sure, after some recent personal experience, show a most gratifying result. The methods which the Government are initiating, and which have actually been commenced, were in the past considered very doubtful. So long ago as eight years, one of the late Ministers for Lands, Mr. Richardson, strongly urged upon the then Government the carrying out of work of a similar nature; and I believe it was in consequence of the objection of Sir John Forrest that Mr. Richardson relinquished his post. Although we have had so many gentlemen occupying the important position of Minister for Lands, and they have all done good work, yet to Mr. Richardson are due the thanks of this country for adding in different ways to our land legislation; but at that time his proposal was thought to be perhaps a step too far in advance of the requirements of the day, the protection of the timber being so essential. He did carry out a portion of this work, and the results have been satisfactory. And although I did not see eye to eye with him at the time in all his proposals, and looked on this proposal to ringbark and prepare land for settlers in advance of settlement as perhaps a doubtful proceeding fraught with some danger, I am now convinced that the work is necessary in certain localities. And the good work which is being done to-day in the locality I have mentioned will, I am sure, repay this country fourfold, perhaps a hundredfold, in the future. To see the country in its virgin condition, studded as it is with

heavy timber, some of it valuable which could be reserved, and the remainder useless, together with the dreaded poison plant which has done so much to prevent the progress of this country; and to see the country, as I have seen it recently, denuded of the superfluous timber and of the poison plant—to see it after burning—was surprising to me, though I had known the country for so many years. I am satisfied that the expenditure incurred will well repay the State, and I am looking forward to a great advancement as a result of the experiment which has just been commenced. I commend the Government for their action. I have in the past gone well into this matter, preferring to test the country personally, and now having tested it, I am satisfied that the public will eventually appreciate the work which is being done. The poison plant has been responsible for many setbacks in this country. It has retarded the settlement of that part of the country of which I now speak; and the earlier settlers have been faced with difficulties and with great losses too; but the difficulty is to-day being overcome. I am not speaking without experience. Recently, in conjunction with my brothers, I have cleared an area of something like 14,000 acres of poison lands. These have now stood the test of three years; and only recently I saw them, and they are all capable of safely carrying stock. This is turning to account land which at one time was termed a waste, and it is a question how valuable this country will become. In my opinion, the clearing of the land at a cost to me of 6s. per acre, that is including ring-barking and fencing, has added 15s. an acre to its value, thus proving that we are undertaking work in which the funds of the country may be safely expended. I have noticed in the Speech the references to mixed farming; and I am pleased to note, too, that the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell) evidently takes an intense interest in the work of the Agricultural Department which he controls. Much of that work is of an initiatory character, and will have to be watched with care. Though much adverse comment has arisen from the importation to the State of cows for dairying purposes, yet the expenditure after all is not large; but before the

experiment is carried out on an extensive scale I should like to see the result of the first investment. However, I am confident from my own knowledge of the country that we shall see a great impetus given to dairying. The country to the south, and over the south-western corner of the State has a climate unequalled in Australia. Cool nights, tempered as they are by the breezes of the Great Australian Bight, add to the country a charm which brings people to it; and at the same time it means that we can carry on the dairying industry without resorting to artificial means of cooling. If we watch the returns given from time to time by the Government Meteorologist, we see that the thermometer frequently goes down during the summer months as low as 40 degrees, and we know that the days, though hot, are short in the hours of heat, and the nights are invariably cool. I have tested by practical experience the making of butter—not a large quantity, but at the rate of about 120 pounds a week. It is all done without artificial means of cooling, simply by having properly constructed buildings. The butter did not require any setting. It kept hard throughout the day. This goes to show that, although so much has been said about unsuitability of this State for dairying, when we are undertaking some of the other industries, I am satisfied it will play a prominent part in the future welfare of the State. [Mr. Johnson: What was the number of cows you milked?] It was at the rate of about 5½ pounds per cow. It was kept on proper principles of bookkeeping, showing the profits at the prices paid then, 1s. 4d. down to 1s. 1d. per pound. Of course these prices were slightly in advance of the imported article; because, being local, the people prefer it to the imported at certain parts of the year. It was hand-made with the cream separator, and with the best means that could be procured on a small scale. The excellent results proved to me that the country would be equal to other parts of Australia, not growing, perhaps, grasses as luxuriantly as in some parts where they have deep rivers and excellent water supply, but equal to the Goulbourn Valley and Euroa country, and other places famed in Victoria. [Mr. Johnson :

Did you give special feed?] The cows were fed on the natural grasses and with bran and chaff at certain periods. With reference to the question of stock, it is most gratifying to find that the stock have increased in large numbers. Knowing the South-West for 32 years, where there has been no increase—in fact a decrease—in the sheep returns for 20 years, I find to-day that we are beginning to have a larger number of sheep placed there. We have 75,000 in the Williams district, and 197,000 in the Katanning and Wagin districts, which brings the number up to 270,000. This, as compared with the returns 10 years ago of 110,000, shows a very encouraging increase indeed, and I think my words uttered in this House previously will be confirmed by results in less time than I anticipated. I said two years ago that we would have a million sheep grazing on that area. I have no doubt in my mind about it now, because of the methods that are being adopted, and because of the way the country is being brought under subjection and dealt with in regard to improved ways of grazing. Grasses which have been planted, starting from very small results eight or nine years ago, are now beginning to be turned to profitable account; and we hear to-day of the 50 acres and the 100 acres of *paspalum*, rape, and other fodders that have been planted, as against the few roods planted some years ago. One man engaged in farming in that district has brought into it as much as 35cwt. of grass seed this year. I speak again from my own experience. I have proved for four years by grazing upon these grasses that this country will return good results, and that grasses, if carefully grazed, will not be fed out. Each day we learn more, and so it goes to show that we will be adding wealth to the country by the improved methods adopted. The wool of that district has realised the highest prices on the London market for Western Australian wool, reaching the high figure of 1s. 4½d. in the grease, and I may add that the weight of the wool per sheep has improved from about 5lbs. for the fleece to 9lbs., at which weight some of the more important breeds shear. So it goes to show we are daily advancing. It is not a question entirely for what may be termed

