

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 30th July, 1913.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Public Works Department—Municipal Corporations Act, 1906—By-law of the Municipality of North Perth *re* Special Roll for Loan Poll. 2, Fremantle Harbour Trust—Annual Report to 30th June, 1912. 3, Bunbury Harbour Board—Annual Report to 30th June, 1912.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): I am not in a position to answer questions Nos. 1 and 2 on the Notice Paper and must ask the hon. member, Mr. Moss, for a postponement of them until the next sitting of the House. At the same time I would be very grateful indeed if hon. members would give reasonable notice. It entails a lot of worry and anxiety on my part if I have to furnish replies on the day following the asking of a large number of questions. I must also ask that the question standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Colebatch, be postponed until the next sitting of the House.

QUESTION—STATE STEAMSHIP SERVICE ACCOUNTS.

Hon. M. L. MOSS asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, In connection with the State Steamship Service have trip accounts been furnished by the manager of the Department to the Government? 2, Has a profit and loss account been furnished by such manager for each trip of

each steamer? If so, will the Government lay such trip and profit and loss accounts on the table of the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Trip accounts are kept, and the operations of the State steamships are brought under the provision of the Trading Accounts in accordance with which a Profit and Loss Account will be duly submitted to Parliament. Such accounts, however, are not worked out in connection with each trip.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew) sessional committees were appointed as follow:—

Standing Orders Committee—The Hon. the President, the Chairman of Committees, Hon. M. L. Moss, Hon. D. G. Gawler, and the mover.

Printing Committee—The Hon. the President, Hon. F. Davis, and the mover.

Library Committee—The Hon. the President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, Hon. J. F. Cullen.

House Committee—The Hon. the President, Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, Hon. J. E. Dodd, Hon. A. G. Jenkins, and Hon. B. C. O'Brien.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South): In discussing the Speech of the Governor it seems to me there is not a very great deal that hon. members can devote very much attention to. The proposals in the Governor's Speech are twofold, so far as forms are concerned. There are the proposals that have already been before this Chamber and which have been rejected and one does not feel disposed to talk much regarding those matters, inasmuch as they have been pretty fully discussed at previous meetings of this House. Then the second set of proposals before this House are those regarding new matters, and the proposals are merely indicated without any details being given as to what

exactly is the character of these proposals. For instance, we have Constitutional and Electoral Reform, the Initiative and Referendum, Local Government, and Regulation of Traffic, and until we know exactly what the Government intend to do regarding these matters it will be premature to discuss them at any very great length or to express any very great approval or disapproval of them. I personally rather regret that we did not have a pre-sessional speech. A pre-sessional speech is very useful to members of both Houses and also to the general public. When the Premier addresses a public meeting he seems to get into closer touch with the people. The newspapers have an opportunity of discussing the Government proposals and the public also, and then when the House does meet, members are in a better position in that they know something more about the details of the Bills that are to be brought forward. I, however, perhaps, might almost from personal reasons regret that there was no pre-sessional speech. It is a good old-fashioned custom that the Premier should go to his own constituents and address them on the questions of the day or the proposals of his Government prior to the meeting of Parliament. Mr. Scaddan, the Premier, is a goldfields man. We have known him for a long time now. We on the fields have known him well ever since he was returned to Parliament. He was then a man who came fresh from his work in the mine, a man who did not know anything whatsoever regarding Parliamentary work, but during the years he has been in Parliament the Parliament has been to him in the nature of a university. He has learnt a great deal about politics, about government and about Parliamentary procedure, and those on the fields who take pride in the success of fellow-citizens naturally have admiration for the career of the man who is now occupant of the chief Parliamentary office in the State. We therefore would have liked to have seen him on the fields and would have liked to have heard a pre-sessional address, as Mr. Scaddan is always well received in what might be regarded as the stronghold of his party. I have no doubt whatever that he had good reasons for not

going. The moderation with which I approach the discussion of the proposals of the Government because of the absence of details does not seem to have been altogether shared by the non-party members of this House.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Is the hon. member a party member?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am asked if I am a party member. I was returned to this House—

Hon. J. Cornell: By the Liberals.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: To support measures, not parties. I stood for the South Province, and from every platform from which I delivered addresses during my political campaign I said I was an Independent. I was accused, Sir, and I think the Hon. Mr. Dodd, who was my opponent on that occasion, will bear me out that the severest charge that was brought against me, and the charge that I had to answer upon every platform on which I stood, was that I was a nominee of the Moore Government. The Hon. Mr. Dodd will remember how strenuously I denied that I was a nominee of the Moore Government or that I was a supporter of the Moore Government, and I certainly was not. I believe that I received the votes of many of those who were supporting the Moore Government because they possibly preferred one who was an Independent rather than a pledged supporter of the Labour party, such as Mr. Dodd. However, I think my career in Parliament has fully justified the statements I made on the platform that I was not a nominee of the Moore Government. I was not returned to support the Liberal Government any more than I was returned to support the Labour party, and my speeches as a candidate for Parliament which I have carefully preserved, each and every one of them will show that they are quite consistent with the career I have followed. That is the answer to my friend's interjection. Now, Sir, regarding the non-party or the professed non-party majority in this House, I would like to say a few words. The majority of the members of this House who pose as non-party men endeavour to occupy a

very high plane indeed. You, Sir, are no doubt acquainted with Parliamentary institutions all over the world. You are acquainted with that greatest of all Parliamentary institutions, the mother of Parliaments. There the Upper House is the House of Lords, which is usually regarded as the Upper House, that is the superior Upper House of all the Upper Houses in the British Empire. In the House of Lords there is no assumption of non-party views. There is the recognised leader of the Opposition—the Marquis of Lansdowne is at present, I think, the leader of the Opposition there; they have their Government representatives, they have their Opposition Whips, their Government Whips, and their party rooms, and they have no semblance of and no pretensions to being in any way a non-party Chamber. This House, however, assumes to occupy a far more exalted place than that filled by the House of Lords itself. We in this Chamber are expected to believe that we have a number of beings here who have reached that state of political perfection that they have no party feeling whatever. I dare say sometime in your life, Mr. President, you have studied theosophy, which is more of a philosophy than a religion. In theosophy there is a belief that individuals of this world develop their spiritual characteristics and get rid of all that is gross in human nature, until they reach perfection. Then they become mahatmas, who are to be engaged in the exciting occupation of sitting all day in sublime condemnation of their own divine origin——

Hon. J. F. Cullen : As independents.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN : As supposed non-party men.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : As independents, like the hon. member.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN : Perhaps the hon. member will define the distinction between independents and non-party men. I confess that I find it very difficult to see a difference between independents and non-party men.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : The hon. member claims that.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN : However, I want to explain the position that the majority of hon. members allege they occupy in this House, those hon. members who pose as non-party men. Most of them have been old political war horses; several of them have been members of Ministries, and when they stand as candidates for this House they receive the support of a very powerful organisation, the Liberal League. I am not referring to the half dozen or so members who are avowedly party men, and are selected by their party, and who are not denied by their party, and who come here as party men, but I am referring to those men who profess to be non-party men. I said they are old political war horses. They fight keenly the battle of politics when on the hustings. Some of the supposed non-party men in this Chamber occupy important positions on the Liberal political organisation, but they seem to think that we ought to believe that as soon as they come into this Chamber they are a sort of political mahatma. They sit here in divine contemplation of themselves, in supreme satisfaction, with a perfect consciousness that they have shed all the wickedness of party politics.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : Does not that apply to the hon. member himself ?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN : I have not set myself up as a non-party man in the sense in which my friends opposite have declared themselves. In almost every speech, every announcement that they make they are non-party men, when they must know they are not. I was returned as an Independent.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : That is the same thing.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN : There is one thing which is totally different. I am not the representative of a political organisation disguised as a non-party man. I have not come here as the nominee of any political organisation. I do not hold any position such as vice-president of a political organisation. I am absolutely free and independent of any political organisation, but these constant statements of non-party views coming from men who have all their lives, and are still closely

associated with leading political organisations, are to me rather amusing, and they must be amusing to the public as well. Now I want to point out how this assumption of non-party view works out in practice. We heard four speeches from members last night; two, if not three, of these gentlemen prefaced their remarks by saying that they were non-party men. Those speeches were very interesting, but anyone would be led to suppose from them that the Government had no good points whatever; that it was quite incapable of doing anything that was good, and that it was capable of all the wickedness that Governments sometimes perpetrate; that it had committed various crimes. In those four speeches from supposed non-party men I have failed to find one single reference implying that the Government have done anything that is good. The *West Australian* this morning prefaced its leading article—I do not know whether they are going to commit the *West Australian* for contempt in connection with the matter—but it was an awful crime for that newspaper to refer to the Opposition speakers, as Mr. Mitchell in one place and Mr. Moss in another. Was it not an awful thing to refer to Mr. Moss as an Opposition speaker, a gentleman I took occasion to refer to last session as the non-party leader of the non-party party. His speech yesterday was characteristic of him. I read the speech delivered by an ex-Minister of the Crown in another place, Mr. Mitchell, but that speech was as mild as milk in its criticism of the Government compared to the speeches we heard yesterday. The *West Australian* report of the Legislative Council proceedings was headed "Caustic criticism of the Government." It is singular that such speeches should come from a non-party House.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Very significant.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Criticism, not finding fault; that is what we are here for, to criticise and revise.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Not to give credit to any Labour Government for anything. I am sorry Mr. Moss is