the squatter; but it is a question for the mixed farmers turning to account on the biennial system fields before covered with wheat and other cereals. Thus they are not only improving their financial position, but also improving their land. I said to the farmers when speaking this year on the low price of grain and the short crops garnered, that I considered that the land, cultivated as it has been, had improved in value by 4s. or 5s. per acre, because of its greater grass carrying capabilities, and because of the larger number of stock that would result therefrom. Then comes the question of lamb export that has been alluded to as one of our growing and future important industries. Recent shipments to London proved that our lamb is equally appreciated there with that of the Eastern States and New Zealand, and it is only a question of time when we shall be sending away large quantities from the South-West; and the Eastern and Northern districts will participate in the trade, so that in a few years we shall be equal to the Eastern States and closely following upon the track of New Zealand in our lamb export. It is a question of the near future—not more than eight or 10 years—when we shall show a tremendous change in this country. With reference to the matter touched on by the member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber), that of freezing, which is so closely allied to the stock question, I wish to say at this stage that although the matter has been handled and financed by capitalists in other parts of Australia, still we must not forget that equal assistance has been given in certain other cases, such as the bonus on butter, and assistance in other directions afforded by the Eastern Governments. Therefore I think that, safely guarded and properly protected in every direction so that the interests of the country will not suffer, the proposal of the Government is upon the right lines. We must do something to help forward these industries. Although I will not go so closely into the matter as I shall when it comes before the House in the proposals the Government will place before us, yet at the same time upon first appearances, and with the understanding that due protection will be afforded to the State's interests and to the smaller producer, I am in

accord with the Government. We have talked so much, and a good deal has been said of the progress of the State; we have heard so much of mixed farming, prospective dairying, and the wool industry, and of the wheat, in fact of the general growth of the country; but there is one thing which the Government must take in hand. I understand they are doing so, because we have it evidenced in their determination to bring the railways into touch with the people, and to help the producer. I am referring to the question of dealing with the railway rates. I have spoken strongly on the subject before. I think there is much to be done in this direction to foster our latent industries, and to build up the country, and then in a few years to obtain an adequate return. It may be for a time only prospective, it may be discouraging, but still I always think that if we can settle a large number of people, say 20 to 50 where one or two are to-day, then the country must benefit. It is slow work and it means a good deal of perseverance and hard struggling for the people on the land; therefore I think the Government should immediately take into consideration this question of railway rates; and I would remind them that it is not wise to allow the question to slumber until we require to carry our produce. One of the greatest drawbacks to the industry this year was the alteration to the rates at so late a date as the 8th February. It enabled speculators to get in early, and farmers did not benefit to the extent that they should have done by the alteration.

The Minister for Mines and Railways : It was the 28th January; you may be referring to the amendment.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: I must say the Minister was most anxious to do what he could, although we did not get all I expected would be given to the farmers and producers. [*Mr. Johnson:* The farmers got nothing.] I will show that they got something. I think the Minister deserves credit, though I do not consider he went far enough at the time. Members may say it is useless to the wheat-growing country if the rascally millers have the results of the hard work of the people on the land. The rascally miller has

been talked of a good deal in this House and outside. [*Mr. Johnson:* By the farmers.] Not so much farmers as numbers who do not recognise the true position. I do not come before members without my facts. I spent several days in looking up the information; I have gone through the files of the three principal Eastern States papers, and through our own files, and I have searched my private records, and I am going to show that the farmer last year received equal prices to those paid in the Eastern States. These adverse comments have been made. I want it to be understood that people are at perfect liberty to talk as they please, but at the same time they should be fair and should not disparage an industry which has cost the people engaged in it about £145,000 for the necessary buildings and machinery. Speaking as one who has had the longest experience in milling in this State—since 1891—and as one at the present time engaged in it, I know that with the exception of five years during that period, the balance has been on the wrong side of the ledger for me. We must not forget this that it is not that we were not always able to buy satisfactorily, but because we had the difficulty which has long faced the industry of dispelling the prejudice against Western Australian flour. I am glad to say that to-day that prejudice is much less than it used to be, especially in the far North where it used to be worst. In that part of the country the Western Australian millers are now getting about one-third of the business. We have succeeded in getting 23,000 tons of the business of the more settled parts and there has been a falling off in the imports of flour of from 15,000 tons 5 years ago to 6,000 tons last year. Although the figures are not yet available, the prospects for this year, taking the present importations as a guide, are that the quantity imported will not be more than 4,000 tons, so that you see the importations are gradually diminishing. You might say that that is all very well, but that the millers are putting the money into their own pockets, and that the poor farmer gets nothing. Some say that the prices paid here last season were

from 3d. to 6d. per bushel less than those paid in the Eastern States. This is erroneous. If we are to come to the question of values as compared with the world's rates, then we must make the same comparisons here as in the Eastern States. Before the reduction was made in the railway rates the price at Northam for wheat was 2s. 8d. In any event, the reduction did not mean more than 1d. per bushel. The figures that I will now quote refer to the values in January, February, and March before the reduction was made. This will be quite sufficient for my purpose. As I have said 2s. 8d. per bushel was paid for wheat at the Northam mills—and I have these figures on the declared authority of the people engaged in the business. That was before the reduction; they paid 2s. 9d. after the reduction, a great deal of wheat coming in in the meantime. [Mr. Underwood: The papers must have misreported the prices then, for they stated that wheat was 2s. 6d. a bushel.] I have all the reports here and I hope any member will trip me up afterwards if I am incorrect. I have come here to-night to put before you the true facts of the case, and I will do so as fairly and squarely as I can. In fact, in my figures I am giving the benefit to the farmer rather than taking it from him. Now the price paid at Northam was 2s. 8d.. The rail-age under the reduced rate was 9s. 3d., or equal to 3d. per bushel, making a price of 2s. 11d. at Fremantle. With regard to Katanning wheat for Fremantle the price paid was 2s. 7d., the rail-age 15s. 3d., or equal to 5d. per bushel, and the price therefore at Fremantle was 3s. It might be contended that the Katanning returns should be given as if the article went to Albany, seeing that that is the nearest port. To deal with the figures therefore from that point of view, there will be the original price of 2s. 7d. for the wheat and the rail-age charge of 3½d., making a total at the port of Albany of 2s. 10½d. The price in Adelaide for the same months was to farmers 2s. 10½d., and on shipboard 2s. 11½d. I have gone through every file to-day myself care-

fully, and that is the exact amount paid. You will see therefore from these figures that the price on shipboard is 1d. more than the farmer's price, but the difference does not go to the farmer but to the man who has to deal with the shipping. Consequently, we can take it that the price in Adelaide is 2s. 10½d. as against 2s. 10½d at Albany from Katanning, 3s. at Fremantle from Katanning, and 2s. 11d. at Fremantle from Northam. Therefore there is shown a benefit to the farmer here of ½d. per bushel. Now to deal with wheat bought for export. With the 12½ per cent. less for rail-age, the prices were—Northam, wheat 2s. 10½d.; Katanning, wheat (at Fremantle), 2s. 11½d., (at Albany), 2s. 10d. It will be seen that in this case also the comparisons are still favourable to this State. The London price for the same date was 30s. per quarter of 480lbs., equal to 3s. 9d. per bushel. The freight which by the way is more favourable from Adelaide to the European markets than from here—but I will give you the benefit of that—amounts to close upon 7¼d. per bushel. The charges, which cover wharfage and all expenses in connection with the bringing of the product to its destination amount to 2½d., leaving a total therefore for freight and charges of 9¾d. Let this 9¾d. be deducted from the 3s. 9d. which was the existing price in London, and it leaves a total of 2s. 11¼d. as the value of the product at the port. That really corresponds with the price which is paid here for the wheat. The price of flour in Adelaide for the same months was from £6 12s. 6d. to £7 2s. 6d. The former figure was the "cut" price for the purpose of securing the trade as against our competition, and the exporters are prepared to reduce the price 7s. 6d. in order to defeat the Western Australian miller. The price at Perth and Fremantle at which contracts for the whole of the year were made with the bakers and large consumers was from £6 15s. to £7 5s., so that you see that once more the prices compare favourably with those in Adelaide. Early in May last a rise took place in the price of wheat in the Eastern States, and it went up to 3s. 3d. for farmers' wheat