not here. He was very indignant because some men during the Referenda campaign had the audacity to say that this Chamber indulged in obstructive tactics. Some people said that this House was opposed to the will of the people—a monstrous charge according to Mr. Moss. He quoted to us a number of Bills that were passed by this House and wound up by saying that all the statutes in operation in Western Australia had received the support of this House, and yet he declared some people say we are obstructive. He pointed out that we passed adult suffrage, workmen's compensation, employers' liability, arbitration measures, and so on. Is there any special virtue in this House passing Bills that have met with the sanction of the people? Does anyone say for one moment that these measures that Mr. Moss takes such an amount of credit for passing were not in accordance with the wishes of the people? Are the members of this Council the masters of Western Australia? Is that the position they want to assume? Is it that we do not care what the people say or think? Are the people to show their gratitude to this House because we happen to pass certain legislation? Are the people to be most gracious and most thankful because a few measures have been passed and because the Council have allowed them to pass? I would like to remind members of the attitude this Chamber has adopted towards previous Governments and towards this Government. Mr. Moss is constantly saying, and other members also say, that when previous Governments were in power they criticised their measures. I have been in this House when previous Governments were in power, and the criticism that previous Governments were subjected to was very mild indeed. Members were very careful that that criticism should not in any way interfere with the prestige of the Government of the day. I would like to remind the House of its attitude towards that wonderful Heaven-sent Ministry which was not long ago in power. I do not want to say anything about the Wilson Government; they are dead politically; as dead as Julius Cæsar.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: They hit you pretty hard before they died.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Nonsense. But there is this difference between that Ministry and Julius Caesar. For Julius Caesar there may be some hope of resurrection, but for the Wilson Government there is none. That is a good thing for the country. The only one particular Bill that need be mentioned, not for the purpose of raking up the past but for the sake of illustration, is the Redistribution of Seats measure, with the twisting and turning of the Collie electorate boundaries. How was that Bill treated in this non-party Chamber? There were four of us who pleaded with the non-party members to take a non-party view of that measure, but there were only the four of us in this House to oppose it. What was the attitude of this non-party Chamber towards the other Bills that were passed by the Wilson Government? I have here a list of the Bills as they were dealt with during the last session of the late Parliament, portion of the time the Government were led by Mr. Wilson, and portion of the time by Sir Newton Moore. The session began on the 28th July, 1910, and it was a very long session. The Wilson Government came into power on the 16th September and the session closed on the 3rd February. During that session there were no less than 57 Bills introduced, and that I think is a fairly ample list. Of course five of them were Supply Bills, and perhaps they do not count. How many of those 57 Bills were rejected by this non-party House? During that long session not a single one of the Bills introduced by the Government was rejected by this non-party Chamber, although they included such a measure as the Redistribution of Seats Bill. There were two Bills only the progress of which was arrested in this House, and those two Bills were introduced by private members, one of them by the present Attorney General. The two Bills I refer to related to workers' compensation and to tributers. Their progress was arrested in this Chamber, but not one single Bill introduced by the Government was either rejected or had its progress arrested, nor

was there one Bill which this House could in any way be held responsible for its having failed to pass. That was how this House treated the Wilson Government. Let us think now of what was the position of the Wilson Government in the country. After that session the Government went before the electors, and members all know the result. The Wilson Government and their followers were not merely defeated; they were annihilated. Of the five Ministers who went to their constituents, two were defeated and two of them got back merely by the skin of their teeth, and of the whole party there was left a remnant of only 16 members in another place. They were defeated by more than two to one, and yet this Ministry whom the elections showed to be held in such poor esteem in the country were able to get all their Bills through this non-party House without one of them having its passage arrested. Compare the way in which that Ministry was treated in this Chamber—that Ministry which was shown not to have the confidence of the country, and to be out of sympathy with the country—with the treatment of the Ministry who came after them with such an overwhelming majority, a Ministry who came here with a mandate to carry out the will of the people, at which non-party members in this Chamber are so fond of snapping their fingers? I shall just mention a few things that these non-party members have done to the proposals of that Ministry. We all know the criticisms to which the present Government have been subjected here. The speeches in this House have shown a marvellous awakening to activity on the part of members. It is most commendable and we are all pleased to see how members have suddenly commenced to take an interest in every little proposal, and every single clause of every Bill. I repeat we are all glad to see it. Originally this House had the reputation of being a sort of sleepy Chamber where members did not care, and where Bills were passed in a hurry without consideration of any sort. I must confess that since the Scaddan Government came into power the Chamber has

removed any ground for the accusation of sleepiness previously levelled against it. It is simply marvellous the interest that is now shown in every proposal. Only last session the non-party leader of the House moved what was tantamount to a vote of censure, a vote which could be taken really as a censure upon the Governor, and which was, in fact, taken in that way. Yet, the mover would not consent to its withdrawal, so earnest was the zeal of the non-party members to find fault with the Government of the day. When I come into this Chamber and hear what my non-party friends say it has this effect upon me, that I, as an entirely independent member, feel that somebody ought to be here to say something for the Government. I do not care a snap of the fingers for the Labour Government or any other Government, or for the Labour party, and as soon as any party comes along which, to my mind, will do better than the Labour party, no one knows better than the Labour party that I will not be a supporter of theirs for a minute longer. I am not going to support any party that I think is not doing the best for the country. However, I was referring to the vote of censure which was carried by such an overwhelming majority. There was not one of the non-party members ready to vote with the Government on that critical occasion, notwithstanding that the meaning of that vote of censure went very much further than, I believe, the mover intended. The extent to which the resolution went was merely a minor matter compared with the non-party members' desire to express their opposition to the Government. What was their attitude towards the Bills introduced by the present Government. I could read a list of the Bills and their fates. I have here a complete account of what happened to all the Bills, but it would take a great deal of time to go through it, and members can turn up the list for themselves at the beginning of *Hansard*. During the last two sessions I think this House was responsible for something like 14 Bills not being placed on the Statute book, and amongst them were measures that

the majority of the people of Western Australia—so far as can be judged from the voting for the Legislative Assembly, and so far as public opinion outside can be gauged—wanted to have passed. This non-party House twice rejected the Esperance Railway Bill. I shall refer later on to the Esperance railway, and I wish merely to say now that the action of members in rejecting that Bill has shut up a fertile province, and has certainly done serious harm to Western Australia generally. They have twice rejected the Public Works Committee Bill. They rejected also the Public Works Act Amendment Bill, the Timber Lines Traffic Bill, and the State Hotels Bill.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It was not wanted.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I very much doubt if that opinion will be endorsed by the people of Western Australia generally, and at the next general election we shall see whether that action is approved. Prior to the last general election, when I was one of four pleading with this Chamber not to pass the Redistribution of Seats Bill, I remember with what jeers my remark was received when I told members that the country would give them an answer in a most emphatic way. I was jeered at, and was told that I knew nothing of what I was talking about. So I am jeered at now when I tell members that as sure as the sun will rise the present Government will go back to office, provided this House continues as it has done during the last two sessions. The members of this Chamber are in that way the best friends of the present Government, and it is to the interest of the Government to allow the non-party members of this House to continue as they have begun and throw out all the Bills sent up to them. The other Bills thrown out last year included the Land Act Amendment Bill, the Land and Income Tax Bill, and the University Lands Bill. The rejection of the last named Bill is causing a good deal of trouble to-day to the Government and to the governing body of the University. These Bills, all of which were submitted by the party that came fresh from the

country with such an overwhelming majority, were rejected by this House, which considered that the will of the people should not prevail and that the will of the Legislative Council must be supreme. There were some very interesting non-party expressions regarding the finances. Mr. Moss talked about the deficit. He deplored the existence of a deficit, which of course, we all deplore, and when he was indulging in his heroics, he as a non-party man might in a spirit of fairness have referred to what I, at all events, like to see—a very commendable indication of a desire on the part of the Government to reduce that deficit. The Treasurer has been out of the State, having been away on important business to the Old Country, and since he has come back it seems to me that he has tackled the position with a great deal of earnestness, and only last month we had a reduction of the deficit by £107,000.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : Only a matter of book-keeping.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN : Does the hon. member say one word in commendation of a reduction of that kind? These non-party men now in their spirit of non-party fair play will not allow me to go on even to point this out. They will not give the Premier credit for the reduction. When Mr. Moss indulged in such vigorous language in regard to what the Government have been doing in the matter of the finances, and the present position of the deficit, my mind went back to a speech of his last session which is still ringing in my ears. The Government last session came down with a commendable attempt to meet the finances and increase the Land Tax. What was the attitude of Mr. Moss towards this effort of the Government? It was a small thing and would not have amounted to much, but it was still something in the shape of an endeavour to meet the inevitable dry financial period that was in front of us. How did he describe the Government for their action? The words he used were "political brigandage," and in looking through that speech I think you can find at

least a half a dozen times the application of the words "political brigandage." The Bill was rejected; I think only seven members supported the Government on that occasion. That was the poor encouragement given by this non-party Chamber to a small effort to meet the financial position. It was certainly no encouragement for the Government to go on in their efforts to introduce legislation to still further meet the financial crisis. There was another non-party advocate here last night, who made a speech, Sir Edward Wittenoom. He drew up a long list of causes for the present position of affairs and found fault with the Government for almost everything under the sun. I am not quite sure, but it looked from the way in which the speech was phrased, that he would even find fault with the Government for a bad season. He certainly blamed the Government for the high price of money and the financial stringency. He ought to have said that financial stringency is general all over the world, not merely in Western Australia and not merely in Australia. The financial stringency is now a matter of universal concern. Everywhere the price of money is high. I would like to say, and I am sorry the hon. member is not here, that if there be any local causes at all for the financial stringency, so far as it is affecting Western Australia, I think that some portion of the blame is due to men like Sir Edward Wittenoom, some of them in a far more responsible position than he, who make statements which imply that the present Government are not worthy of trust; that if money-lenders abroad advance money to Australia while Labour is in power, they practically imply they are fools. They say the British or foreign money-lenders will not lend money while a Labour Government are in power. If there is one question which ought to be above the dust of party politics in this country it is the question of finance. Whatever differences of opinion we may have between the merits of the Labour Party and the Liberal Party, surely we can view this question from the

patriotic standpoint. Only recently, at the turning of the first sod in connection with the Trans-Australian Railway at Kalgoorlie, when a number of responsible people were present, what did I hear the late Premier of this State say? He made a speech which clearly implied that the financial position was unsound. At that very time we were endeavouring to get money in London to go on with works which his Government had sanctioned. Is that a proper attitude to adopt. Whether a Labour Government or a Liberal Government are in power, I believe the security of Australia and the security of each and every State is absolutely sound. We have revenue producing assets which are far ahead of those of almost any other country in the world. We may sometimes have our slumps, but it is absolutely certain that no matter what money is loaned to Australia, and no matter what Government may be in power, the interest and capital of that money are absolutely safe. Australians will see to that, irrespective of party differences; and I think a man like Sir Edward Wittenoom, who has a reputation in London, and other men associated with financial institutions, might be a little more careful in their criticisms concerning the financial position of affairs in Australia. If he has to talk on the financial position he ought to make it perfectly clear that those who lend money to Australia have no need to fear that it will not be paid back, both interest and capital. Whatever hesitancy there may be on the part of London money-lenders to advance money to Australia, that hesitancy has been fostered by men such as the hon. member I have spoken of, and numbers of others in this country, who, in order to secure a party point, are not above distorting the financial position of the country. What did actually occur in connection with our recent loan? The Premier, when he wanted money, thought it advisable that he should go Home himself, and it was a very good move on his part. In view of all that has been said in criticism of the Labour party, if I did not know the exact position with regard to

them, and if I had only heard speeches from certain men, I, as a resident of Australia, would be almost inclined to gather together the few half-pence I have and fly from the country, to make sure that that money would not be grabbed by these "political brigands" who, if we are to believe Mr. Moss, have two hands out to grab everything everybody has got and distribute it amongst everybody else. That is not my idea of the Labour party. They have their faults, it is true, but when criticism of that kind is carried on those who know the true position should explain it to London financiers. When Mr. Scaddan went to London he met financial magnates, delivered speeches at public banquets and at various meetings in London, and they at once saw he was not the irresponsible individual his critics would have us believe. He does not look or speak like a brigand, and we know no action of his to warrant that description. It is true Governments in Australia have imposed an absentee tax. From the point of view of getting all the capital possible into the country it may be unwise. One may discuss the Absentee Land Tax from that point of view, but, still there can be no question that a person of wealth who spends his money out of the country should reasonably be expected to pay more than the residents of the country. There is nothing, at any rate, to justify the charge of political brigandage because an absentee tax has been imposed. It seems a most extraordinary interpretation to place upon a tax which is not peculiar to Australia. Mr. Scaddan, when he did go to London, got £2,000,000, enough to carry on with, and he got this £2,000,000 at a cheaper price than South Australia, where a Labour Government are not in power, had to pay for their loan. What do my non-party friends say to that?

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: Credit may be due to Sir Newton Moore.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: This spirit of criticism is not in the direction of assisting the Government to carry out work that we all desire to see pushed ahead. There is just one point about Sir Edward Wittenoom's speech which was

worthy of particular notice, and it is this. He corrected a remark which Mr. Moss, among many other things said, that Government steamers carried cattle infected with pleuro. I do not know whether they did or not. I am sure if they did it was an accident. However, Sir Edward Wittenoom, who I think knows much more about the question than does Mr. Moss, flatly contradicted Mr. Moss. He said the cattle did not have pleuro. I merely mention that as an evidence of the fact that the non-party leader evidently does not pause very long to consider the accuracy of his remarks. I am sorry he is not here, because there are certain other points in connection with the accuracy of his remarks which I would like to refer to in continuation of similar remarks I made last session. As he is not here I do not feel inclined to dwell upon that point. I would like to refer to a matter which has been before the House on a previous occasion, a matter in which I feel very strongly interested. I mean the Esperance railway. Mr. Moss referred to that as a wicked expenditure of money. I think Mr. Moss ought to pause before he talks about a wicked expenditure of money. Several members of the House will remember when the Fremantle dock was before this Chamber, and will also remember how I stood up in this place and moved a motion asking that the construction of the Fremantle dock should be delayed. I went to a tremendous amount of trouble to get all the reports, to get facts and figures; I saw a number of people in connection with the matter and I brought what I thought were satisfactory reasons to show why that dock should be delayed. Evidently the majority of members also thought that I brought satisfactory reasons as to why the construction of the dock should not be proceeded with until further inquiries had been made. I can well remember, and no doubt you, Sir, also remember, as several other members will, with what antagonism Mr. Moss attacked me in connection with that resolution, how he waved his arms, indulged in all his powers of eloquence, said I was blocking the progress of the country, and that the one thing necessary to make Western Aus-

tralia great and prosperous and glorious was the Fremantle dock. However, numbers of us pleaded with the Government of the day not to go on with this Fremantle dock; still Mr. Moss insisted, and once more Mr. Moss had his way. One need not dwell upon the sad history of the Fremantle dock. They went on with the construction of the dock, and I believe the loss to the country has been £200,000—so much money thrown into the sea. In view of this I think Mr. Moss, before he talks about a wicked waste of money, might well pause and think hard himself regarding the Fremantle dock. I know that if by any chance the construction of the Esperance railway were to mean the loss of half that amount of money to the country I would be ashamed to occupy a seat in Parliament, ashamed to look my fellow members in the face. The Esperance railway was referred to by Mr. Clarke. In talking about Bunbury that hon. member touched what has always been a sympathetic note with me, when he said that every port was entitled to its dues. Every port in this State, I think, whether Wyndham, or Eucla, Esperance, Albany, Bunbury or Fremantle, is entitled to its dues, to its natural trade. When Mr. Clarke came out with the remark that every port should have its dues, I interjected "including Esperance," but my friend did not indicate that he included Esperance, although I hope he does.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: When the time comes I will be there.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I trust that is an indication that the hon. member will vote for the Esperance railway; but I was really very much disappointed when the Bill was twice before the House that we did not then have Mr. Clarke's vote. But it is never too late to mend, and there has been much additional evidence brought forward since then, and I sincerely hope that Mr. Clarke will be true to the principle he lays down, that every port should have its dues.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: I was very doubtful about the Fremantle harbour.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: However, I would be glad to feel that we shall have Mr. Clarke's support on the next occu-

sion. I would like also to refer to Mr. Cullen's attitude regarding the Esperance railway. Mr. Cullen seemed to think that there was some dreadful design on the part of the Government to please some people on the goldfields. He says he finds there are some people on the goldfields in favour of this railway. I might well confirm Mr. Cullen's views on that point. There never has been a member of Parliament returned from the goldfields who has not been pledged to the railway. Within my recollection there has been only one Parliamentary candidate who stood for a goldfields seat and expressed opposition to the railway; and that candidate, although a Minister of the Crown, was defeated. So Mr. Cullen was quite right in his surmise that there are some people on the goldfields in favour of the railway. In fact, if there are any against it they are in a very insignificant minority indeed. But I do not hold that it is a very powerful argument against the railway to say that goldfields people want it. Mr. Cullen himself mentioned a whole lot of railways which he thought ought to be constructed. I presume there are some people anxious to have those railways constructed, and the more people there are who want them the more the Government ought to consider them. It is not anything very dreadful that the people of the goldfields are in favour of this particular line. These numerous railways which Mr. Cullen brought forward were here, there, and everywhere, all within his own province. I was wondering when he was going to stop. Finally, I thought there was one place he had not decided to run a railway to—it was only in accordance with some views I had previously heard expressed—I really thought he was going to advocate an aerial tramway to the moon, with a further intimation that when the main trunk line was completed he would propose spur lines to the planets Jupiter and Mars. Now he also is a supporter of the railway to Esperance—if he has not gone away from those views of which I am told he was so strong an advocate in the town which was his first home, I think, in this State, namely, Norseman, a town where,

I can assure the hon. member, he is well remembered, and where the people have discussed him with me on many occasions. I remember when the present Government came into power and there was some talk of the Esperance railway coming forward some Norseman people came to me and said, "There is one man in the Legislative Council who will be a champion of the Esperance railway." I asked who the hon. member was, and they said, "Oh, Mr. Cullen will never desert us on that point." So I am sorry I have been disappointed in my friend. But, as he explained, he is in favour of a railway to the Esperance lands. He said so last night. He is quite satisfied that this country ought to have a railway, but the railway Mr. Cullen desires is a railway that would run east and west. I am sorry hon. members have not a map here to show the extraordinary sort of railway an east and west line would be. I was at Scaddan the other day—a very promising agricultural centre—and the Colonial Secretary came along. About twenty settlers immediately waited upon him and wanted to know, among other things, when the railway would be constructed. I can imagine the position of Mr. Drew, supposing he had said "Oh yes, we will fall in with the view of Mr. Cullen. He wants an east and west railway. We will build an east and west railway." The first question the settlers would have asked him would be "What about the port?" And his answer would have been "Oh, the port of Albany will be your port." Sir, the port of Albany is over 300 miles from Scaddan. These good people are within 30 miles of the port of Esperance. This east and west railway seems a strange conception indeed. Mr. Cullen's one idea is east and west. "On no account build north and south, or the goldfields might have access to Esperance, and that would be dreadful." If you look at the map you will see the proper thing is to build the railway north and south, and then have east and west spur lines. Mr. Cullen says the whole of the belt between Nampup up to Grass Patch is all good agricultural land. I hope it is. I have travelled over a good portion of it, but

I do not know of any official report upon the whole of the land. I understand it is good land, and I hope it is good; my earnest hope is that it is a long way better than the best accounts of it. But so far as official reports are concerned, the officers of the Government, and they have been many, have classified the land 20 miles east and west of Grass Patch, and they say that so far as they can see from that point both east and west the land is good, but as to how far it really extends is not officially known. I have gone over the land between Ravensthorpe and Albany. It seems good land, although perhaps I ought not to express an opinion, because after all I was only driving through in a hurry. The only way to open up that country is to build a railway between Norseman and Esperance, and then to open up the land to which Mr. Cullen was referring by an east to west railway in the hope that ultimately the line would be linked up with Nampup, or some other point on the railway system. A glance at the map is quite sufficient to show that Mr. Cullen's proposal is only animated by an earnest desire that under no circumstances whatever shall the goldfields ever have access to the coast itself, or else it is an excessive parochialism which desires that the ports in his province should have whatever trade there is, quite irrespective of all other considerations, the convenience of the people, the welfare of the country, or anything else that any reasonable person ought to take into account in connection with the matter. His proposition is one that cannot be entertained seriously by any Government, no matter who may be in power. He was particularly vigorous in his denunciation of the Government "rushing" through this railway. I do not know how many years ago it was since my friend was in Norseman, but I suppose it is nearly 18 years at any rate since the movement was started for the construction of the Esperance railway. It has been reported on by half a dozen officials; it has been visited by various Ministers; the line was surveyed some ten years ago. It has been twice before this House, and yet Mr. Cullen comes forward and blames the Government for "rushing" the railway