and to 3s. 4d. for shipping purposes. This advance was brought about owing to an expected shortage in the European markets. Speculations took place in the old world, and it is that which brought the temporary inflation of values. It was thought later that there was no justification for the rumour, and prices then dropped from 3d. to 4d. a bushel. Subsequently more accurate statistics were made available and the fact was disclosed that there was a real shortage and another rise took place, and the prices ruling to-day were confirmed by the world's values. I would point out that there is a good deal of speculation now in the wheat buying in the Eastern States. The price ruling in Adelaide to-day is from 3s. 9d. to 3s. 11d. and in Melbourne from 4s. to 4s. 0½d. Flour for export ranges from £8 10s. to £8 15s. in Adelaide, and in Melbourne £9 5s. The high price ruling there now has been brought about by the big demand for export to New Zealand in consequence of the high price of flour in that colony. To-day in Western Australia, the price at which any miller will sell flour is £8 10s., which is equal to the price ruling in Adelaide, and much lower than that in Melbourne. Wheat to-day is worth and is being paid for at the rate of 3s. 5d. at Northam, the value at the port being 3s. 8d. This means that the price is only about 2d. less than is being paid in Adelaide. The wheat is being bought by the millers who unfortunately have contracted heavily, and the price is as high as they can afford to pay. Certainly there was a period here when a depression in the price existed, and it did not recover in the way it did in the Eastern States as there were not the people here to push it upwards. Also we had not the quantity of wheat. Most of the wheat was in the hands of the shippers or the millers in the early part of the year. The price last season was very different from that ruling in the preceding one, for in the latter case we bought wheat early in the season at 3s. 4d. and it subsequently went down to 2s. 8d., the result being that those farmers who sold their wheat early obtained a much better price than those who sold

later. It was just the reverse this year, when the price was low early in the season, but has increased considerably since. As one of those associated with the trade and more particularly with the milling industry, my experience goes to show that the same thing applies to wheat as to other commodities, and that is that we have to work upon averages. Unfortunately it happens frequently, and has done so this year, that the new settler strikes a year when the price of the product is very low. Many farmers have suffered considerably, as they have been unable to stand up against the vicissitudes of the markets in the same way as a man who has had five to ten good crops previously, and has had the benefit of the high prices which have existed in the past. Four years ago a bag of wheat was worth 25s., and that this price will be reached again is just as sure as that night follows day. There have been ups and downs in prices in the past, and they will occur again in the future. I remember in 1891 that the firm with which the hon. member for York was connected bought 8,000 bags of wheat at 2s. 8d., which was far in excess of the Adelaide price. We have bought at that price at Katanning, and the farmers knew at the time that the price was based on the world's values. Flour was sold that year at £5 12s. 6d., and there is no doubt that the experience of the past tells us that the price of wheat and flour practically moves in a cycle. It was a bad year last year—what we call a farmer's year, and this year it is a miller's year, and although the latter look to be making good profits I may say this, that they sold ahead early, just as the farmers did, for it was necessary for them to make their arrangements to sell part of their products. Although they will make a good profit on the product which has not yet been sold, they are not making ordinary profits out of that which they were forced to get rid of early in the season. With regard to the question of the world's value, I will make certain comparisons, and show you how speculative wheat buying brings about a great difference in values. The world's highest values to-day are at 36s. per quarter of 480lbs., or

equal to 4s. 6d. per bushel. The charges are 9¾d. and this leaves an Australian value to-day f.o.b. of 3s. 8¾d. That is an advance on the prices paid for wheat to-day of 2¾d. in Adelaide, and 4¼d. in Melbourne. You will wonder why that is so, and I will let you into the secret. There has been overselling in Melbourne; ships have been chartered to take the wheat away, and the man who has sold has found that he does not possess the wheat required to fill the ships chartered, consequently he has been forced to buy and naturally the price has gone up. There is a great deal of speculation going on in connection with wheat buying, and it sometimes happens that men who have obtained special information to the effect, perhaps, that there would be shortages in the supplies from certain countries, buy wheat on this information, and find that it goes up to a very high price. This is what brings about speculation and causes fluctuations in values. After all, these transactions are very much like sharebroking or share-dealing, for the wheat is either bought or sold in the hopes that the price will rise or fall respectively. The position is this, that unless you know and watch the market closely, on the face of it you may believe that the prices are going against the farmer, and that the miller is having an unfair advantage. As I pointed out, last year was a losing year, and the contracts held this year have been heavy in certain directions, based on the prices ruling at that time; and to give members some idea of the want of knowledge and perhaps the prudence of men engaged in the wheat trade, such as Wills & Co. and others, they would not pay a halfpenny above what may be termed the export value. Now if those firms had had any knowledge of the big advance which was about to take place—if I had had any knowledge of it—what would have been easier than to borrow the money or to use our own money, and to speculate? That was not done; for so many people have been bitten in this very wheat business that they fight shy of speculation; and it is not until circumstances are as we see them now that there is any

plunging. Then comes the reaction, with disastrous losses such as we see in sharebroking, during the wild excitement which accompanies the operation known as cornering. Those who have read the books published on the American wheat trade know how disastrous speculation may prove, and there is no one objects to it more than I, preferring legitimate trade to that speculation which often turns out so well for some people and so badly for others. I have said already that millers are to-day grinding in this country 25,000 tons of flour; and this year I think the quantity will be about 27,000. We have a capacity of about 40,000 tons, a consumption of 30,000, and an import, prospective and actual, of 4,000 tons, meaning that the quantity ground to-day will be about sufficient for the country's requirements. A few words on the question of a ring, and I have done with the subject of wheat. There is no ring, and has not been a ring for the regulation of prices in wheat-buying. I overlap in my districts with other millers with whom I compete. They come into my districts and take away wheat from under my eyes. But there is, and has been for the last few months, and at different times, an association, which has more than once fallen through, for the regulation of trade methods and for the selling price of the mill products. That regulation has been necessary, though how long it will last no one knows. It has been necessary for the reason that men have been ruined in this business, and there have been no profits; and so long as we have the competition from abroad and from the Eastern States to regulate local prices, the farmer need have nothing to fear. There are men who have not bought their wheat supplies, and who are unfortunately in the position of having to buy at the price ruling to-day, the 3s. 9d. per bushel. No doubt this country looks with suspicion on the association and speaks of "the rascally miller" as a man who has done tremendous injury to the country. Well, if there is one thing which has brought grey hairs to my head it is that milling business,