through. That is just on a par with some other of his statements. I have here a collection—I am not going to read them—of all official and unofficial reports issued concerning the Esperance railway. I shall be only too happy to give any member who likes any report on the railway. There is no unfavourable report to give them, but I will give them every report that has been made on the railway. I had the pleasure of accompanying the Colonial Secretary on a visit to that district since the House last met. Mr. Drew prepared a very interesting report on his tour through the locality, and all that Mr. Drew said in that report is borne out by every one of the official reports published regarding it. Somebody talks about Mr. Paterson's report. Mr. Paterson's report is constantly quoted by opponents. From the beginning to the end of Mr. Paterson's report you cannot find one word against the railway. This report was prepared in 1911, more than two years ago, but Mr. Paterson in this report says he was not long enough in the district to judge of the quality of the land, and he has also doubts as to the holding capacity of the soil for dams. I think both these points have been satisfactorily cleared up. If members had seen as we have, about a dozen or 20 dams, they would see that every one is holding as tight as bottles and nearly all are overflowing. The Colonial Secretary said—and he did not rush through the district, he did not go through in darkness, he was constantly jumping out of the car digging holes, seeing the subsoil and satisfying himself—that he had never seen better soil for dam-making than is to be found in that district. There was one dam shown to us—the only one in that district—that did not hold water. We were shown this dam that had been seen by Mr. Paterson, and it had been sunk in a place where there was a broken reef passing through the ground. It was sunk a great many years ago, perhaps 10 or 15 years ago, and it was a dam that might have been sunk by accident anywhere. The broken reef clearly showed where the water went. But everywhere else not a settler had any trouble as to the holding capacity of the ground for water or the

catchment area for his dams. There are now more than 50 settlers there. If the Government allowed more people to select there probably there would be 500 settlers in the district, but the Government have prevented people going there. They will not grant any more land in that locality and they have done so during the last couple of years. The present settlers there are people who got the land originally, but for reasons, which personally I do not approve of, the Government will not allow people to go there unless there is a certainty of a railway being constructed. But there are 50 or 60 settlers in the locality, and there is not one who is not satisfied with the land. The Colonial Secretary did not hear one of them say that he wished to go anywhere else. All were enthusiastic in regard to the value of the land, and everyone who has seen the country is of the same opinion. I have never yet discussed the matter with anybody who condemned that country. The only person whom I talked to who threw cold water on the proposal for the railway is Mr. Mitchell, and he admits that he passed through, I think it was about 15 miles of good, or fair, agricultural land. He admitted there was good land there, but he drove through the best part of the country in the dark. The worst thing that has been said about the country was said by Mr. Mitchell, and he admits that there is about 15 miles of good agricultural country. There is a good deal more than 15 miles of good agricultural country, but I can leave that to be dealt with by the Colonial Secretary. He went there with an open mind, and he can speak about the district from an agricultural point of view better than I can. In Mr. Paterson's report he says—

If it can be proved that the land will yield profitable wheat crops, and water can be got at a moderate cost, a railway line for sixty or seventy miles towards Norseman, and spur lines east and west, when required to provide facilities for economic working, will be justified, because in this particular locality we would then settle one of the largest virgin tracts of land that I know of, easily accessible by railway and still in the hands of the Crown.

That was the minority report. There is nothing throughout the report that is in any way unfavourable.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Is that the whole of it?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I will let the hon. member read the whole of it if he likes.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Why not carry out Mr. Paterson's suggestion of having some land put under cultivation?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. Mr. Lynn has interjected several times about the Esperance railway. If I was in his position I would not talk so much about this railway.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: That has nothing to do with the question.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Mr. Lynn has asked me a question, and I am going to answer it. What I wish to say, and Mr. Cullen will not stop me—you might stop me, Mr. President, but Mr. Cullen is not in charge of this House—what I want to say is that if I were Mr. Lynn I do not think I would talk so much about the Esperance railway. I found a number of people at Esperance who know Mr. Lynn very well, and they told me, "You will have one great barracker for the railway, one who will never go back on that railway, although he is a representative of Fremantle, and that is Mr. Lynn." That is what I was told at Esperance. Mr. Lynn has interjected and says, "Why not have the recommendation in Mr. Paterson's report carried out?" The recommendation made by Mr. Paterson has been carried out. It has been carried out for the last ten years and more. When Mr. Paterson made the suggestion, he wrote to Mr. Thompson, the manager of Grass Patch, and said, "Will you prepare so much ground and fallow it and sow it, and let us see the result," and Mr. Thompson said, "What am I doing every year? Go and see the result now." You can go now and see the ground, and members may go and see the ground which has been treated by Mr. Thompson. The Colonial Secretary saw the results. He saw the crops growing. The idea of asking Mr. Thompson, the manager at Grass Patch,

to do what he has been doing all along amused him. It was the absurdity of the thing. He says, "I am doing it every year. I am delighted that you ask me to do it. But why ask me to do this for I am doing it every year?" Mr. Paterson himself can go and see it. There are over 50 other people there struggling along, but in many cases they do not go in for scientific farming as Mr. Thompson does. There they are battling, and any member can see what they are doing; brave-hearted pioneers, fighting a great battle to establish homes for themselves and their families in what they believe to be the best part of the State.

Hon. T. H. Wilding: What is the wheat yield?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The average wheat yield is very low, and I think if any member went to that district the wonder would be that it is not still lower. The methods of farming, as the Colonial Secretary will explain, are of the crudest. What they do is this: I presume members of the House know what mallee is, but the mallee there is extremely dense. These settlers roll down the mallee and then burn it off. When it is burnt off they take a disc harrow, put it over the ground and sow the corn. The surface of the ground seems to be mostly stumps, and you would wonder where the wheat had an opportunity to grow. That system of farming is carried on in nearly every case. The yield is very poor indeed. The Colonial Secretary protested with some of the farmers and said, "You are not giving the land a fair chance: this is not proper farming." They said, "We must have feed for our horses. We quite recognise that it is a mistake to do this, but still we must go on with it," and so the result is very poor indeed. Mr. Wilding, when he asks that question, no doubt would mean what would be the yield where farming was carried on in a proper way. Wherever the ground is ploughed, tons of roots and stumps are turned out per acre. Where fallowing is adopted the yield is very satisfactory indeed, and it is the average of the land that has been properly treated that is a fair average for the district.

I am sorry that at present I cannot answer that question, but I think that the average could be easily ascertained and perhaps the Colonial Secretary might be able to find it out. I would like to know why it is that some hon. members are so much opposed to the Esperance railway. Why is it that all this opposition has been raised to the Esperance railway?

Hon. J. F. Cullen: They take the whole of Mr. Paterson's report, and not a part, as the hon. member.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am perfectly willing to hand the whole of Paterson's report to the hon. member, and still I fail utterly to find anything that is unfavourable and Mr. Paterson says he was not long enough in the district. There is the report of Mr. Middleton who was six months in the district and the report of Mr. O'Brien who was in the district. These reports are very good. Mr. Middleton who had been there six months said:

I consider one million acres or more of this mallee country is equal in value for the growth of cereals to the same area anywhere else in the State.

Could anything be more emphatic. Over 120 samples of soil were brought into the corridor of this House during the debate on the Bill last session. Each and every one of these samples has been numbered and an analysis given of it. What more does the hon. member want? There has not been a railway about which so many official reports have been published, about which there has been such a consensus of opinion in its favour or one which has been so long fought for and to which so little can be said in opposition. Now what is the fear of granting the railway? Is it that hon. members are afraid that the goldfields may have access to their natural port? If this land were anywhere else but between Norseman and Esperance, it would have been provided with railway facilities long, long ago. I can imagine how hon. members would regard it if a report came out that similarly good land was available anywhere else. Yet, if anyone says anything in favour of this land he is denounced almost as an enemy of the State. It seems high treason to say a word in favour of

this line. We are fighting against people who are trying to defame the country and who decry it as being no good. It seems to be the duty of a certain class of individuals to denounce and decry this country in every possible way. I have never heard of any other district in this State being decryd to that extent, but here it is constantly going on. There is the fear that the goldfields might have access to their natural port. May I pause to consider what possible commodities can be landed at Esperance and taken to the goldfields, the importation of which would be any detriment to any industry in this State. Would they land agricultural produce at Esperance? I can scarcely conceive it possible. I do not think that anyone who has seen the land or who has read these reports can conceive is possible either. The people are not going to land agricultural produce there when they have an enormous area of $1\frac{1}{4}$ million acres of wheatgrowing country. They are not going to land fruit there with all the fruit growing land around Esperance. They are not going to land vegetables or root crops at Esperance, and they are not going to land fish from South Australia. What can they possibly land at Esperance that can be of any detriment to any industry in this State? This is a question which I would ask those hon. members who fear the opening up of the port of Esperance, to answer. I would like to point out that the goldfields members have never objected to any agricultural lines in any part of the State. We have always been delighted when we heard that good land existed in any part of Western Australia. We have never raised one word of protest against any money that has been expended in this way. We have been told that some of these railways would not pay, and they did not pay, but we have said "Let them be built; they will develop the country." The goldfields are always friends of the agricultural districts in that respect, but why should this dead set be made on this particular part of the State? What has that part of the State done to deserve it? Is it not a part of this State of Western

Australia just as much as any other part of the State? What has caused this hostility to this particular locality? I would like, in my comments regarding opponents of the Esperance railway, to acquit the people of Western Australia as a whole from blame in connection with this matter. There was a time when the people of the goldfields did think that the people in other parts of Western Australia were opposed to them in this matter, and perhaps a certain amount of ill-feeling may have sprung up, but no such feeling now exists. They recognise that the people of Western Australia have no desire to do an injustice to any part of the State and have no desire to close up any port of the State. They wish to see fair play exhibited to every part of Western Australia, whether it is north, south, east or west. They have shown that by sending to the Legislative Assembly such a large proportion of members who are prepared to vote for this railway. I meet people from different parts of the State, people who are in different occupations and in different classes of society, but I find very few indeed opposed to this railway, and the few I do find opposed to it are people who are interested, but the great bulk of the people say, "Why should not the Esperance people get the railway, why should not fair play and justice be done in connection with this matter," and I wish to say on behalf of the province I represent, and I think I am echoing the feelings of our goldfields generally, when I say they thank heartily the people of Western Australia for what they have done in this connection. They must be acquitted from all blame in connection with the blocking of this railway. The wrong that has been done they are eager and anxious to have redressed. We want to thank the Government for what they have done, and whatever the fate of the Esperance Railway Bill to be introduced this session might be, the goldfields people are fair-minded and will never forget the Scaddan Government as being the first Government that had the courage to bring in a Bill for this railway and face the influential forces arrayed against it. By

influential I mean in certain directions, not perhaps in voting power, but in other ways, and the Scaddan Government have shown themselves independent of these forces. They have the people behind them. We feel that the people are with us, and I am perfectly satisfied that those members from Fremantle who to-day oppose the railway are not speaking for the people of Fremantle and that those members from Perth who oppose it are not speaking for the people of Perth. The people of Perth do not wish to have this wrong done to this particular locality; it is just a few people in each particular place, and whatever may be the result of this railway proposal, I want to say we shall always be grateful to the people of Western Australia for what they are doing. They are doing a good deal by wishing to open up a part of the State that will not only add immensely to the wealth of Western Australia, but will add to the population of the State and they are also healing political differences, and perhaps by the healing of these political differences they might be doing almost as much as will be done by the benefits which this railway will confer on Western Australia.

Sitting suspended from 6.10 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East): I should like at the outset to congratulate the hon. member, who resumed his seat just before the adjournment, on the excellent fashion in which he placed before us the political situation from the independent point of view. There are many of us who do not see eye to eye with the Hon. Mr. Kirwan on a number of questions, but I think we all admire the courage with which he maintains his attitude of sturdy independence in the face of what I suppose must at times be most embarrassing circumstances. I hope he will allow me to express the earnest desire—and I confess I do it more from a personal than a political point of view—that he will not be followed by the same fate that seems to dog the footsteps of

most independent politicians throughout Australia. I should like to remove some slight misapprehension from his mind regarding my own attitude. He was pleased to refer to those people who posed as non-party politicians whilst occupying such offices as those of vice-presidents of political organisations. To the best of my knowledge and belief I am the only member in this House who occupies the position of vice-president of a Liberal organisation, and I cannot understand why the hon. member should have referred in this manner to my case. I have never for a moment suggested in this House or elsewhere that I had taken up a non-party attitude. I do maintain that members in this House are able to treat party politics, and should be able to treat party politics, from a point of view entirely different from that of members of the Legislative Assembly. For this reason, that in the Legislative Assembly a member may often have to make a difficult choice, he may be confronted with the position that he must support something he does not altogether believe to be right or else be the instrument of throwing out of office a Government in whose general administration and general policy he believes, and put in their place a Government with which he has no sympathy. Therefore in the Legislative Assembly it is probably necessary under our present party system, that there should be very rigid loyalty, not only to party principles, but also to party political proposals. In this Chamber there is no bond of that kind, no matter what view we may take of politics generally. It is open to those who profess liberal politics to reject measures sent to this Chamber by a Liberal Government without fear of endangering that Government, so it should be possible for supporters of the Labour party and independent politicians to oppose proposals sent here, with which they do not agree, without in any way endangering the Government they give support to. It has been said by one of the previous speakers in this Chamber that he sympathised with the Governor when he was called upon to read the Speech, to which the Address-in-reply has been moved. I confess my sympathies were

rather with the gentlemen who had to propose and second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I felt, and I have no doubt they felt, they were confronted with a very difficult task. As Mr. Kirwan said, there was practically nothing for them to talk about in the Speech; they had to endeavour to clothe the dry bones of this skeleton Address—"to give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." Most of us know why it was that this Speech was so indefinite and so inconclusive. We were confronted with a situation that had never previously arisen in our State Parliament. When Parliament was about to open, the triennial Labour Congress was about to sit. It was seen that difficulties might arise, and it was in order to avoid these difficulties that the Speech was made of such a character that it might afterwards be turned in any way that might be desired. It was probably also for this reason that the Premier refrained from making a pre-sessional speech. I join with Mr. Kirwan in expressing regret that that time-honoured custom was departed from. We remember that the Premier said he did not intend to deliver a pre-sessional speech before the opening of Parliament a month ago, but that probably he would deliver a speech before the real opening of the session yesterday. I am not surprised that he departed from that. Having perused the report of Congress to which I have referred, I can quite understand, seeing, as he must have seen, that in almost every instance the wishes of his Ministers were over-ruled by that Congress, the Premier would have found it difficult to make a pre-sessional speech which would have harmonised at once with his own ideas and the resolutions carried by Congress. I should like to make one personal remark at this stage. I do not like having to do it, and I do not intend to strain much less to abuse the privileges of this House, but I take it, when an hon. member in another place occupying a high position in the Government of the country, sees fit to make charges of disloyalty and intrigue against

a member of this Chamber, such member has a right to defend himself. All I propose to say in that connection is that those charges of disloyalty and intrigue made chiefly by imputation against myself are entirely without foundation, and that every specific statement, without exception, on which those charges were founded, is false in substance and in fact. This afternoon I submitted certain questions to the Colonial Secretary and I regret very much that I was not able to give him more time to frame answers. I appreciate fully the difficulties of his position and the numerous matters he has to attend to, and I am quite aware that neither of the questions I have asked comes within the purview of his department. I do not blame him for asking for extended time in which to give answers, but since he has made that request, I propose to take this opportunity of making clear to him exactly what I want to find out, so that the answer may be suitable to both of us. In October of last year I asked the Colonial Secretary, "Has the attention of the Government been drawn to a statement made by the Minister for Home Affairs (Mr. King O'Malley) in the House of Representatives on Wednesday last, to the effect that the Commonwealth Government is not concerned with the cost of powellising karri sleepers for the Trans-Australian Railway, this being purely a matter for the successful tenderer—the Western Australian Government?" To that I received an affirmative reply. Then I asked whether the statement was correct, and if so whether an agreement had been made between the Western Australian Government and the Powellising Company in regard to royalty and other charges, and the Minister replied, "Yes." I asked what royalty was to be paid, and the reply was, 1/3 per 100 superficial feet. I also asked on what basis such royalty was to be paid, and what other charges, if any, were to be made by the powellising company, and the answer to the last was, "None." So that the answers were, that a contract had been made that the amount to be paid by the Government for powellising sleepers to be supplied to the Commonwealth Government for the Trans-Australian Rail-

way was 1/3 per 100 superficial feet, and that no other charges were being made by the powellising company. The questions I submitted this afternoon were to this effect, "Was the matters published in the *Sunday Times* and *West Australian* purporting to be a copy of the agreement entered into between the Western Australian Government and the Westralian Powell Wood Process Limited, an accurate copy of the agreement, and if so whether the Minister would explain the apparent discrepancy between the terms of the agreement and the answer given by him to the question asked by me in October last in regard to the rate of royalty to be paid to the company on powellised sleepers to be sold by the State Government to the Federal Government for the purpose of the Trans-Australian Railway." In order that the Minister may know what I want to find out, I would point out that this agreement as published in the Press, shows that the royalty to be paid for sleepers used by the West Australian Government for its own purposes within the State is 9d. per 100 superficial feet, but the royalty to be paid for all other sleepers is not 1s. 3d., as stated by the Minister, but 2s. per 100 superficial feet. I do not suggest that the Minister wilfully misled me when he gave me that reply and I am prepared to believe there is a simple explanation, but whatever it is I shall be pleased, and the House and many people outside will be pleased to know exactly what that explanation is. We are also told in answer to my question that no other charge was to be made. Whether that actually expresses the state of affairs or not I shall leave it for hon. members to judge. This agreement was apparently entered into on the 27th February, 1912—some eight months before the questions I referred to were asked in this House. It was approved by the Executive Council on the 9th April, 1913, so that a period of 14 months elapsed after the agreement was entered into before it was approved. It might be usual for so long a period to elapse between the making of an agreement and its approval, but whether it is usual or unusual, I hope the Minister will be able to explain the reason for it. Al-

though it was approved by the Executive Council on the 9th April this year, it was unknown to the public until the 8th June, so that something like 18 months elapsed after the date on which the agreement was entered into before it was published, and I believe that even then it did not receive what might be called voluntary publication. At any rate, that is a question I do not intend to discuss just now. But this agreement, if it is correct, shows not only that the State Government have to pay 2s. per 100 superficial feet for all timber utilised for sale to anybody else, but also that there is a minimum annual royalty to be paid. The Government must pay royalty on at least ten million superficial feet treated per annum. I have reason to believe that that agreement is already operative from an early date in this present month. Now, many of us will be curious to know if the Government are in a position to treat this ten million superficial feet annually, on which they have to pay powellising rates whether they have treated the timber or not. The period of the agreement is for ten years, or such longer time as the patent rights exist, and it is specifically stated in the agreement that, although the patent rights terminate in five years and may not be renewed, yet should they not be renewed the payment of this minimum royalty for the treatment of ten million superficial feet must go on for another five years. Now that is another point upon which we should like some explanation, because on the face of it it seems an utterly bad bargain. It must be clear to anyone that immediately the patent rights cease to exist it is unnecessary for anybody to pay for the right to use the patent, and in the event of these patent rights not being renewed at the end of five years it will be possible for anybody to use the process without paying patent rights, and few of us have such confidence in the controlling of these undertakings by the Government to suppose that the Government can pay the royalty and compete with the private person doing the same work and paying the same wage, and yet paying no royalty whatever. Those are just a few points upon which I

would like a little explanation, and, whilst it may be technically correct to say that the company is receiving nothing but the royalty, it is a curious fact that the agreement also provides for extending a certain area held by the company under timber license by the grant of an additional 15,000 acres. To my mind that seems to be an extra payment in addition to the royalty already agreed upon. Not only do the Government give them an extra 15,000 acres, but it is also a condition of the agreement that the Government accept a tender from the powellising company for the supply of one million powellised karri sleepers. What does a million powellised sleepers mean? According to the contracts let by the late Federal Government, and the figures published from time to time in that very interesting document that used to bear on its cover the signature of the late Minister for Home Affairs, Mr. King O'Malley, the price of these sleepers was never less than 5s. and varied from 5s. to 7s. 9d., according to the point of delivery. So that this tender which has been accepted as one of the conditions in the agreement made between the Government and the Powellising Company involves a matter of a quarter of a million of money. Therefore, apparently, in addition to paying this royalty, and in addition to giving this extended area, the Government have also entered into a contract involving a quarter of a million of money, without calling for tenders and apparently without subjecting the Powellising Company to any competition whatever. On the face of it, it does seem to me that the company receive from the Government something more than the royalty specified in the answers given to me by the Colonial Secretary during last year. Of course, we always understood that the Government were going to deal with this timber themselves, that they were going to cut all the sleepers at their own saw-mills, and I hoped to find some reference to this fact in the report of congress to which I have referred, because I do not know whether it is in accordance with the principles of that congress that instead of cutting these sleepers at the State saw-mills, the Government should let a con-