and I wish I had never seen it. People will not believe me; but they should nevertheless watch closely the operations of those in the business, and should be fair. They should consider all the points, and deal justly with men who are ready to put their money into this country, and to build up industries which will employ a large number of hands, industries which are feeding the people, and not at an excessive cost. I say this because I wish the Premier to note it. I was much startled, much disappointed, to notice that in his Bunbury speech he said it was the intention of the Government to make advances to farmers against their wheat—not that I wish to stand in the way of the farmer. If that project is to be good for the farmer, I hail it with delight. But I must say that, although I agree generally with the Premier's policy speech, with some reservations regarding details, there are two points on which I do not agree with him; one in regard to these advances, and the other in regard to the land tax. I am sure he was only prompted by a desire to do good to people who are said to be in the grip of both the miller and the exporter. We have already in this country a farmers' institution with about 3,000 or 4,000 members, called the Producers' Association, consisting of men who have paid up their share capital, who are carrying on a very large business, and who have had the opportunity of shipping their wheat as they ship their lambs and other products, who are buying their manures and their sacks first hand; and I have never offered any opposition to them; I have helped them in every way to establish grain stores and to buy their sacks, if they could buy them cheaply; and I say to hon. members, that institution should make the advances. If the institution is not strong enough to make such advances, I say the competition in the Eastern States is sufficient to ensure what I call fair and legitimate business here. If it is not, then I say, let the Premier come along with his proposals. At the same time, he is probably on dangerous ground. I wish to be understood thoroughly. I am

not here as a philanthropist, but I am here as a lover of this country, and as a man who desires to build up its industries; and I have done and shall try to do my best to assist the people. I do not for a moment stand in the way of the farmers, but I say this proposal is a questionable stroke of policy. I say at once it is not wise, and I think the Premier will on more mature consideration see rather that the interests of the farmers are better safeguarded in the matter of exports. I do not wish to conclude without saying how necessary the mining industry is to this country. I am pleased to hear the expressions of opinion in this debate, and I offer my sincere congratulations to the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) for the able administration of his department, and for the great trouble he has taken to visit our Nor'-West country, which will play a most important part in building up the State. I am in a sanguine mood, as I nearly always am, and am now looking to our making great advances in different directions. The Black Range development mentioned by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) shows how wonderfully progressive that country is about to become, and proves to me that we are again on the very edge, as it were, of the up grade. There is a buoyancy in this State; I see it whilst travelling amongst the business men and the farmers. Several bankers have told me of it; and one banker in particular whose opinion I value tells me he has been for four months travelling in various parts of the country, and has returned delighted with the buoyancy shown by the farming community at large. The season has proved prospectively good, and the large area sown shows that we are on the up grade again. I do not say we should live in a fool's paradise. It is absolutely necessary to economise in every direction, but I think we shall in a short time see an end of the existing depression. The end may not come immediately, but it will come. As to public works, I congratulate the Minister (Hon. J. Price) on his able exposition last night. I think he did well. We may disagree with him in some details,

no doubt many members do; but I think he has a thorough grip of his work, and his speech shows that he takes an absorbing interest in carrying out his duties. I was pleased with the account he gave of the building of the new railways, and I speak with a knowledge of those lines which have been so adversely commented on here. I am satisfied that when members have had an opportunity of travelling on those railways they will see that benefit has resulted from them, and that the lines are much better constructed than some people will admit. The lines are standing well, and they are opening up the country as required. Of course their farther extension is necessary. I am glad that the Minister is bringing up the question of roads boards and when it comes before the House I hope to have an opportunity of speaking. As to the revenue, I should like to say that although there has been a deficit, yet it is not a deficit that would frighten any man who has the courage of his opinions and the desire to do good to the country by helping it along and studying that economy which I have indicated as necessary. There are avenues for economy, and they are very wide. Of course we have heard it long talked of, but it takes time to bring about economies; and the present Government, who have not so far been long in office, have made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the country's resources; and in this I commend them, for I believe that the manager of an estate such as this, likening it as I do to a great commercial concern, should himself at various periods make visits through the centres he controls, and become acquainted with them. Therefore I feel the Government have done well in that matter. I am sure the Treasurer (Hon. Frank Wilson) fully recognises the responsibility cast upon him; and though remarks have been made here of a certain visit which he made, a visit which I consider necessary, especially in view of the hard work he did in this House, yet I am sure there is bound to be a good result from the opportunity he has had of seeing the markets of the Far East. We need not fear so long

as we keep this country for workers of our own race. To Asiatics I do not particularly object, except that I do not say one should despise them. At the same time this is a country for the white man. And it seems to me that it is not after all a question of introducing black labour, but of our supplying Asiatic countries with our products. We are the nearest to their ports, the nearest to the other ports of the world; and Western Australia will yet benefit by that proximity. I reserve my remarks on the Civil Service Commissioner question and on other questions until these come before us. But before sitting down there are two matters on which I will touch. One is the change in the railway commissionership. I am sorry that the late Commissioner was a man who in the opinion of many was impossible. Yet after all, he went into his work with a zest and a determination to do his utmost. Unfortunately perhaps for him, in the eyes of many that best was not satisfactory to the people. But I do say that for zealous work, for honesty of purpose, for determination to do what he thought was right, hardly any man could excel him. At the same time, speaking of the railways generally, I am delighted to think that the Government have made up their minds, pending their inviting applications from abroad for the Commissionership, to give the present officials an opportunity of showing what they can do. With the opportunities which those officers have, and with the knowledge they possess, they should be able to give a good account of themselves; and I think that in a very few months, although we cannot expect too much at once, yet, given a fair time, they should do well in the interests of the country.

Mr. Johnson : Will the hon. member support the appointment of a single Commissioner?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : Yes; I have stated so before. I will revert to my old days and say, I should prefer the railways to be under Ministerial control rather than under a single Commissioner or under three Commissioners. And now I will not take up the time farther than

to say that on the Land Tax question I have not altered my opinion. I still disagree with the Government. I consider the Land Tax Bill was a most inopportune measure to bring in, and I am of opinion if it had been deferred until the present time the Government would have seen the wisdom of not introducing the measure. I know how strongly the Premier and his colleagues and many members on the Government side of the House feel in regard to this matter, yet I do not in one iota alter my previously expressed opinion because I think the action in bringing forward this Bill was injudicious.