tract for a quarter of a million of money to a private company that has not had to submit to competition in any way. Now, in regard to the proposals briefly outlined in the Speech, Mr. Moss suggested that he found amongst them a good many old friends. Personally I miss one very dear acquaintance, and that is the proposal to provide for the non-alienation of Crown lands, with a view to the ultimate nationalisation of all land. I have been told that it was the intention of the Government and the Labour Party to drop this plank from their platform, and when there was no reference made to it in the Governor's Speech, although a number of other things rejected by this Chamber last year were referred to as about to be introduced, I flattered myself that my hope was well founded and that we had heard the last of this proposal, which has undoubtedly done a great deal of harm to the country and will continue to do harm so long as the people feel that it is hanging over their heads. This proposal in the past was in the general platform of the political Labour party, and during the last conference held in Fremantle recently a proposal was submitted that it should be taken from the general platform and made one of the fighting planks, one of the things that they should go right ahead on and endeavour to achieve. Amongst those who addressed themselves to this question were two Ministers, one a member of this House, and both of them spoke in an eminently common sense and proper manner in regard to it. One of them appealed to congress to confine the fighting plank solely to practicable matters. The other, Mr. Dodd, pointed out the futility of continuing with this nationalisation plank when the country had power to impose on land whatever taxation was thought to be just. But, in spite of the arguments used by those two Ministers, the resolution to elevate this plank from the general platform to the fighting platform was carried, according to the official report, by a majority of only two. 38 votes to 36, in an assembly larger, and I would not like to suggest in any way less important, than would be the two Houses of Parliament rolled into one.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Where did you get those figures? The Press were not present.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: One section of the Press was admitted; the section that could be relied upon. That section published this report, and there are many interesting things in it, one or two of which I shall refer to. The Labour party, which has placed this plank in its fighting platform, has done so by a majority of two in an assembly of between 70 and 80, which means to say that the delegates were practically equally divided. I take it that as the plank has been transferred to the fighting platform it will not be long before we will see it here again. A Bill will be sent up from the Legislative Assembly, it will be rejected here, and then our friends, both Government members and independent members, will go about the country saying that the Legislative Council is flouting the will of the people, when all that the Council has done is to prevent a trifling majority of one section from imposing its will on the rest of the community. I think that is an illustration of the way in which the more extreme and objectionable portion of the party's platform is framed, and if held up clearly before the country will be a sufficient excuse for the Legislative Council rejecting those planks, and we shall not be accused of flouting the will of the people in doing so. Now, the first plank in the fighting platform of the Labour party is referred to indirectly in the Speech in the reference to constitutional and electoral reforms. That first plank is the reform of the Legislative Council with a view to its ultimate abolition. The plank was not altered by conference, but a resolution was carried, not altogether a vote of want of confidence in the Government and the existing members of the Labour party in the State Parliament, but an emphatic resolution demanding that they should push forward this particular plank with greater vigour than they had done in the past. Hon. members will notice the wording of these two planks of the platform, the first and the fourth, "The reform of the

Legislative Council with a view to its ultimate abolition," and "The non-alienation of Crown lands with a view to the ultimate nationalisation of all land." In each case there is a proposal to do something with a view to ultimately doing something else, and perhaps it is because of that peculiar similarity in the wording that they jumble and mix themselves up in my mind until I can only see them as "The abolition of the Legislative Council with a view to the nationalisation of all land and everything else." I said a little while ago that in regard to nearly every proposal brought before congress, Ministers when they expressed their views were not attended to and were in the minority; but there was one refreshing instance where they secured a majority and that was on their own proposal regarding the initiative, referendum, and recall. The "recall" appeared to be a matter that Ministers were greatly interested in, and one Minister proposed that the word "recall" should be struck out of the platform. He was supported by another member and the motion was carried. The word was struck out. Apparently congress felt that in so amending the platform against the wishes of Ministers they had gone sufficiently far, and they might give way in this little matter in which Ministers seemed to be so very much concerned. Mr. Moss, when speaking last night, made some reference to the financial position of the State. I do not intend to labour that question, but there are one or two matters I would like to bring under the notice of the Colonial Secretary in the hope that he may reply to them and explain them. The Colonial Treasurer at the commencement of the financial year just closed estimated a revenue of £4,596,962, a very handsome revenue indeed, and he obtained £4,596,659. He was almost absolutely correct, not £300 out, and in a forecast covering an amount of over 4½ millions to be only something less than £300 out constitutes a record that I think no Treasurer in any British community has ever been able to better. But the curious fact of it is that when we turn to the details of revenue received we find the items

varying anything from 10 to 50 per cent. from the Treasurer's estimate. The railways did not realise the amount he thought they would by something like £20,000. The Harbour Trust returns were £42,000 more than he expected, and the water scheme £20,000 more, and so on right through the list, until, after scrutinising the figures, the only comparison I could find was that it was a sum in arithmetic in which all the workings were entirely wrong but the answer was strangely correct. Now my experience as a school-boy was that if I presented a sum and the master found that the workings were wrong, and the answer was correct, that only increased the offence, because he said at once, "You must have cribbed your answer." I am afraid that Mr. Moss when speaking of that transfer of £30,000 from trust account to revenue was leveling against the Government a very similar charge of having cribbed the answer. It has been suggested that the deficit is all the fault of the unfortunate farmer who has not been able to pay. I suggest that if that were the case the Treasurer would have failed to realise his estimate. In the fact that he has realised his estimate is a complete answer to the charge that it is the bad season in the country that has created the debt. I think that last year was not a bad season in Western Australia. The average wheat yield was good and the total yield was the highest on record, and we cannot expect a season in which one of our industries will not fall short here or there. The land revenue was only £7,000 short of the estimate, and the revenue of the goldfields water scheme, which is contributed to so largely by the farming community, was no less than £20,000 in excess of the estimate, and the people in the farming community who contribute this revenue to the goldfields water scheme are those who experienced the worst effects of last year. I do not know how many paid the rate imposed upon them in the eastern agricultural areas, but on the one hand we are told that it was the terribly bad year in the eastern wheat belt which caused that deficit, and on the other that those who experienced it are the very ones upon

whom additional taxation is imposed by this very high water rate. The railways estimated revenue was £2,057,250, and the amount received was £2,039,534, or £20,000 short of the estimate. It might have been thought that if there were a decline in business bringing about this decrease in revenue there would have been a corresponding decline in expenditure. That is what usually happens in business concerns, but instead of that we find the estimated expenditure on the railways was £1,455,881 and the actual expenditure £1,516,793. Therefore, although the Government received £20,000 less than they expected, and we must assume did £20,000 less business, they actually paid away £60,000 more than they estimated to pay away. The deficit is much more readily attributable to that than to some failure on the part of farmers to meet their obligations. With regard to State steamers, there was an estimated revenue of £73,000 and an actual revenue of £66,000. Again we might have thought that if the steamers did not do the amount of business they were expected to do the cost of running them would have been less. But we find that instead of the estimated expenditure of £61,000 there was an actual expenditure of £86,000, so that, although they earned considerably less than was expected it cost £20,000 more than was estimated to run them. Sir Edward Wittenoom made some reference last night to the question of loan indebtedness. He seemed to be upbraiding our Government for not having borrowed more money. I cannot help looking back to the period immediately preceding the last general election when members of the Labour party were going up and down the country denouncing the Wilson Government for having added to the loan indebtedness of the people. On looking up the *Statistical Abstract* I find that in June, 1911, the indebtedness per head of the population was £73, and in the two years that have elapsed since then, notwithstanding a substantial increase in population, the Government have succeeded in increasing the net indebtedness from £73 to £83 per head. We are only a small community, and that

is a fairly heavy indebtedness per head of the population.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : They have been very successful in borrowing.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH : But I do not think they have spent in the best fashion the money they have borrowed. Mr. Kirwan suggested that our credit was good, and that it was wrong for anyone to suggest otherwise, but I am sure I am right in saying that while investors at Home are ready to lend to any British community money for the development of their State, they are not ready to lend it to State Governments to dabble in socialistic experiments and to carry on enterprises that are surely better adapted for private people to conduct. The steadily growing interest bill is not met as it ought to be by the productive nature of the undertakings on which the money is spent, although we know it is one of the planks of the Labour party that borrowing should be restricted to things that pay their own way. In addition to the loss of £20,000 on the State steamers for actual working the taxpayer will have to find the interest, the sinking fund, and the depreciation; and it is because of that we are told that we shall have to increase taxation, and again the proposition is that increased taxation shall be borne by those very people whose hardships during the bad season the Government say brought about the deficit; and the burden will be placed on the shoulders of those who are least able to bear it. Turning to the question of land settlement, I want to say that in my opinion land settlement and immigration must go hand in hand. An active immigration policy would be fatal unless it were accompanied by an active land settlement policy. In 1910, for the full year ended in December, the amount of conditional purchase leases totalled was 1,727,000 acres. In 1911, nine months of which was controlled by the Liberal party and three months by the Labour party, the quantity fell to 1,349,000 acres. In 1912, when the Labour party had control for the whole year the quantity was 891,000 acres, which was a little more than half of the conditional purchase land settled during

1910. For the first half of 1913, that is from January to June, the conditional purchase areas taken up amounted only to 271,000 acres. At that rate this year's total will be only about half of last year's. So it will be seen that land settlement is rapidly reaching the vanishing point, and if that is the case I can quite understand the unsympathetic attitude to immigration on the part of the Labour Congress. It has been stated that it is the policy of the Government to reserve dry areas from immediate settlement. Personally, I do not think that it is a very good policy. Only recently an area was thrown open for settlement situated north-west of the Cowcowing Lakes, one of the driest spots in the whole agricultural belt, and far removed from railway communication or proposed railway communication. That land was thrown open for settlement.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan : What is the rainfall?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH : It is a good deal better than that of the Esperance country. The reason I do not know exactly what it is is because there is no old settlement there and no records have been kept.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan : That is a fair sample of the fair play of this House towards Esperance.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH : The rainfall at Wongan Hills is about 15¼ inches. During the last three or four years the rainfall has fallen off a good deal; for instance, at Northam, where our average is 16.6, we have received only about 12 inches. I am inclined to think that, given anything like a decent chance and reasonable encouragement, these areas, including the Esperance lands, which had insufficient rain during the last two seasons, will respond very quickly, when we get back to our normal rainfall. We should all of us have to admit, if the last two years represented the normal condition of affairs, much of this country would have to be written down as valueless, but I have no hesitation in saying that an enormous amount of country in the eastern agricultural areas that is already surveyed should

have been thrown open, and people should have been encouraged to settle on it at the present time. Mr. Kirwan referred to the splendid impression created by our Premier's speeches in the Old Country. When the Premier was in England I think almost every newspaper in this State, and particularly the Liberal newspapers, printed his speeches very fully, and with the highest commendation. Everywhere Mr. Scaddan went in England he said to the people, "If you cannot find work here among your congested population, come to Australia where there is plenty of opportunity and plenty of land for you." He went on to tell the people of England what we had been able to do in developing Western Australian resources, "chiefly by means of English capital." He naturally gained the ear of the British public and gained the commendation of all fair-minded people in this State, but when the Labour Congress—the Parliament of Labour as it was called by its official organ—sat in Fremantle a few weeks ago a proposal was submitted that the Government should take steps to advertise throughout England and other places that there was no opening in Western Australia for people to come to, that there were unemployed in Western Australia, and no opportunities. I do not remember the exact words of the resolution.

Hon. J. Cornell: No, I moved it and so I ought to know.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Excuse me, it was a lady who moved this resolution, and when interrupted I was about to congratulate Mr. Cornell on having come into the breach and submitted an amendment which was certainly less objectionable, and which he was successful in inducing the Congress to carry. The motion was, in effect, that the Government should take steps to advertise our poverty, to advertise the fact that, although there are only 300,000 people in the State, there is no room for any more. That was the motion. Mr. Cornell, with admirable tact, while not directly opposing the motion, sprang into the breach and said "Let us substitute an amendment to the effect that the

Government do not spend any more money in bringing out immigrants from other parts of the world. Those who like to come out themselves, let them come, but let us not spend any more money in bringing others here." In itself the amendment was certainly less harmful than the motion by reason of the fact that it was not so damaging an advertisement for the State, although practically it will have as bad a result. Again, I would like hon. members to take the trouble to read the debate on immigration which took place in this Congress. They will find that Ministers, loyal to the policy they have consistently carried out since they have been in office, spoke in favour of immigration, but, unfortunately, they were unable to impress their convictions on the Congress, and were defeated. Fortunately, as I have said, Mr. Cornell submitted an amendment which was somewhat less objectionable than the original motion, and this amendment was carried. So now we have it as an instruction to the Government that no more money is to be spent on immigration. Mr. Moss last evening commended the Government on what they had done in respect to immigration. I would have been disposed to do the same, but when we come to look at actual records, we find that, whereas in 1911 we had an excess of immigrants over emigrants of upwards of 12,000, it dropped last year to 6,000, or a decrease of one half. Only half the number were brought out here last year as compared with those which were brought out in the previous year. For the expired period of this year we have over 5,000 immigrants in excess of those we have lost, so thus far we have made a fair beginning. But I am afraid to think what will happen as the result of that resolution passed in Congress, for it seems quite on the cards that we will go back to the dismal record of a few years ago, when there was in one year an actual excess of departures over arrivals of 1,500. If this should eventuate it will inevitably mean that the burden of taxation will become heavier on each individual in the community. This morning I happened to see a Canadian newspaper. From that I learnt that, dur-

ing the month of April this year the excess of arrivals over departures in Canada reached the total of 50,000. During May it was 60,000 and for the five months from January to May, both inclusive, the excess of arrivals over departures in Canada was 170,000, or more than half the population of Western Australia.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What are the figures for the Commonwealth?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Absolutely insignificant beside those for Canada.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But it is not a fair comparison to take Western Australia as against Canada: take one province of Canada.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Individual provinces in Canada have received greater excesses during ten months than we have received in ten years; but then I do not think that in Canada the parliament of Labour has power to dictate to the Government that they shall cease spending money on immigration. If we correctly estimated the value of immigrants to our country we should probably make some arrangement whereby they could get out here almost as cheaply as they can get to Canada. I do not say that we could do as much as Canada has done; and if we were going ahead as we have done in the last few years we might not have much cause to complain. But when we are not doing enough there comes this resolution from the power behind the throne that we have to stop even what little we are doing. A remark fell from Mr. Moss last night with which I cannot entirely agree. That was in regard to the congestion of business in our courts. That hon. member said he thought the Government had acted wisely in stopping the Civil Service Appeal Board in order that Mr. Justice Burnside might go back to the Arbitration Court and deal with certain cases there awaiting his attention. I do not suggest that it is not urgently necessary that these cases held in abeyance should proceed, but I say that it is absolutely unjust to the civil servants, and suicidal from the point of view of the State which depends so much on having a contented service, that these people should have been fooled in the way they

are being fooled. They are told they have an appeal board. They go to the board and are then told that it will probably take 12 months before their cases are heard. Then, when the board has been inquiring into the accumulated cases for a few weeks, the appellants are told that the judge must give up this work and go back to the Arbitration Court; and when the appellants ask the judge when he will come back to the appeal board he says he does not know if he will ever come back. What is to be done in such a case?

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Appoint somebody else.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Whatever the remedy is, it should be discovered and acted upon, because civil servants treated in that fashion cannot possibly get along with their work in the regular and contented fashion necessary to its proper execution. To my mind the recalling of the judge in order to send him to these arbitration cases, no matter how urgent these cases may be, is almost on all fours with the action of the Government directly they got into power, in giving an increase of wages to the lowest-paid men in the railway service; yet for months and months they have denied just treatment to the railway officers and other officials in the department. I do not wish for a moment to say anything that might be regarded as prejudicial to the Civil Service Appeal Board, but I do say that amongst those who submitted their cases to that board there are many old and good servants of the State who are being treated far worse than is any man in any of the industrial causes waiting to be brought before the Arbitration Court at the present time. In regard to the question raised by Mr. Kirwan, namely, the rejection by this House of the State Hotels Bill—there were, I think, two or three State Hotels Bills; there was a Bill for the erection of a State Hotel at the Wongan Hills and for another at Rott-nest—this House did not reject that Bill, but only a portion of it, whereupon the Government dropped it. We were assured that it was absolutely necessary that this Bill should go through, because without it the Government were denied the

privilege which everybody else enjoyed of applying for a licence, so long as the locality was 15 miles away from the next nearest licence. Again, I wish to say that I do not suggest for a moment that in making that statement the leader of the House wished to mislead. He was merely repeating the legal opinion with which he had been supplied. But the Bill was not passed, notwithstanding which, very soon after Parliament prorogued, the Government proceeded to do what we had been told they could not do. We did not pass the Bill, yet the Government immediately proceeded to do exactly what they had assured us it was impossible for them to do. I do not intend to say much in regard to that State hotel at the Wongan Hills. You will remember that a discussion arose during last session in regard to the material of which it should be built, and the leader of the House said that although there was some reference to the employment of wood in its construction, it had not been decided to construct it of wood. Many members took that as an assurance that the building would not be constructed of wood. Then the Government applied to the court for a licence for a wooden building, and got it; called for tenders, and published the name of the successful tenderer. But I am glad to learn that they subsequently stayed their hands, and now I am informed it is proposed to erect a building of substantial material. I can assure them the people of the district desire a State hotel; but they desire also a substantial building. I am sorry the leader of the House was not able to answer my second question in regard to the Perth tramways purchase. Perhaps it will be just as well to explain exactly what I wanted although it was such a simple question that I thought anybody could understand it. The question was as to what proportion of the Perth tramway purchase money was paid in (a) cash and (b) bonds. You will remember that the first schedule of the Perth Tramway Purchase Bill contained a provision which was strongly commented upon by me and others as a most extraordinary provision, namely, that the company should have the option of pay-

ment in cash or in bonds; and we were assured that if the Bill passed the company would take, at all events, a very large proportion of the purchase money in bonds? Now, because of the absence of any answer to this question I am unable to speak, except from rumour. What I have been told is that when the deal was fixed up the tramway people practically said, "If your bonds had been at a premium we would have taken them and made an additional profit out of the transaction, but as they are at a discount we demand cash." The result was that the Government raised the money at a cost of four per cent. per £100 for the whole of the £475,000; so instead of the original sum of £475,000 the tramways cost us half a million of money. To-night I take up the same attitude as I took up, then, and assert that that money would have been of far more benefit to the State if expended on public works which would have developed this country. I will even go so far as to say that I would far sooner have seen all that was required of that half million spent on the construction of the Esperance railway, in which my friend, Mr. Kirwan, is so deeply interested. If this had been done it would at least have given employment to a large number of men. As it was it gave no employment, and added no new facilities. That money was capable of building 200 miles of railway and giving employment to hundreds of men. Mr. Davis, in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, made some reference to the question of local option, and said it was only right that all these matters of local option, including prohibition, should be decided by a simple majority vote. I do not endorse that view, I merely refer to the hon. member's remarks, because he used a familiar expression when he said he thought it only fair that those who pay the piper should call the tune. I was unable to apply it exactly to this question of local option, but apparently something else was running in the hon. member's mind, because directly after using that expression "those who pay the piper should call the tune" he proceeded to tell us what the Government proposed to do in the matter of amending the Local Government

laws, such as municipalities and roads boards in the direction of giving one adult one vote. "Those who pay the piper should call the tune" is a good theory in the mind of the hon. member as applied to local option, but evidently it is not a good theory as applied to the election of local governing bodies, to expend the rates. His ideas in that case are that those who do not pay the piper should call the tune, and that those who do pay the piper should pay as much as the others dictate. If the Government do submit to this Chamber a Bill providing for adult suffrage at municipal and roads board elections, I for one will strenuously oppose it on the principle given out by my friend, that those who pay the piper should call the tune. I would like to say one word in regard to some remarks which fell from Sir Edward Wittenoom last night with reference to the assistance extended by the Government to farmers upon the eastern wheat belt. I do not think Sir Edward meant to go quite so far as some people might be led to think he did from a perusal of his speech, because I think it is a great mistake to cry down the eastern agricultural areas. During the last two or three dry seasons, the worst in the recollection of people who have been settled there for the last forty years, when springs and soaks that never failed before have failed, there have been grown to the east of Kellerberrin crops averaging over 16 bushels of wheat to the acre on areas up to 600 acres in a single farm. This does not apply to one, two or three, but to many instances where proper farming methods have been employed. Farmers with as much as 600 acres in have taken an average of 16 bushels to the acre in these unprecedentedly bad seasons. What need is there then to be afraid of the result in these eastern agricultural lands when we come back to anything like normal seasons?