Mr. Johnson: Did you oppose it?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: Yes, I did.

Mr. Johnson: Half-heartedly.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: I was treating the present Government with a little leniency because they had only just come in; but I am stronger in my opinion now, and I wish that to be understood at once. I do not think this measure will do any good in what is termed the bursting up of large estates, because people who hold large estates can afford to hold them and make money out of those people who are developing. I do not keep an acre of land myself unless I improve it, and I have great objection to the holder of land who does not improve. This may be a step in the right direction, and if the Bill becomes law we shall see the result; and I hope it will meet the anticipation of those who introduce it, but I am doubtful. When we consider the fact as announced by the Minister for Works when speaking yesterday, that £38,000 was collected by the roads boards, and when we know that the municipalities to-day are contributing largely for their own upkeep, to place this extra burden on the people will be more than injudicious at the present time. It will interfere with prospective settlement and will do injury to us. I would like to see the country free from a land tax. I thank members for giving me an opportunity of making these few remarks. Though I have not touched on some very important subjects I hope my remarks on the matters I have referred have given members my feelings in regard to them. I congratulate the Government on the programme which they have placed before us in His

Excellency's Speech, and I disagree with those who find fault with the Premier in going to the Eastern States in connection with the conference, because if nothing be done, Western Australia as an important part of the Federal Commonwealth should be represented. We may give the Premier and his colleagues as much criticism as may be expected both from opponents and from our own side, but fair play should be given so that the Government will have an opportunity of doing the best they can in the interests of the country, and in a great measure I feel we shall not be disappointed.

Mr. H. BOLTON (North Fremantle): Opportunity is usually given to members when offering remarks on the Address-in-Reply, to travel to all points of the compass. Sometimes this is not availed of but members prefer to concentrate their remarks on a few items in which they are deeply interested. Believing that any remarks offered on the Address-in-Reply are not wasted I prefer to occupy a brief space of time in a few general words. Perhaps as an instance of the action when members concentrate their remarks on one or two items in which they are interested I may say we have had the "Maid of the mill or the rascally miller." I am inclined to think that such remarks falling from the member for Kataanning are instructive and educating and of great use to the Chamber. I am sorry I cannot compliment my foreign friend the member for North Perth in the same way. He concentrated his remarks on the dock. With all due respect to that hon. member it was said, I heard it from members on this side, that they could not understand him. Perhaps that is unfortunate, but at least I feel bound to say he did not understand what he was talking about. I remember last session the member strongly opposed the idea of the dock, and I was by no means surprised when he rose in his place and said he had a few remarks to make on two subjects. With the remarks on one of those subjects I agree, but on the other of course I disagree. The member's remarks were practically a rehash of his speech of last session, in which he brought up Mr. Keele's report. The member referred to this matter last session in

which he mentioned No. 1 as the principal site, and he said that Mr. Keele was the cleverest engineer who had ever reported on the scheme. I differ very much in that opinion. I think the gentleman who served this country, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, was as clever if not more clever than the gentleman whose report has been referred to. I would place that gentleman's report against Mr. Keele's. The hon. member said the reason of the sites below the bridges having to be abandoned was because there was no room to swing a vessel and it was dangerous in a narrow passage-way for vessels leaving the dock. Perhaps the hon. member has not inquired into the matter lately or he would have discovered that it was suggested that the dock should be a double-ended one, thus doing away with a great deal of room. The Government propose to construct the dock at Rouse Head and it is to be a double-ended dock. In the site suggested a few months ago, officially or unofficially, it would not be possible to put a double-ended dock, or I believe the dock would have been constructed at Arthur's Head rather than as is now suggested. Throughout the remarks of the member for North Perth, the same as during last session, the great question of opening up the river comes in. That would be all very well at another time, but it is somewhat ridiculous for the member to bring before the House now the suggestion that the Government should open up the Swan River.

Mr. Johnson: It will have to be done some day.

Mr. BOLTON: Yes, it will have to be done some day, but the hon. member will not be in the House neither shall I be.

Mr. Johnson: The hon. member should speak for himself.

Mr. BOLTON: I am speaking of old age overtaking one. The estimate for opening up the Swan River is £2,000,000. If the work was justified it would be good to take it in hand, and as the present Government have been termed a Ministry of concentration they would gladly adopt it. The member for North Perth suggested that the dock be placed below the bridges to prevent the opening up of the river; but this is not a fair statement. Moreover, he made the statement that each Government who have

come in alter the policy of the past Government. That is a very good idea. It is not good for an incoming Government to follow an outgoing Government in all their actions. I would point out where the member has made another mistake. The Daglish Government proposed a dock below the railway bridges, so that this is not the first Government who suggested the construction of the dock below the bridges. I am perfectly satisfied that the best site below the bridges has been selected. I had very high hopes that the dock would eventually be built at Rocky Bay, but it is not only the question of the dock the Government have to consider but the removal of the bridges and the expense of allowing railway communication with the town of Fremantle as well as with the dock. That is the reason I take it that the construction of the dock below the bridges is to be taken in hand. I am asked whether the Government have decided to construct the dock at all. That only leads me to say that there is considerable doubt in Fremantle and the surrounding districts as to whether the Government do intend to construct it. I am one of those who has had that doubt. But I will frankly confess that a good deal of that doubt has been removed. I want to see the dock constructed and whilst I do not admit that my parliamentary life depends on it, as probably does the parliamentary life of the Minister for Works, I am still as anxious to see the dock constructed as that member. I will now answer the interjector by saying that I do believe the Government intend to construct the dock, and if the Government are sincere in this they have five or six months in which to show their sincerity. Any adverse remarks I have to offer about the graving dock I will reserve until the end of the session. Then will be time enough to see whether the Government are sincere.

The Premier: You have made them already.

Mr. BOLTON: Made what?

The Premier: Adverse remarks.

Mr. BOLTON: I often make them. I said I was in doubt, but I said that that doubt had largely been removed since last night. We shall be able to see what the Government intend to do

within the next five or six months. There was another scheme the member for North Perth outlined, and it is known to many members present as the viaduct from West Perth to East Perth. A splendid scheme if it could be carried out. But that again requires an enormous amount of funds, and I am beginning to think that the hon. member is becoming too big for his boots. The two schemes he suggested are too big for this Government to have anything to do with. I desire to refer to one or two matters of which I took a note during the speeches of members preceding me. During over three years in Parliament (not a very long time) I have never heard a severer indictment brought against a Government than was brought by the member for Murchison in regard to immigration matters. I have advocated a certain amount of immigration of the right class. From this out I think I am justified in saying that I shall oppose every penny the Government propose to spend on immigration, after what I have heard pointed out by the hon. member, after hearing of the class of immigrants and of the subterfuges worked to gain farm labourers, as they are called, or saw-millers for this State. I think the only means to get increased population is to make the country attractive, so that people will come here of their free will, seeking to better themselves, and to take equal chances with the people already in the country. If they do so there will be little to complain of; but when people are brought here by nothing but a subterfuge, to walk in to the bureau by one door and out at another, and to get their names down in preference to those already here who have been waiting for weeks, it is a thing that should be altered in the future. What has been mentioned by the member for Murchison is a clear case of flouting the Commonwealth Government. There is no doubt about it. It is difficult perhaps to prove that these men came here under contract, but I think anyone listening to the remarks of the hon. member and to the letters read, sent by the gentleman who engaged these men, would be sufficiently convinced. I think it would convince a Federal officer. It seems to me that the Combine have rather too much hold on the management of this State. I can-

not understand why no action is taken when a breach of the law is known. How is it that when there was a doubt existing in the previous Government as to whether the Combine were carrying out the labour conditions in merely erecting a mill without working it, the present Government have not allowed a test case to be heard, or even taken action against the Combine? If the Government think there is any doubt—there was a doubt existing in a previous Administration—they should allow a case to be tested. A case was to have been tested at the Supreme Court by the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Bath, but at the change of administration rents were accepted from the Combine which knocked out the case that had already been referred to the Supreme Court, and there was no means of testing the matter. I believe the Government would be justified in bringing down an amending Bill to enforce the labour conditions on these leases. Members have referred to several police magistrates. I do not wish to be particularly personal on the matter, and I do not desire to mention the names of any magistrates, but I wish to take the Government to task. Some few months ago a certain resident magistrate was supposed to have been retired. He is not yet retired, but it is his wish that he should be retired. Peculiarly enough he desires to be relieved of the position, but his pension is of such dimension that the Government think they are saving money by keeping him in the position doing work. They have had several instances of his incapacity. He may have been a good officer at one time, but now I can hardly find terms mild enough, without hurting his feelings, to express myself. All I can say is that it is quite time he is retired; and as he wishes to be retired why do not the Government shift him from the bench? He is not the only one that needs shifting, but while others perhaps wish to retain their positions, this gentleman does not wish to retain his. He recognises his unsuitability for the job, and I think the Government should take the matter up and appoint a successor as early as possible. The member for North Perth referred to the freezing works at Wyndham. I am entirely opposed to them. There is not

only a danger of creating a monopoly on top of a monopoly, because undoubtedly the meat ring which now exists must be strengthened by the erection of freezing works at Wyndham, but it appears to me they will have the right to name their own prices. The consumer can choose whether he will have the live beast or the carcase, but if he will not pay a proper price he will get neither, because it only remains for the stock people at Wyndham to say "We will not supply the South with stock at all unless we get our prices, because we have the works here and can kill our beasts and send them to Japan, since the Treasurer has been good enough to open up a trade for us with Japan." The small man, of whom so much has been said by the Premier, has to pay an enormous rate to get his live beasts to Fremantle, because the ships are owned by the large stock-owners, and the freights are put up on the small man to prevent him sending his live beast South. It does not pay a small man to charter a ship, so that he must send his cattle by the vessels owned by the stock-owners.

The Premier: Will not the opening up of the stock route give him an alternative?

Mr. BOLTON: I understand that it is for the Eastern Goldfields, and it may be good for the Eastern Goldfields provided we do not allow tick cattle to come over the stock route. I think it was said by the Minister for Works that by the time the freezing works were established the stock necessary for the metropolitan consumer would be taken from the South. I disagree with that entirely because the same old meat ring will govern the supply as they are doing to-day, and they will have the right to put up their prices, though the consumer can take his choice whether he will have the live beast or the carcase. Moreover as there is a fifth quarter to every beast it will pay them better to slaughter and send to cooling chambers at Fremantle, and we will have to live on frozen meat.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: Have you looked at the prices marked up in the shops this week?

Mr. BOLTON: Yes; the reason is that there are one or two enterprising gentlemen entering into competition with

the meat ring; but will they last? We have had them here before, and they have been crushed times out of number by the same ring. Now the Government propose to practically give £35,000 to those moneyed men, to whom £35,000 is a mere drop in the ocean. It is to assist them to get a farther hold on the consumer. I think it is an absurd proposition and I hope the Government will not press the thing. If there is money in the concern, believe me this meat ring would put their own money into it; and if the Government by putting in half the sum simply lend it to them at a low rate or at a fair rate of interest, and have no control over it, they are doing a wrong action. The meat ring will do this when the find they are shaken in the South for their trade. They will see that there is an outlet for their herds without the assistance of the Government. If the Government stay quiet they will see that the meat ring will soon find an outlet for their herds.

The Premier: They are sending cattle to Queensland.

Mr. BOLTON: Better to do that than to be under the control of the meat ring. It is because the small man is not getting fair treatment from the big men.

The Premier: Who is sending 17,000 cattle? Not a small man.

Mr. BOLTON: There is perhaps one herd of 10,000, but the balance is made up from small men. A remark was let fall by the Premier when dealing with the finances, that the net indebtedness per head of the population was decreasing. It sounds all right giving just the bare facts, but what helps to increase the net indebtedness? Population. If this State continues to lose its population as it has during the last four or five months, the Premier will not be able to come to this Chamber with the same cry. The more the population increases, naturally the net indebtedness will be lessened; and because we are losing population the figures just suit to a certain point; but unless we stop the population leaving the country the net indebtedness will soon increase at an alarming rate. Paragraph 1 of the Governor's Speech contains an apology. It is not often that the Speech starts with an apology. His Excellency apologises for not having called Parliament together in February.