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I was not referring to the eastern agricultural districts.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Was the hon. member referring to the Esperance district?

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: No.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Personally I think we need not fear anything so far as the eastern areas are concerned. I do not know that we can rely with absolute accuracy upon the weather prophets like Mr. Wragge but they have been marvelously accurate during the last two or three years, and if they are accurate for the future we can look forward to improved conditions from now onwards. In regard to the Esperance railway to which the Hon. Mr. Kirwan devoted so much attention, my attitude is the same as it was last year. I do not pretend to know very much about the country between Norseman and Esperance, but I do know a good deal of the requirements of other portions of this State, and I am not prepared to support the construction of the Esperance railway whilst not a few settlers, not 50 settlers as the hon. member talks about, but hundreds of settlers in the Mt. Marshall district, in the Kuminin and Emu Hills districts—particularly in the Kuminin and Emu Hills districts, because these people had their railway given to them by Parliament and taken away by the Minister for Works—and settlers on the Bolgart extension are without facilities. I am not prepared to look with a favourable eye upon any railway which is going to be given precedence over these. The Hon. Mr. Cullen mentioned a large number of railways in his particular district, which probably are just as urgently needed as are the others to which I have referred. If they are as badly needed and if they are as long promised, and if there are as many people settled in these districts, these railways should be constructed before the Esperance line is built. The first half of the Mount Marshall railway alone would serve a tract of country in which at present there are 20,000 acres under crop. The Kuminin and Emu Hills railway would serve even a larger area than that, and probably the Hon. Mr. Hamersley knows more than I do as to the quantity of land which the Bolgart extension would serve. I know enough however to be able to say that the quantity is considerable. We hear a good deal of talk about centralisation in regard to

the opposition to the Esperance railway, but it is madness to talk about centralisation when in the whole of Western Australia we have only a handful of people, not enough to make one first class city. Concentration is what we want. I am opposed to centralisation, but we want concentration of effort. When we see so many ports as we have at present on our coast-line, I should require a very strong reason indeed before I would agree that merely because it was a decentralisation policy we should spend a lot of money on the opening up of new harbours instead of using the money to equip existing harbours. We have in proportion to the number of people in this State an enormous number of harbours. If we are going to give up concentration of effort, so as not to be accused of centralisation, our last case will be worse than our first. We were told last session of the urgent necessity for passing a Bill for the construction of a broad-gauge line of railway from Merredin to Coolgardie. So urgent was this matter that the Minister for Works informed the Legislative Assembly that he had succeeded in countermanding orders for 60lb. rails in order that they might be replaced by 80lb. rails for this Merredin-Coolgardie railway, and those who urged a little delay on the ground that the Federal authorities might be approached in order to get the rails landed free of duty were accused of all sorts of things. I do not know what was not to happen if we blocked this very important project. But here we are back again in another session, another financial year has been entered upon, and this line, so far as I can understand, appears to have been forgotten. I have heard nothing about it. I do not know whether the 80lb. rails have arrived, or whether any laying has been done. I have heard nothing at all in regard to the railway. The Loan Estimates provided a sum of £300,000 for this work just as provision was made for the sum of £10,000 for the Mount Marshall railway, which we are told cannot be proceeded with for another twelve months. When we find so many railway enterprises hung up, is it not straining a point for the Government to come for-

ward with additional Bills of the nature of the Esperance railway? Another reason why I am not very keen on passing new railway Bills is that the Government persist in their policy of constructing them all by day labour. I would like to refer once more to that very interesting Labour Congress which was recently held at Fremantle. There was a plank on the fighting platform of the Labour party prior to this year called "the right to work." This plank has disappeared from the fighting platform and now appears among the propaganda principles. I do not know what propaganda principles mean—

Hon. J. Cornell: Also ran.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: The Hon. Mr. Cornell was as refreshingly candid at that Congress as he is in this House. He told the Minister that he was responsible for putting this right-to-work plank in the Labour platform at the Bunbury Congress, and it had been there three years and nobody had suggested any way of carrying it into effect. One member of the Congress proposed a motion something like this, that the Government should develop agricultural lands by departmental labour, with a view to putting into effect the right-to-work plank of the platform. I have no doubt that by the adoption of that policy they would be able to find work for a good many men; whether it would be a profitable policy, I do not know. This afforded one of the numerous instances when Ministers at the Congress strenuously fought against ridiculous proposals and were out-voted by the Congress. Two or three Ministers told the Congress that this motion was impracticable, and that it would be too costly; yet Congress decided against them, and the motion was carried that the Department should by day labour develop agricultural lands with a view to putting into effect the right-to-work plank of the platform, which was subsequently jettisoned into the propaganda principles.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What do they think will happen?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: The Minister for Works made an appeal to Congress in regard to this matter which certainly ought to have been listened to. He

stated that "he had had something to do with the departmental construction of public works. In some cases he got good results, but in others the reverse was the case." Let me repeat what he said, that in some cases he got good results, but in others the reverse was the case. He anticipated and in fact he openly stated that this particular matter of developing agricultural lands by day labour would be the reverse of successful, and would not give good results, and that the experience so far had been that in some cases good results had been obtained, but in others the reverse was the case. When we know how strongly pledged the Labour party are to this principle of departmental day labour, we can understand the provocation which must have moved the Minister to make that statement, and I think I am right when I say that the fewer railways we construct under departmental day labour the better it will be for the country, I am not prepared to largely increase our railway proposals. We must keep faith with the people for whom Bills have been passed, but I am against increasing the railway policy so long as the work is to be done in a manner regarding which the Minister in charge sees the folly. There are only one or two other matters to which I would like to refer, but I have one other reference to the Labour Congress. There is another plank in the platform to which I want to call attention, and that is preference to unionists. Some fair-minded delegate wished to add the words "other things being equal." He got the support of one or two of the Ministers, but that was fatal to him and "other things being equal" was struck out, so that preference to unionists, whether equal or not, is the policy decided by that Congress.

Hon. C. Sommers: Gilbert & Sullivan should have attended that Congress.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: There are one or two matters which I would like the Government to push forward more rapidly, and one is the matter of secondary education in country districts and on the Goldfields. I see the Hon. Mr. Kirwan has a question on the Notice Paper—being an Independent, he is in a very for-

tunate position, for he can ask the Government awkward questions which some of their supporters might hesitate to ask, in view of the fact that they show that he is dissatisfied with the lack of progress. The previous Governor's Speech made reference to the intention of the Government to establish secondary schools in goldfields and agricultural districts, and mentioned Kalgoorlie and Narrogin. I do not think this matter is referred to in the present Speech, and if it is referred to, it is in a less definite fashion than it was last year. Apparently nothing has been done, although that reference was made 12 months ago. I hope that the Government will push forward the secondary schools at Kalgoorlie and Narrogin. I think that there are other places in country districts which would offer better prospects than Narrogin does, but if the Government have selected Narrogin for reasons of convenience and economy, then by all means let the Government start it there, but do start somewhere, and as soon as it is started let the Government take into serious consideration the matter of establishing at the earliest possible moment an Agricultural College in what is considered by those qualified to judge the best possible situation. Perhaps we shall be told that there is no money for these undertakings. Just that little bit of money which has been lost on the State Steamships, would have done the whole trick.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Or that was lost over the Fremantle Dock.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: It is no good going back to money which was lost years and years ago. The money which has been lost during this present year would have done the trick without loss to anybody, and to the infinite and undying benefit of the State. Reference was made to the Savings Bank, and I hope the Minister will inform the House if it is possible for him to do so of the negotiations which took place between the Premier and the Federal Government. There is an impression that Western Australia was unfairly treated in this matter. On the fatal 31st May, Mr. King

O'Malley issued the last of his interesting publications dealing with the different Commonwealth Departments, and according to that publication £53,000 of Western Australian money had gone into the Federal Savings Bank, and the bank had then been in operation for a matter of only two or three months. This is a serious loss to Western Australia and it must also be proving a serious embarrassment to the Government. I hope the Federal Government will find some way of stopping this sort of thing. A good deal of reference has been made to the matter of the State steamers. I do not intend to labour it, but I hope that the Minister will clear up one point which has been raised. We have been given to understand that the position of the manager of the State Steamship Service was advertised for, and that the salary was stated in the advertisement. I believe it was stated at £300 or £350; I do not know which. Now we have been informed that after the appointment was made the successful applicant was told that if during the first six months of service he gave satisfaction he would be given a five year's appointment. At any rate we know that although he was appointed as the result of his application at £300 or £350 a year, his salary was in a short time raised to £600 a year. This is not a sound business method. I do not say that £600 is too much. I doubt whether it is enough for such a position, but if we can afford to offer £600 we should certainly get a £600 man in the first instance. If it is a fact that the appointment has been made for five years, and that the salary has been raised to £600 per annum, in what position are those members of the civil service who are sitting on the present board of inquiry into the State steamers. What sort of indictment will they make against the Minister who is responsible of this increase if they say in their report that this officer is not suitable of the position? Is it fair to put public servants in a position of that kind? I maintain it is not. I hope this will be one of the matters in regard to which we shall have an explanation from the Minister. I must

apologise for having occupied the attention of the House for so long. I desired to bring under the attention of members and the leader of the House the few questions to which I have referred, and in which I think, not only the members here, but the people in the country are to some extent interested.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th July, 1913.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): I desire to ask hon. members who have questions on the Notice Paper for to-day to postpone them until to-morrow, and may I point out that it is most difficult to obtain replies when the questions are not received in the departments until shortly before noon on the day that they are supposed to be answered. Some of the questions involve going through more than one department in order to get the necessary data. It is almost impossible to get the information here in time to answer the questions. I ask hon. members