The only explanation we have had has been from the Premier, and what has been explained in paragraph 1—"owing to the absence of many members of Parliament from the State." I do not think that argument should have been put in the Speech. Surely it was forgotten that this country was paying these members to be present. Surely it was forgotten that payment of members, though certainly on a small scale, had been introduced, and that it was the duty of those members to be here if wanted. And when the intention of the Government to hold a special session in February was declared, those members knew they were wanted; and when they were paid for their services they should have been here. Reference has been made to the Ministerial caucus meeting deciding that this session should not be held and that this State should be represented in Queensland. One member has said that he personally wanted the session, but it is strange that the papers reported that the decision was unanimously arrived at, which I do not think is correct. It is also reported that at the meeting there were five Ministers and two whips. One would have thought that with five Ministers and two whips the meeting could have been induced to do as the Government desired. Undoubtedly the Ministry decided—and asked their followers to go with them—that no session should be held. My opinion is that the Government never intended to hold the session. I think it is quite patent without going any farther into it, but the Government might as well have been straightforward and said, "We have been beaten this time over our taxation proposals and we will let it go to next year;" but instead of that they said, "We will give the people something to talk about and have a special session." They never meant a word of it. The next matter of importance is that of the railway control. I agree that the Government have taken the right stand in not reappointing Mr. George, for no matter whether he has been a good, bad or indifferent officer, he has been an impossible man for the producer. I disagree with the Government in their desire to perpetuate the system of railway control now in force, and believe they would do very much better to hand over the rail-

ways to Ministerial control. It has been suggested that there should be three Commissioners; I certainly prefer one to three, but would rather have neither. The Premier has said that applications will be called for on January 1, but I hope that one or two matters will be taken in hand before the new appointment is made. For instance, it is very necessary that a new coaching stock rate-book should be issued, as in the present one some of the greatest anomalies in passenger fares exist that could be found in any such rate-book in the world. I will give you one instance of this. The railway fare from North Fremantle to Bayswater, second-class return, is 1s. 5d.; but a man can take a second-class return ticket from North Fremantle to Perth for 1s., and a second-class return from Perth to Bayswater for 3d. Therefore by taking two tickets instead of one and, notwithstanding the extra cost of printing the tickets and the labour of serving them out, a passenger can save 2d. on the trip if he buys two tickets instead of one. Has anyone ever heard anything worse than that? Surely that is quite sufficient to show how necessary it is that a new book should be compiled. The Minister for Works, in referring to the railway policy said he thought that the producer should get any profit that is obtained after the interest and sinking fund have been paid. He forgot to mention that the railways have never paid interest and sinking fund, that they were £79,000 short of the amount last year, and perhaps will be a good deal more than this sum short this year. It is all very well to bring forward a surplus when interest and sinking fund are not paid, but before any reduction takes place in the freight the genuine charges must be met in a similar manner to the way they are arranged for now by the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I do not think it necessary that a profit should result from the working of the railways, but interest and sinking fund should be met. The Government claim to have done a vast amount of work. I would like to go to the people of this State and ask them what they have to say with regard to this so-called large amount of work, for I am satisfied they would disagree with the Ministry on the point, and especially with the Minister for

Works. A large amount of work has not been done, and the past six months has been the most stagnant recess we have had for many years. During that period no works of magnitude were started, and the old excuse was forthcoming that it takes a certain amount of time to prepare plans. It also takes a certain amount of time to prepare measures for Parliament during recess. It is significant that just before the meeting of Parliament it is announced that plans have been prepared and that works are being started, and it is evident that this is done merely to disarm criticism.

The Premier: Over £600,000 of work is in course of construction.

Mr. BOLTON: It is a very easy matter to accept contracts for £250,000 worth of work straight away. When work is hardly begun, or perhaps has not been begun at all, you can say it is in course of construction.

The Premier: There is one railway line that we only got authorisation for in December last, and it will be completed next month. That is the line between Armadale and Jandakot.

Mr. BOLTON: How much of the £600,000 will that account for?

The Premier: About £30,000.

Mr. BOLTON: That is a very small amount out of so large a total. However, I would compliment the Ministry on the way that they have pushed that work through. When the Loan Estimates were being considered I said that the amount then set down for that work was not sufficient, and I am glad to see that the Government have spent more than they then said they would do. It is a good work, but after all is only a small item considering the vastness of the amount of work which the Premier says is in course of construction. As to the land tax. I do not know what is to happen or whether we shall have the same old arguments which were brought up for and against the tax last session. I, as an individual, will do my best to get a tax without exemption. If the Government introduces the Bill again for revenue purposes they will have a splendid opportunity, by removing the exemptions, to make a little more than they anticipated. The Legislative Council did not defeat the Government's

proposals last year at all, the Government were to blame themselves because that measure would have become law had they accepted it without exemptions. The choice was given to the Government as to whether they would have the Bill without exemptions or have no Bill at all, and they decided that they would have no Bill. There will be very little discussion, and no trouble at all in bringing that Bill into law, if the exemptions are knocked out; otherwise, however, there will be a great deal of discussion, and in such circumstances the measure will be defeated in another place. I made similar remarks to these last year and pointed out that if the Bill was defeated in another place the Government would be able to depend upon this side of the House to fight the battle against that Chamber. It was, however, a sham fight with blank cartridges. In all probability there will be a fight this year, and the Government must choose to have the Bill either without exemption, or to fight another Chamber. If they are sincere the Bill will become law, but if they are not sincere it will be a very easy matter for them to get it thrown out elsewhere. The Government pointed out in the Governor's Speech that they believe that success will result if they persevere in the paths of administrative economy. I think that it would have been more accurate had the words been that the Government intended to initiate a policy of economical administration. I compliment the Government on their North-West policy. I had the honour of forming one of the Parliamentary party that went over the route lately travelled by the Minister for Mines, and I feel I am not going too far when I say that it is a source of pleasure to the members of that party to know that their report and the remarks they made upon that trip when they returned are endorsed by the Minister for Mines. It is a pleasure to me to know that the news we brought from that part of the State, which is unknown to so many members of this Chamber, has been so thoroughly endorsed, and I am delighted that at last the North-West will get its share of attention from the Government. The railway proposed from Port Hedland to Marble Bar is one that the Parliamentary party practically reported upon as being

advisable. This party did not make a definite proposal in that direction, for the report was simply an advisory one, and I am glad to see that there has been no question as to the route. I am also glad that the Minister has endorsed the remarks made by members of that party to the effect that there are several promising places and fields in that district which only need development, and that it would be quite impossible to develop them without a railway. At the time that we were there some centres were practically abandoned owing to the want of that development, but I believe that they will progress rapidly now. I am also glad to see that the Government are going in for the erection of lighthouses. All the money spent in the North-West will be repaid and, if the country is to be pulled out of the slough of despond which it is in now, it will be by means of the North-West rather than through the medium of the agricultural districts. Paragraph 18 of the Speech states that many important measures will be brought forward, among them being the amending of the Constitution to provide for a reduction in the franchise of the Legislative Council. Are the Government sincere in this matter? Although we do not know what the reduction in the franchise is to be, I hope it will be substantial, and that the measure will not be held in abeyance so that the Government might see how another place deals with the land tax proposals. There is a danger that such a thing might be done with the underlying intention that if another place chooses to pass a certain measure, such as the land tax, steps will not be taken to push on with the reduction in the Legislative Council franchise. I trust that in the measure provision will be made for household suffrage for the Upper House; I do not mean adult suffrage but merely household suffrage, as I think that if the heads of families are given votes, the present position will be greatly improved upon, and much greater satisfaction will be caused than by the suggestion made in the Bill brought up last session. Then it is proposed to amend the electoral laws; but I view this with a considerable amount of suspicion. I do not want to be unfair in my criticism

so I will reserve my remarks until we have copies of the Bill before us. Judging, however, from the remarks of the Minister for Works it seems to me that there is a certain amount of suspicion about the measure. With regard to the question of granting security of mining tenure, I do not profess to know anything about mining, but I would sooner follow the practical men on this side of the House, of whom there are eight or ten, than those who are unacquainted altogether with mining. I give the Minister for Mines credit for a knowledge of mining, and I know that he gives members on this side a like credit for their knowledge, but it is different from the Ministerial supporters, who give members on this side no credit whatever for their knowledge on the question. The amendment proposed to the Bill has been referred to in some instances as being just the same as granting the fee simple of the leases to the owners; this is denied by the Minister for Mines. My mind is open on the question of this Bill, but I would point out to the Minister for Mines the case of the Whim Creek copper mine. When we visited that spot some time ago we found that it was wonderfully rich, and yet abandoned, having been idle for years. It is a freehold property and labour conditions cannot therefore be maintained, and the result was that this valuable property was not worked. I referred to this very property when giving the House an account of our trip to the North-West; and I should much regret to see the same conditions, or anything approaching them, apply on any of our mining fields.

The Minister for Mines: We have power under the Mining Act to throw open these lands.

Mr. Gordon: That mine is working now.

Mr. BOLTON: I know it is working now. I do not know whether that was brought about by the remarks of the parliamentary party who visited the district. That the mine is working now must be a source of delight to those members, in view of its richness. Amendments have been suggested to the Arbitration Act, and last night and to-night a good many speakers dealt with the subject. I believe there is a

necessity for amending that Act. I do not admit that it is an absolute failure; I believe that since its inauguration it has done good work; but it has not had sympathetic administration, and I blame the registrar himself for most of the trouble. The other proposals of the Government are a little vague—local option, public service, health, and roads boards. We have no particulars; and therefore one is justified in reserving one's comment until the Bills are brought in. I am glad to see the promised amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. That amendment is badly needed. I represent part of a district which suffers very acutely under the existing Act. There is a union to which this statement applies more closely than to any other union. I refer to the union of lumpers. They are now in the unfortunate position that they work for many different employers during the year, hence it is not possible to arrive at a fair compensation which injured members should receive. The lumpers are engaged by a certain steamship company, or by a stevedore, to unload certain vessels; the men have worked for three or four employers during one week, and when a man is injured the allowance made to him is only one half the wages he has received during the preceding twelve months from the employer for whom he was working when injured. Consequently that is not fair to the man, and the unfairness is admitted. The matter has been represented to some members of the Government, and they have promised to introduce an amending Bill. For this I give them credit, as I give them credit when I can. I trust they will introduce it early, and that it will be satisfactory to all parties. It is hard, indeed, to satisfy everybody, but it is well to give credit where credit is due, and I am glad to see the amendment suggested. I was about to offer some remarks as to the Premier's suggested reduction of the sinking fund, but since his explanation that his statement was simply a suggestion, and as it is not proposed, I take it, to go much farther with the matter, I need not say more on that subject. On the public platform suggestions have been made by one member of the House (Mr. Daglish), and have been recently taken up by the Press, that for

the sake of the country and its financial position or want of position, there should be a sort of fusion of parties; that there should be no party politics; that both sides of the House should combine to lift the State out of the slough of despond; that there is no difference, or very little difference, between the two parties; that it would take little to bring them together; in fact, that there is no Opposition; that we are all Ministerialists or all Opposition. With that view I cannot agree. There is considerable difference between members on this and members on the other side. [Mr. Heilmann: Ministers' salaries, for instance.] Yes; but I was not referring to the salaries. We are bound to take exception to some actions of the Ministry, as they would take exception to our actions if we were in power and they in Opposition. How can it be possible to sink all party feeling and work in harmony, when little points are always attempted to be made against us, especially during recess, in respect of matters that are decidedly of a party nature? How could it be possible for this Opposition to work hand-in-glove with the Ministerialists, when we remember what happened to the Factories Act during the last recess? The Factories Act is now dead, and if Parliament were not obliged to meet once a year, the factory inspectors, the chief inspector's office, and everything else in that connection would be abolished. And if we look back on what has happened during the past six months and find the Factories Act a dead letter, and the chief inspector writing notes which a junior at £40 a year would write in other offices, just because the Government do not wish the chief inspector to administer the Act, we are bound to take exception to such a state of affairs. Again, does the gentleman who suggests the fusion of parties think that we have no objection to the action taken by the Government, and especially by the Attorney General, the action he has taken ever since he assumed office, to prevent trades unions from using their funds for any purpose they may desire? Does he expect members on this side to agree with the Attorney General, and to admit he has acted rightly? No. We will fight him and his Government on this question so long as they are the Government and we are

the Opposition; and if we were not in Opposition and they were, we should perhaps put the matter to rights. Then again, it is felt pretty strongly on this side of the House that the prosecutions during the timber trouble were largely influenced by the Government. And when that is rightly or wrongly our belief, how is it possible for us to work hand-in-hand with Ministers? So many little things of this sort crop up during recess, that it is not easy for us to amalgamate. It is very easy for some public men to advocate that course, very easy for some organisations, because, fortunately or unfortunately, they are of very small dimensions, like the organisation of the gentleman I have mentioned, who combines the functions of leader, whip, premier and secretary. His is not now an important party, or one that is felt in Australia. It would not do for the Opposition to agree altogether with the Government; because the Opposition have for several months been trying to get Parliament to meet to do some business, and at the same time the business of the Ministerialists has been to dodge Parliament. I wonder whether it would be possible to keep Parliament from meeting until the end of the year, or a few days earlier. Was the idea to shorten the session, thinking it would extend till the end of December no matter when we met? The Whip (Mr. Gordon) says "my word?" and I expect he knows. He is in the confidence of the Government, and ought to know. We believe there should possibly be a longer session, not longer sittings but a longer session; and we believe that if Parliament could have met earlier, some proposed works could have been sooner put in hand. Therefore we do not wish to see time wasted after Parliament opens. And while we admit that any remarks on the Address-in-Reply are not a waste of time, we believe that if Parliament had met earlier the time given to the Address-in-Reply would now have elapsed, and more good would have resulted from that than from the visit of our representatives to Queensland. I have occupied more time than I originally intended; and if there are items to which I have not referred, I shall have ample opportunity to do so in future, so I will

reserve my remarks, with the promise that I have made to refer to the dock.

On motion by Mr. Gordon, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 16th July, 1907.

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

Prayers.

SUPPLY—MESSAGE.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation out of Consolidated Revenue and Loan Funds of the sum of £639,303 for the services of the year ending June 30, 1908.